Improving and Operationalizing Maritime Domain Awareness in the South China Sea

May 2020

Brit Felsen-Parsons Sarah Fu

Kirara Nakamura Schoni Song

Faculty Supervisor: Ben Reames

COLUMBIA
SIPA
School of International
and Public Affairs

Disclaimer: This report represents independent research and does not in any way represent official U.S. Department of State policy or the official recommendations of Columbia University.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This paper proposes steps that the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) can take to improve regional maritime security cooperation in the South China Sea by helping regional countries address a lack of maritime domain awareness (MDA) in order to better detect, deter, and interdict transnational crimes. The report highlights three axes, or lines of effort, that INL can pursue to help states improve and operationalize MDA: **1) Build national MDA capacity through National Fusion Centers, or National Maritime Single Points of Contact** (NMSPOCs); **2) Foster regional MDA through Multinational Fusion Centers**; **3) Strengthen Maritime Law Enforcement cooperation through joint operations and exercises**.

Insufficient MDA is an overarching problem that hampers maritime law enforcement efforts and undermines regional security. The vast expanse, strategic location and geopolitical tensions of the South China Sea already pose unique challenges to maritime security, and a lack of MDA means that scores of illegal activities – piracy, IUU fishing, terrorist safe-havens – can take place virtually undetected. **Improving MDA will help states develop a holistic picture of the threat landscape so they can better identify trends in activity and formulate strategies to detect, deter and interdict transnational criminals.**

Demonstrating the ability to coordinate around one policy issue will enhance INL's role in facilitating regional cooperation, which is a necessity in the region's long-term fight against transnational crime. Improving MDA is not the silver bullet to solving the region's maritime security problems, but it is the most practical goal for INL to help South China Sea states fight transnational crime. Furthermore, the measures we recommend are built on an ethos of cooperation and sharing, and this approach will not only improve regional MDA, but will also **foster and improve cooperation between South China Sea states by demonstrating a tangible benefit from sharing information and resources.**

The three axes of cooperation that we identify provide a multi-layered strategic framework to improve MDA in a coordinated and organized manner, and these axes were selected to maximize where U.S. interests align with that of regional states. While we acknowledge the complex and multi-layered nature of MDA, we recommend **solutions that focus on human cooperation rather than technological assets – an approach that will be more operationally effective in the long-term, and more cost-effective in the short term.** Lastly, if INL agrees with and chooses to adopt this approach, it should communicate the strategy broadly to its regional offices and implementers to prevent any erosion of the unity of effort necessary to achieve the goal of a wider regional MDA.

Policy Solutions at a Glance

National Fusion Centers (NMSPOCs)

1. Improve the information analysis capabilities of NMSPOCs
- a. Facilitate integrated workshops and trainings to develop analytical skills
- b. Support the development of a regional training center

2. Structural Unity
- a. Share best practices in the organizational structure of NMSPOCs
- b. Encourage the implementation of inter-agency protocols
- c. Conduct workshops to define nodes of common interest and areas of responsibility

3. Cooperation and Communications
- a. Expand MOUs bilaterally and multilaterally
- b. Establish standard operating procedures for information sharing
- c. Provide technological tools for information sharing and advocate a regional MDA network

Multinational Fusion Centers

4. Shared Vision
- a. Develop a shared lexicon for maritime law enforcement and security issues
- b. Support the establishment of multilateral Codes of Conduct

5. Expand Partnerships
- a. Increase the engagement of the private sector and international organizations
- b. Encourage information sharing and the use of open-access MDA tools

6. Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation
- a. Institutionalize the role of national coast guards and other law enforcement agencies
- b. Support these multinational initiatives to leverage best practices and expertise

Joint Operations and Exercises

7. Information Operationalization
- a. Transform shared information into actionable intelligence through the use of hotlines and liaison offices, standard operating procedures for critical incident notification

8. Expand Joint Exercises
- a. Increase the participation of coast guards and law enforcement in joint exercises

9. Donor State Coordination
- a. Leverage the momentum towards cooperative frameworks such as bilateral-plus-one (ex. Japan-US-ASEAN) and trilateral-plus one (Japan-US-Australia-ASEAN)
- b. Align INL initiatives with the ASEAN Regional Forum's current workplan and its initiatives with others (including the EU)
- c. Implement concrete joint initiatives to magnify impact

Methodology

This capstone project was undertaken by a team of six graduate researchers from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) in Spring 2020 under the supervision of adjunct professor Benjamin Reames, also a member of the U.S. Department of State's Foreign Service. This report is the culmination of three months of research, at the behest of the Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL).

The aim of this project was to analyze the nature and drivers of transnational organized crime in the South China Sea in order to assist INL in identifying feasible policy interventions to improve regional maritime law enforcement cooperation. The research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What are the main forms of transnational organized crime in Southeast Asia?
2. What are its main drivers, and what conditions make the South China Sea particularly hospitable to transnational crime?
3. How do regional stakeholders conceptualize maritime security and law enforcement cooperation? Is it a policy priority?
4. What agencies – national and multinational – are responsible for maritime law enforcement?
5. What authority have these bodies been given by their respective governments? How closely do they work together?
6. What are the main opportunities and challenges that these bodies face in their efforts to counter transnational crime in the maritime domain?
7. How can INL improve regional maritime law enforcement cooperation and bolster collective security in the South China Sea?

In order to answer these questions, the team conducted an extensive open-source literature review, including academic papers, journals, and conference proceedings; newspapers and media reports; available databases and knowledge banks; and think tank publications. Data were then culled from studies and initiatives conducted by national agencies such as the U.S. Congressional Research Service, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Coast Guard, and USAID, as well as their regional counterparts. The team drew upon the research and findings of multinational bodies such as the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, the UN Development Programme, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Parliamentary Research Commission. In some cases primary and secondary sources available only in Mandarin, Japanese, or Korean were translated by native speakers on the team. Finally, we interviewed academics and experts working in the U.S. and Asia. This approach was designed to capture as comprehensive a picture as possible of transnational organized crime and maritime law enforcement cooperation in the region.

| Literature Review | Expert Interviews | Analysis and Recommendations |
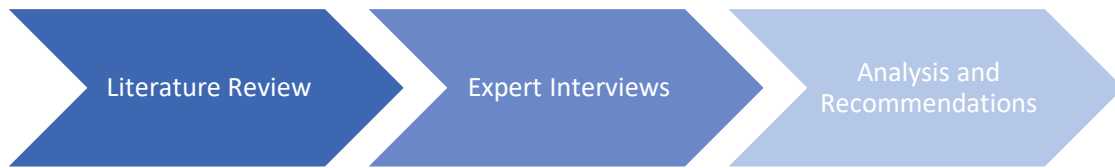
The team concluded that though the forms of transnational crime are diverse, there is a willingness to combat it, and a common challenge that impedes countries in the region from tackling crime is insufficient Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). Weak MDA, in conjunction with other significant obstacles, severely hampers maritime law enforcement efforts and thus undermines regional security.

The team subsequently organized a broad array of current national and international efforts to combat transnational crime in the region into three functional categories, or axes of impact:

National Fusion Centers (NMSPOCs)

Multinational Fusion Centers

Joint Operations and Exercises
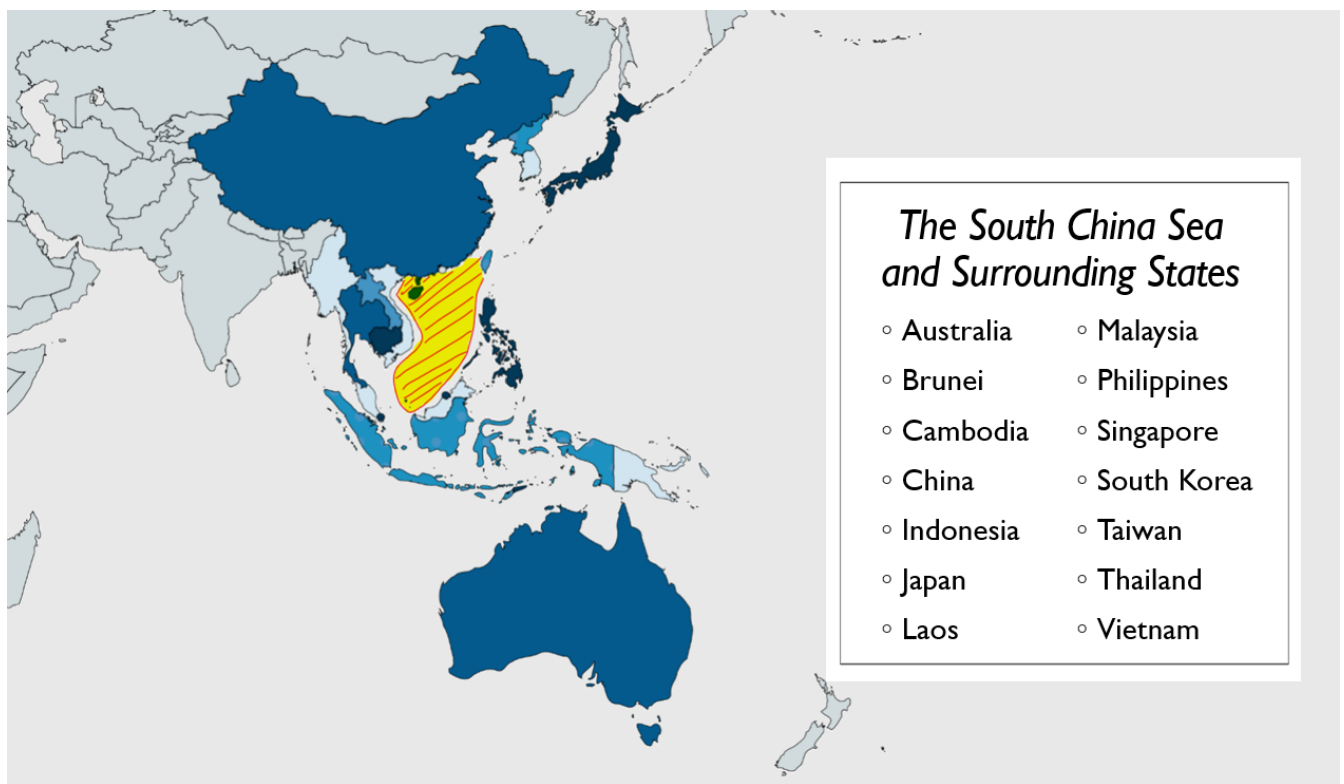
While the institutions and mechanisms within these categories are interlinked in practice, studying them in isolation offered a methodologically useful approach that isolated key obstacles and opportunities and allowed for tailored, context-specific policy recommendations to be made. These categories, and the policy recommendations arrived at in each, are presented in this report.

Background

The South China Sea
and Surrounding States
- Australia
- Brunei
- Cambodia
- China
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Vietnam

Visual courtesy of the authors.

The South China Sea is a large, semi-enclosed maritime area stretching about 1.4 million square miles and encompassing hundreds of islands, including the Spratlys, the Paracels, Macclesfield Bank, and Scarborough Shoal. Some 500 million people live within 100 miles of its coastline.[1] Situated at the heart of global trade and rich in natural resources, this region is also one of the most politically contested in the world, with six different countries – Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan and China – laying claim to various maritime territories.[2]

The region is home to the second-most important choke point in the global oil trade, with 40% of global liquefied natural gas trade transited through the South China Sea.[3] It also boasts tremendous natural resources, not only in terms of marine biodiversity but also in terms of energy supplies – conservative estimates suggest the South China Sea holds some 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 11 billion barrels of oil in proven and probable reserves.[4]

---

[1] Rosenberg, D. The South China Sea: Introduction. *Middlebury College*.
[2] Council on Foreign Relations. (2020, Apr 17). Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea.
[3] U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2017, Nov 2). Almost 40% of global liquified natural gas trade moves through the South China Sea.
[4] Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative. South China Sea Energy Exploration and Development. *Center for Strategic and International Studies.*

International Trade Routes
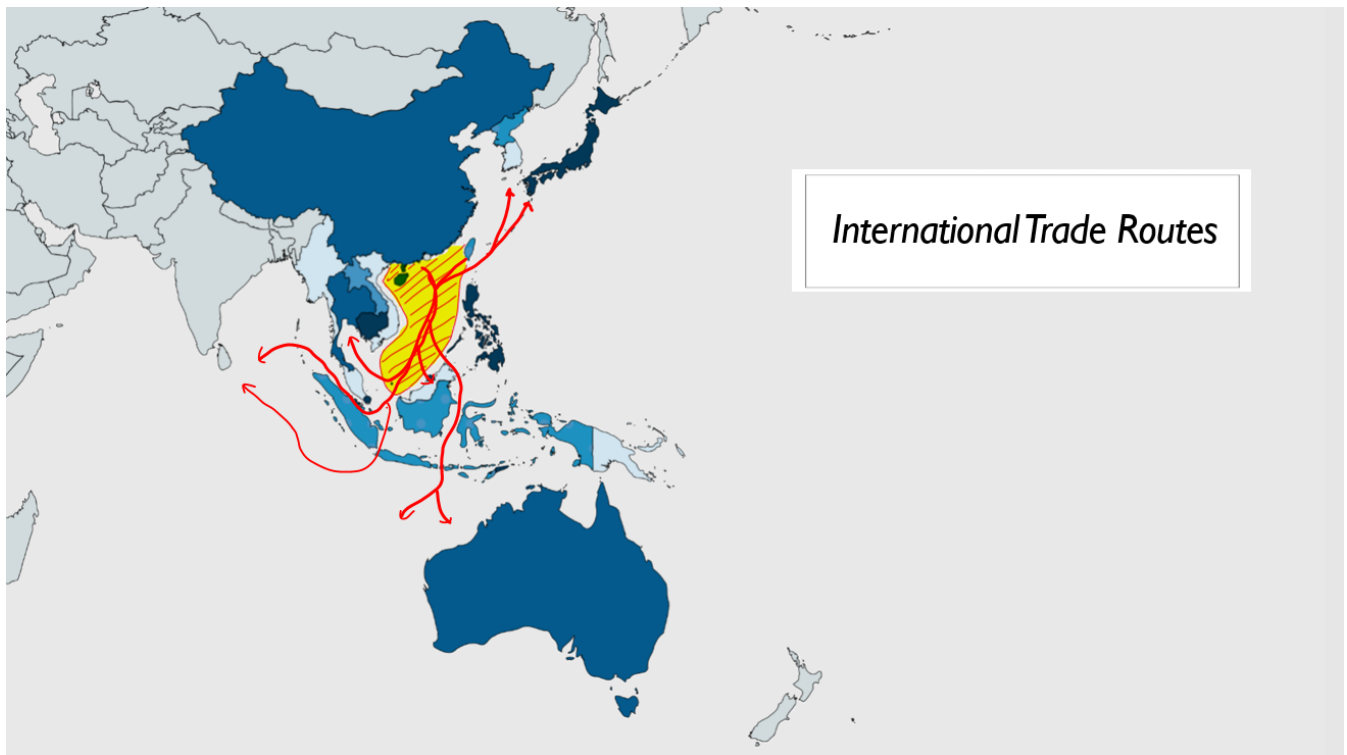
Visual courtesy of the authors.

As part of President Barack Obama's "pivot" to Asia, and in accordance with the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act of 2016, the United States government launched a new program to expand strategic engagement in the South China Sea. The centerpiece of this program is the five-year, $425 million USD Maritime Security Initiative, which aims to build the capacity of ASEAN states to address maritime challenges.[5] The initiative singles out five South China Sea states for assistance and training: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. It also includes a provision for incremental expenses for personnel from Singapore, Brunei and Taiwan to participate in training.[6]

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) is at the forefront of enhancing international security through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance programs with sovereign nations. Within the State Department, INL has the largest foreign assistance budget, which it uses to combat transnational crime, address illicit drug challenges, and strengthen criminal justice institutions to reduce instability abroad.[7]

---

[5] FY16 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section 1263 South China Sea (SCS) Maritime Security Initiative (MSI) is set to expire on 30 Sept 2020. Country teams work through the Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) to nominate proposals to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff for approval, and the DSCA provides program management and execution through the implementing agencies. *Defense Security Cooperation Agency.* Section 1263 South China Sea (SCS) Maritime Security Initiative (MSI).
[6] Ibid.
[7] Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. *U.S. Department of State.*

In recent years, maritime law enforcement cooperation in the Indo-Pacific has become a U.S. foreign policy priority, and therefore a programming priority for INL. INL serves as the coordinating body between other donor nations and regional organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its security-focused subsidiary, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). INL has worked closely with law enforcement agencies in the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, conducting workshops, skills training and technical assistance in partnership with organizations like the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the United Nations Development Programme.[8]

---

[8] Ibid. See also the Congressional Budget Justifications for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs for fiscal years 2016-2020, available at www.state.gov.

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)

<u>What is MDA, and why does it matter?</u>

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) has major economic, military, and security implications, and the importance of actionable intelligence in order to secure the maritime domain cannot be overstated. Roughly 90 percent of the world's goods are transported by sea,[9] and most military equipment must still be transported by ship. In addition, a whole host of transnational crimes – piracy, human trafficking, drug smuggling, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing to name a few – also rely heavily on maritime routes. As such, states have strong financial and security reasons to build and maintain MDA within their territorial waters and beyond, and this is especially true in the South China Sea due to overlapping claims over territory and exclusive economic zones (EEZs), as well as its geo-strategic importance in international trade.

However, definitions of MDA vary in scope. A narrow definition depicts it as a technology-centric tool for law enforcement surveillance, while a wider definition calls for more knowledge of the sea, including the human and political dimensions surrounding it, and places MDA at the center of maritime security governance.[10] The International Maritime Organization (IMO) takes a broad definition of MDA and interprets it as: the effective understanding of any activity associated with the maritime environment that could have an impact on security, safety, economy or environment,[11] and this is the definition that we take for this report.

There are a variety of technological tools that are used to improve MDA, however information from these tools is often complex and incomplete. The best known monitoring systems for tracking vessels are the Automatic Identification System (AIS), which utilizes ships' very-high-frequency (VHF) transponder systems, and the satellite-based Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system.[12] These two systems were established by the IMO and enable tracking of vessels, but there are limitations. AIS and LRIT systems are not required for all ships – of the approximately 17 million registered vessels worldwide only 200,000 are required to have AIS under IMO regulations – and this lack of data is compounded by the fact that operators can turn off their AIS and LRIT systems.[13] Advanced space-based maritime surveillance technologies like synthetic aperture radar (SAR) systems and electro-optical (EO) imaging satellites have been developed to supplement AIS and LIRT systems to better track maritime vessels.[14] However, the information gathered by these advanced surveillance technologies is complex, and South China Sea states with smaller budgets and fewer resources

---

[9] International Chamber of Shipping. *Shipping and World Trade*.

[10] S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. (2019, January 24). *Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) Event Report*.

[11] International Maritime Organization. (2010, May 24). *Amendments to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual*.

[12] Marine Insight. *Automatic Identification System (AIS): Integrating and Identifying Marine Communication Channels*.

[13] Cheng. D. (2019, March 6). The Importance of Maritime Domain Awareness for the Indo–Pacific Quad Countries. *The Heritage Foundation*.
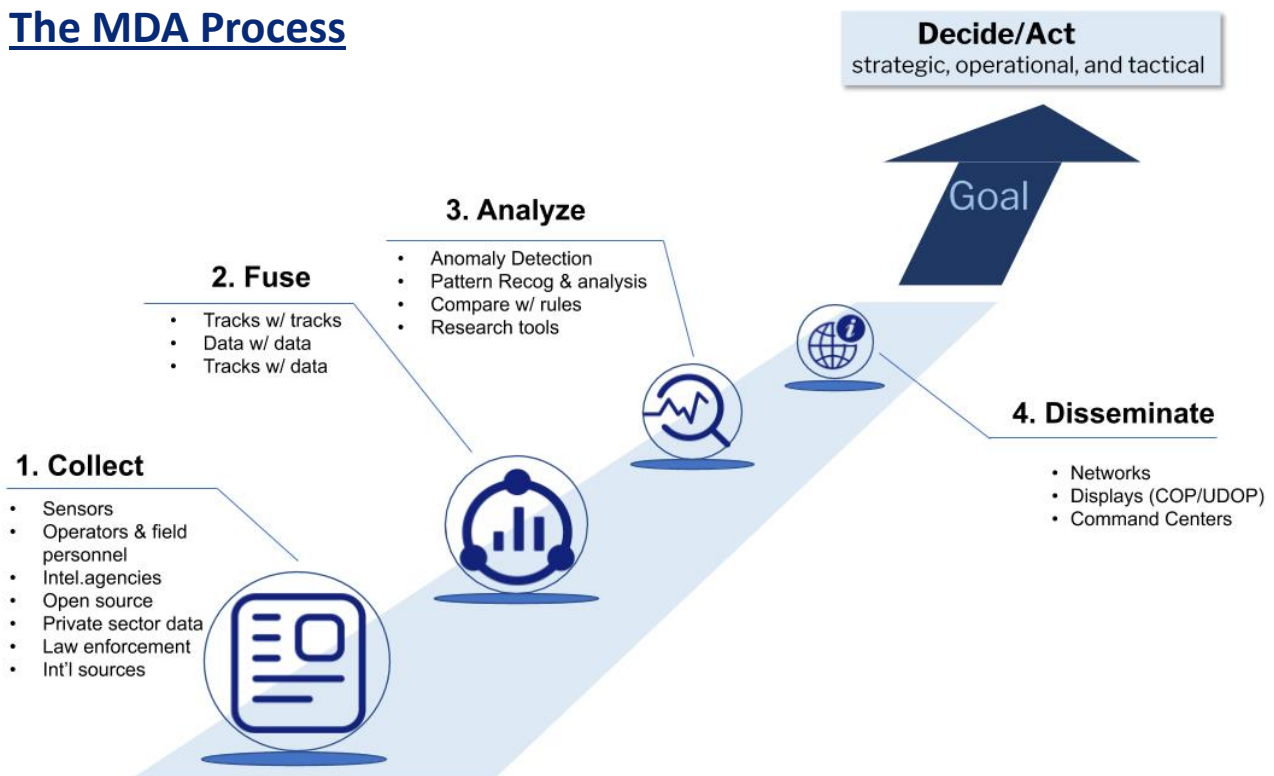
[14] Ibid.

generally have less capacity to analyze the technological information that can help create a more sophisticated understanding of the maritime domain.

Problems with improving MDA created by overlapping territorial claims are compounded by the extreme porosity and great expanse of maritime borders in the South China Sea – the Indonesian archipelago is made up of over 17,500 islands[15], and the Philippines consists of over 7,500 islands[16]. Lack of MDA in the region means that scores of illegal activities – piracy, trafficking, IUU fishing, terrorist safe-havens – can take place virtually undetected.

The MDA Process

Decide/Act
strategic, operational, and tactical

Goal

3. Analyze
- Anomaly Detection
- Pattern Recog & analysis
- Compare w/ rules
- Research tools

2. Fuse
- Tracks w/ tracks
- Data w/ data
- Tracks w/ data

1. Collect
- Sensors
- Operators & field personnel
- Intel.agencies
- Open source
- Private sector data
- Law enforcement
- Int'l sources

4. Disseminate
- Networks
- Displays (COP/UDOP)
- Command Centers

Visual courtesy of the authors.

The United States DHS follows a similar understanding of MDA to the IMO, and aims to achieve it by improving the ability to: 1) collect, 2) fuse, 3) analyze, and 4) disseminate actionable information and intelligence to operational commanders.[17] The four stages of improving MDA turn collected information into actionable intelligence. MDA provides states with a well-informed persistent awareness of the maritime domain, giving them decision advantage and creating larger windows of opportunities for them to detect, deter, interdict, and defeat actors carrying out illicit activities in the South China Sea.

---

[15] Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia. *Facts & Figures*.

[16] World Atlas. *How Many Islands Are There in the Philippines?*.

[17] U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2005, October). *National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness for the National Strategy for Maritime Security*.

What improving MDA can and cannot do

Uneven MDA capabilities across the region may create competition rather than cooperation between states, especially in terms of national security. However, given the interconnectedness of the maritime domain and the fact that transnational crime exacts a very high cost on the societies and economies of all South China Sea states, we believe that states have far more to gain by cooperating on MDA to stop illicit actors than by shoring up MDA capabilities unilaterally to bolster national security. To encourage cooperation rather than competition, the mechanisms that are used to improve MDA should be structured on an ethos of collaboration and a practice of sharing. This dual approach will not only improve regional MDA more comprehensively, it will improve and foster cooperation between South China Sea states more generally by demonstrating a tangible benefit from sharing information and resources.

To be sure, improving MDA is not the silver bullet to solving all of the region's maritime security problems. Even if states manage to improve regional MDA, there remain obstacles to cooperation in the South China Sea that include: territorial disputes, historic distrust, increasing environmental degradation that puts a strain on regional resources, corruption and poor governance, and regional trade disputes. States in the South China Sea must also contend with a China keen to assert its territorial claims up to the Nine Dash Line and that increasingly flouts international norms through its land reclamation and maritime militias. Last but not least, the effect of political and economic tensions between the United States and China are felt heavily in the region.

Despite these limitations, we assess that improving MDA is the most practical goal for INL to help South China Sea states fight transnational crime. This is not to say that improving MDA in the region will be easy. Instead, efforts to improve MDA can come through the implementation of concrete programs that will help states develop the ability to maintain a holistic picture of the threat landscape in the region. This will allow them to identify trends in activity and formulate strategies that raise the cost of transnational crime for actors, ultimately creating a safer, more stable South China Sea for all.

Three Axes of Impact
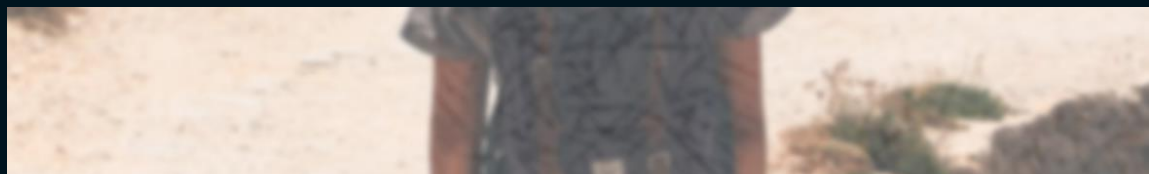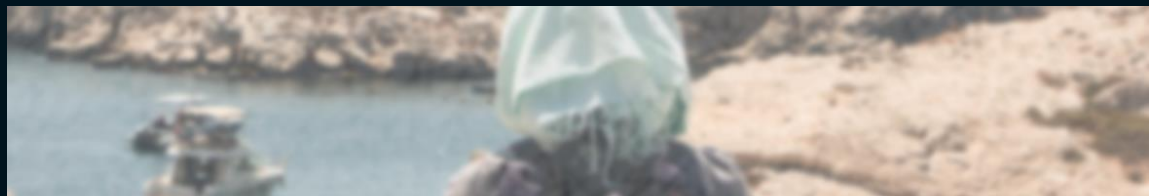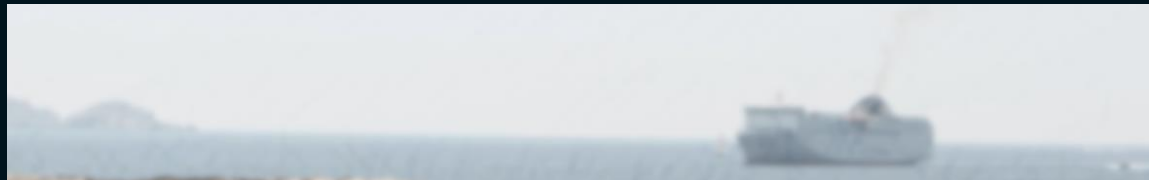
National Fusion Centers, or National Maritime Single Points of Contact (NMSPOCs)

Overview

MDA in the South China Sea suffers from a lack of information sharing – not only between states, but more importantly, between the various agencies and departments within states. This is due to the profusion of government agencies that are involved in the maritime concerns of these states, including navies, coast guards, customs and port authorities, sea transportation, fisheries, and environmental departments, to name a few.[18] Such agencies may assess that they have little incentive to share their information due to jurisdictional disagreements and inter-agency competition.

National Maritime Single Points of Contact (NMSPOCs) – aka information fusion centers, national focal points, regional coordinating centers, or national MDA centers – can be viewed as domestic information fusion centers where representatives from each maritime agency are brought together to facilitate information sharing, analysis, and dissemination in order to help states build MDA capacity to respond to threats effectively. A holistic understanding of the threat landscape is vital to tackling the challenge posed by transnational crime, and counter-threat preparations must include planning at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Where policy is dictated at the strategic level by national security councils, and agencies like coast guards implement logistics and procedures at the tactical level, NMSPOCs inhabit the operational level of planning, synthesizing the levels of planning for a unity of effort in tackling transnational crime.

NMSPOCs in the National Maritime Security Architecture

Strategy
- Grand strategy dictated by the national security council and executive/legislative branches
- Long-term maritime security and development goals

Tactics
- Conduct maritime law enforcement operations including monitoring and surveillance

Operations (NMSPOCs)
- Provide an operational picture of the threat landscape to inform strategic goals and support tactical action
- Facilitate coordination among agencies

Visual courtesy of the authors.

---

[18] For example, Indonesia has 11 maritime-related agencies and departments besides its navy and coast guard. Natalie Sambhi of Verve Research during a panel at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C. on the U.S. Naval Posture and Maritime Security in Southeast Asia, January 31, 2020.

An effective NMSPOC has the ability to: provide timely intelligence and strategic depth, overcome jurisdictional issues between agencies, synergize operations, and cooperate with other NMSPOCs to improve MDA in the region as a whole in order to allow South China Sea states to better deter and prevent transnational crime.[19] In addition, well integrated NMSPOCs with a large cross-section of agencies that are evenly represented can have the added benefit of reducing corruption, as close cooperation between agencies can result in greater transparency, whereby different agencies act as each other's watch dogs. While most South China Sea states have NMSPOCs, their effectiveness varies. For a detailed examination of each country's NMSPOC, please refer to the Appendices of this report.

NMSPOCs in Southeast Asia

Country	National Maritime Single Point of Contact (NMSPOC)
Thailand	Thailand Maritime Enforcement Coordinating Center (Thai-MECC)
Indonesia	Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (BAKAMLA)
Philippines	National Coast Watch Council (NCWC)
Singapore	National Maritime Security System (NMSS)
Brunei	National Maritime Coordination Center (NMCC)
Cambodia	National Committee on Maritime Security (NCMS)
Vietnam	Maritime Security Information Centre (MSIC)

---

[19] Captain Martin A. Sebastian. *The National Maritime Single Points of Contact (NMSPOC): Synergised Efforts Focused Results.* Presented at the Galle Dialogue, Maritime Institute of Malaysia, 2019.

Policy Recommendations

1 ## Information Analysis
Improve the information analysis and sense-making capabilities of the NMSPOCs

The best way for INL to improve information analysis capabilities of South China Sea states would be to **conduct integrated workshops and trainings that develop host countries' analytical skills and tools according to consistent curriculums.** Efforts to exchange MDA skills and tools have already taken place; for example, the U.S. Navy and Royal Thai Navy have conducted a series of MDA exchanges focusing on analyzing information including AIS data, and utilizing information sharing tools to track vessels of interest.[20] Such exchanges should be carried out with other partners in the region, and they should also be expanded to include coast guards and law enforcement agents, not just navies. INL could also explore the possibility of **supporting the development of a regional information analysis training center** to train agents from various states in information analysis skills, especially with regards to analyzing more complex data, such as space-derived information.

While collecting and sharing information is vital to achieving enhanced MDA, that information is only useful once it is analyzed and turned into actionable intelligence that provides states with decision advantage to fight transnational crime. Analytic capacity speaks to the more technological side of MDA, and countries with less funding in the South China Sea generally have less capacity to analyze the technological information that can create a more sophisticated MDA. This is especially true given the increasing prevalence of advanced space-based maritime surveillance technologies like synthetic aperture radar (SAR) systems and electro-optical (EO) imaging satellites.

Outside of the problem of increasingly complex and extensive data, the greater issue remains that most existing NMSPOCs do not currently have information analysis as a priority, instead focusing purely on surveillance, information coordination and sharing. For example, the Philippines' National Coast Watch Council (NCWC) emphasizes surveillance, monitoring and information consolidation,[21] Cambodia's National Committee on Maritime Security (NCMS) focuses purely on coordination between agencies, and Vietnam's Maritime Security Information Centre focuses on information exchange. While sharing surveillance and monitoring data is useful in helping states to respond to crimes as they happen, a lack of information analysis means that states can only act reactively rather than being able to take preventive measures. Strong analysis capabilities in NMSPOCs allow states to make sense of the threat landscape as a whole, allowing for more effective action to disrupt transnational crime.

The best regional example of integrating information analysis and sense-making into the function of NMSPOCs comes from Singapore. Singapore's NMSPOC is the National Maritime Security

---

[20] United States Department of the Navy. (2019, June 20). *CARAT 2019: Building Security Through Maritime Domain Awareness*.

[21] The Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. *Briefer: National Coast Watch Center*.

System (NMSS), which involves five key agencies: the Republic of Singapore Navy, the Police Coast Guard, the Maritime Port Authority, Singapore Customs, and the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority. The NMSS's main role is to use its sense-making processes to harmonize information and assess observations and threats. This intelligence is then shared with the five agencies, allowing them to have a shared picture of the threat landscape, which in turn enables them to coordinate timely operational responses.[22] Singapore's NMSS is closely attached to the Singapore Maritime Crisis Centre (SMCC), which performs a whole-of-government coordinating role between agencies and which also has a data analytic driven National Maritime Sense-Making Group.[23] In addition, Singapore has a Navy-led Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) dealing mainly with piracy, which also maintains information-sharing networks including with international partners and the private-sector stakeholders in the shipping community.[24] To be sure, Singapore has many more financial resources than other South China Sea states and can afford the duplication of information analysis efforts. However, other examples like Thai-MECC's Maritime Information Sharing Center (MISC) shows how information analysis can and should form the backbone of NMSPOCs states with fewer resources.[25]

2 Structural Unity
Restructure NMSPOCs to ensure unity of effort and prevent jurisdictional overlap

While it is politically challenging for a foreign government to advise any sovereign state on the structure of their own governments, INL can and should **encourage the sharing of best practices on the structure of NMSPOCs** among South China Sea states. INL can also **help states to implement inter-agency protocols** that detail agreements on how agencies will work together, and **conduct planning workshops for agencies to define nodes of common interest** in terms of maritime security as well as **establishing areas of responsibility** that offer a clearer base for action.

NMSPOCs tend to suffer from continued interagency competition over jurisdiction even after coming under one umbrella. For example, in the Indonesian NMSPOC – the Maritime Security Agency or BAKAMLA – coordination has continued to be a challenge, with issues of overlapping authority among state institutions as well as laws concerning maritime affairs.[26] Part of the reason for the issue of overlapping authority in BAKAMLA stems from a failure to implement a lack of strategic vision over the structural hierarchy of Indonesian maritime agencies, with President Joko Widodo stating that he intends BAKAMLA to merge with the Indonesian Sea and Coast Guard (KPLP) to form a unified

---

[22] MINDEF Singapore. (2015, August 5). Keynote Address by Second Minister for Defence Mr Lui Tuck Yew at the 17th Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO).
[23] MINDEF Singapore. Fact Sheet: Safeguarding Singapore's Maritime Security.
[24] Parameswaran. P. (2020, February 11). What's in Singapore's Maritime Security Task Force Restructuring Plans?. *The Diplomat.*
[25] Thai-MECC presentation to the ASEAN Regional Forum (2019, January).
[26] Parameswaran. P. (2020, February 11). *Managing the Rise of Southeast Asia's Coast Guards.* Wilson Center.

Indonesian coast guard by 2024.[27] This integration raises a potential problem because **dominance by one agency can erode the integrity of the NMSPOC structure and impede its ability to coordinate information, create holistic intelligence, and synergize operations**. In Malaysia, the Maritime Enforcement Coordination Centre (MECC), was initially set up as an NMSPOC but was subsumed under the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency which ultimately became the formal Malaysian Coast Guard in 2017;[28] there is a risk that BAKAMLA will follow the same route and its NMSPOC will be lost.

One positive example of how to structure NMSPOCs comes from Thailand's Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC). Thai-MECC was first established in 1997 as the Maritime Enforcement *Coordination* Center, but it faced many problems with coordination in part due to inter-agency competition over jurisdiction. In addition, agencies did not view obligations to the initial Thai-MECC as a priority, so they were not motivated to share data or collaborate with other agencies. These problems were addressed in a 2019 restructuring of the organization, with Thai-MECC's focus changing from 'coordination' to a more 'command' centered approach. Part of the restructuring entailed a hierarchical change which has given Thai-MECC clear authority over other agencies.[29] Thai-MECC is now chaired by the Prime Minister of Thailand directly, with the Navy's Commander in Chief as Deputy Director.[30] This change has not only done away with ambiguity over priorities and jurisdiction, it has also situated the NMSPOC directly at the operational level of planning – between the strategic policy level and the tactical procedural level – creating a unity of effort and purpose.

3 Cooperation and Communications
Increase cooperation and communications between NMSPOCs to maximize regional MDA

Once countries establish their own national maritime coordination body, it is crucial to maximize regional MDA by increasing information sharing amongst the NMSPOCs. This can be done at a relatively low cost, as each country is already carrying out intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) operations under their NMSPOC or equivalent agency. An increase in indigenous data shared by each country can create a more comprehensive picture of the South China Sea. The U.S. government can support this approach by leveraging its resources and influence in the region.

Specifically, greater cooperation and communications could be facilitated by **expanding MOUs bilaterally and multilaterally** among NMSPOCs in the region, as well as related international organizations. For example, the Philippines' National Coast Watch Center has partnerships with

---

[27] Gorbiano. M. I. (2020, February 12) *Jokowi wants Bakamla upgraded to Indonesian coast guard as new chief sworn in*. The Jakarta Post.
[28] Maritime Institute of Malaysia. (2019, March 13). *The National Maritime Single Points of Contact (NMSPOC) – Work-Study Visit to Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-West (JIATF-W) and the Narcotics Task Force (NTF)*.
[29] Scott. E. (2019, October 22). *From coordination to command: making Thailand's maritime security governance more efficient?*. Safe Seas.
[30] Nanuam. W. (2019, September 14). *Maritime body restructured to tackle IUU*. The Bangkok Post.

international organizations and NMSPOCs in the region, such as BAKAMLA and Thai-MECC.[31] These partnerships should be deepened by focusing on exchanging information they acquired by their own ISR capabilities. Simultaneously, countries should work on **establishing a set of standard operating procedures for sharing information** on transnational crimes. Regarding the type of information to be shared, it would be relatively easier to share information in rawer forms, rather than at the operational or strategic levels – after it has been analyzed and often classified – since countries will have fewer concerns over the sensitivity of such information.

INL can advance this approach by **using Foreign Military Financing (FMF) or International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds as a leverage** on recipient countries, encouraging them to commit to sharing information with other NMSPOCs before they can receive funding. For instance, the U.S. government could have encouraged information sharing with other regional fusion centers when they supported the establishment of the Philippines' NCWC.[32] INL could also **provide technological systems for information sharing** which would have the added benefit of solving issues of interoperability and technical compatibility of NMSPOCs. For instance, the U.S. could provide Cooperative Situational Information Integration (CSII) which is an unclassified software program implemented for information sharing among 14 Latin American countries and the U.S. by the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF)-South.[33] This web application, in which participants share near real-time information to disrupt drug trafficking and other organized crime, could be a useful model for Southeast Asia. Lastly, **INL should advocate the establishment of a regional MDA network and demonstrate that the U.S. government has the ability and resources to support it**. The U.S. government could also **share some of the data collected by its own advanced assets** as leverage. The State Department could lead this effort in cooperation with the DOD OSD regional office and INDOPACOM Joint Operations Center, and other agencies as appropriate.

One of the challenges to expanding cooperation between NMSPOCs is that exchanging less sensitive information might not contribute much to the actionability of law enforcement agencies. The governments can decide what information to share and the sharing is carried out on a volunteer basis. This is why trust between the regional countries is the foundation of this proposed information exchange regime. However, it is questionable if the mutual trust is present in the region given the current low level of cooperation in security-related areas. The incentives that the U.S. could provide via funds and foreign assistance might be insufficient to overcome persistent mistrust. It would be wise to build trust incrementally, starting with bilateral relationships. This will create a foundation that can ultimately facilitate multilateral cooperation in building a broader MDA network.

[31] Zata, J. (2016). *National Coast Watch System Moves Forward*.

[32] Jackson, V., Rapp-Hooper, M., Scharre, P., Krejsa, H., & Chism, J (2016). *Networked Transparency: Constructing a Common Operational Picture of the South China Sea*. Center for a New American Security.

[33] The US Department of Homeland Security. (2019, October 5). *Snapshot: Intergovernmental Cooperation Enhances Communications, Maritime Awareness*.

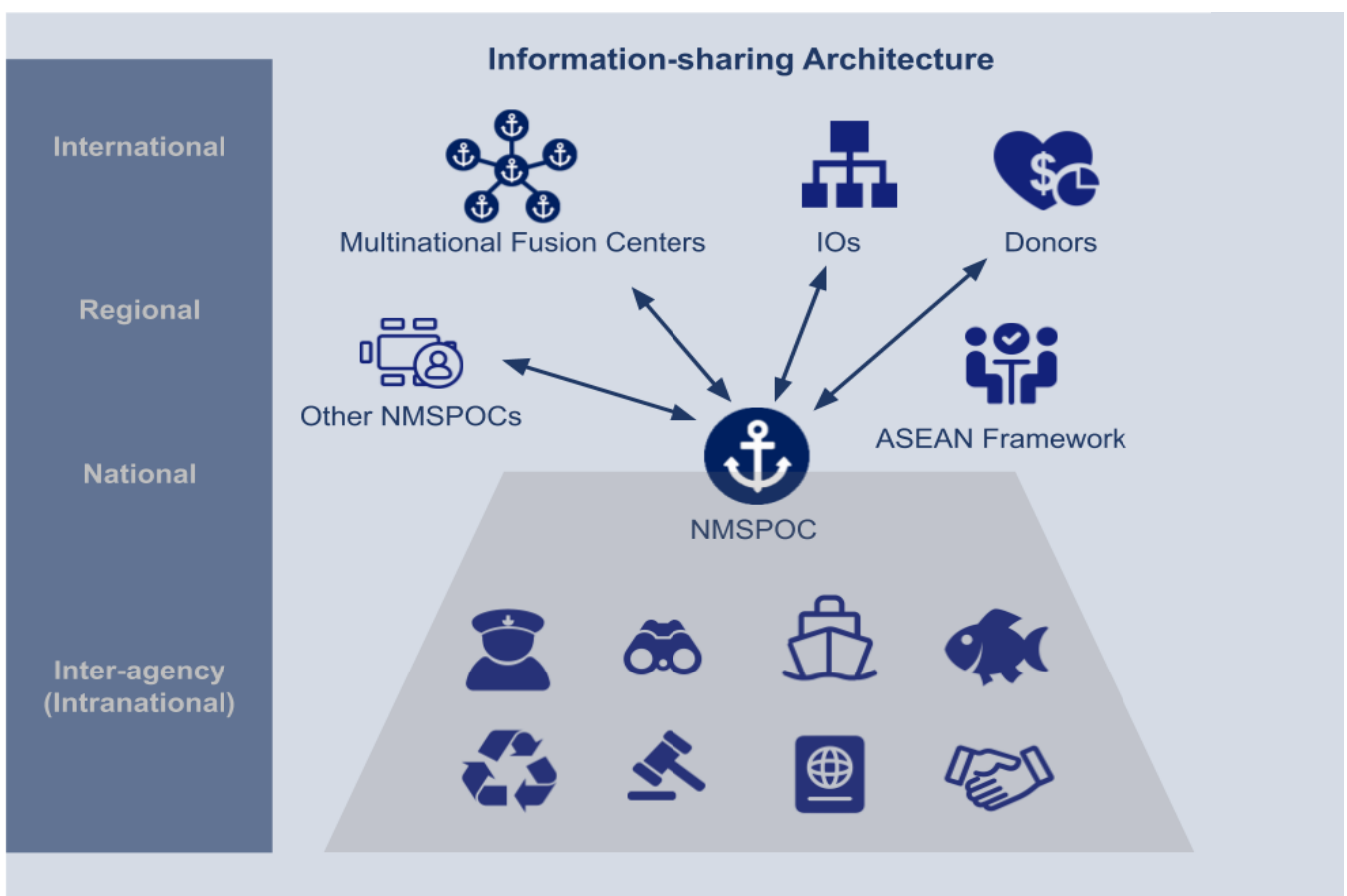# Multinational Fusion Centers

Overview

Given the size of the domain of the South China Sea, no state can provide effective MDA on its own. In addition, the inherently international nature of transnational crime makes it necessary for states to cooperate with each other to gain a better picture of the threat landscape that they all face. Multinational fusion centers play a critical role in supporting, analyzing, and gathering threat-related information between government agencies and state partners,[34] and they are also designed to organize local domestic intelligence into an integrated system to allow room for distribution of data across a network of fusion centers. In order to create a well-rounded regional MDA to fight maritime enabled transnational crime, it is important for INL and states within the South China Sea region to establish a broad, inclusive international MDA network built on an ethos of cooperation. There are the three main multinational fusion centers in the region, with a fourth on the way.

Visual courtesy of the authors.

---

[34] The U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Fusion Centers' Support of National Strategies and Guidance.

Information Fusion Centre (IFC)

The Information Fusion Centre (IFC) is a regional Maritime Security centre established by the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) in 2009, aiming to facilitate information sharing and collaboration. The IFC plays a vital role in providing information to international navies, national coast guards and maritime agencies to combat illegal maritime security threats.[35] The IFC has a range of multinational collaborations with 97 International Liaison Officers (ILO) from 41 countries, as well as close connections with the shipping community through quarterly meetings and a Voluntary Community Reporting (VCR) system. The IFC is one of the four Technical Leading Navies of the Trans-Regional Maritime Network (T-RMN), and it works with the Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Centre in Italy, the Maritime Surveillance Information System of India, and Brazil's Maritime Traffic Information System to improve information sharing on a global scope. The IFC has already played a significant role in regional collaboration on maritime security issues, contributing to a 62% decline in regional incidents of piracy and sea robbery from 200 in 2015 to 76 in 2018, as well as a 92% decline in piracy and sea robbery incidents in the Straits of Malacca in the same period.[36]

Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC)

The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) was the first government-to-government regional agreement on piracy and robbery at sea in Asia and it entered into force in 2006. ReCAAP 20 signatory states as well as links to inter-governmental agencies like the IMO, INTERPOL, and the IFC in Singapore.[37] The ReCAAP Agreement outlines three major types of cooperation: information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements, and it carries out these goals through an Information Sharing Centre (ISC) based in Singapore.[38] The ISC communicates maritime security-related information among the 20 contracting countries and holds annual workshops covering international laws, prosecution and emergencies to enhance the capacity building aiming to improve information sharing and practices of piracy and robbery in Asian seas. ReCAAP effectiveness is limited by the fact that two core littoral states in the South China Sea – Malaysia and Indonesia – are not participants. This is mainly due to the two countries' conflicting views with other participating nations on maritime security. The ISC has been recognized as

---

[35] Kitchen, C. & Chapsos, I. (2015) *Strengthening Maritime Security Through Cooperation*. IOS Press.

[36] Singapore Ministry of Defense. (2019, May 14). *Fact Sheet on Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and Launch of IFC Real-Time Information-Sharing System (IRIS)*.

[37] The contracting parties of ReCAAP are as follows: Australia, Japan, Singapore, Bangladesh, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Brunei, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, the UK, the PRC, the Netherlands, the US, Denmark, Norway, Vietnam, India, and the Philippines. ReCAAP also has partnerships with the IMO, INTERPOL, the Asian Shipowners' Association, Bimco, Intertanko, the OCIMF, the IFC and the WMU.
About ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre: Combating Maritime Robbery, Sea Piracy.

[38] Sun, Zhen. 2016. *Tenth Anniversary of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combatting Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*. Asia-Pacific Journal of Ocean Law and Policy.

a "Centre of Excellence" for information-sharing to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea by the 12th annual Governing Council Meeting.[39] However, only superficial consensus-building among participating governments has been possible, meaning that little progress has been made in terms of operational or tactical cooperation.[40]

International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC)

The International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Center (IMB PRC) based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is a non-governmental agency under the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). It is the only independent piracy reception center in the world, providing shipmasters and ship operators with 24-hour free service to report piracy, sea robberies and hijacking.[41] Its services are free and funded purely by donations. Some of ICC's financial sponsors include the Malaysian and Japanese governments, and other individual donations are also accepted via the ICC website.[42] The PRC provides services covering piracy and robbery with live reports, warnings, and a 24-Hour Maritime Security Hotline. The main goal of the IMB PRC is to raise maritime safety awareness in the shipping industry. The PRC collects information about the ship attacks and robbery in the world, and it also acts as a single point of contact for shipmasters to report piracy and robbery. Data is then shared with local law enforcement agencies, international maritime organizations, governments, inter-governmental and industry law enforcement bodies for assistance and to create a better understanding of piracy patterns in the region.

Pacific Fusion Center

In 2018 Australia announced it will work with its regional partners to support the creation of a new Pacific Fusion Center.[43] The new Pacific Fusion Center will provide strategic analysis of information to help strengthen MDA and provide security alerts and advice for Pacific security agencies on threats such as illegal fishing, people smuggling and narcotics trafficking. This Pacific Fusion Center still remains in the conceptual stage, and future steps over the creation of the center have yet to be discussed.

---

[39] ReCAAP Executive Director's Report 2016
[40] Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), 2020.
[41] IMB Piracy Reporting Centre
[42] International Chamber of Commerce. Voluntary Sponsors.
[43] Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon Marise Payne. (2018, September 5). Australia to support new Pacific Fusion Centre.

Policy Recommendations

4 **Shared Vision**

Establishing and maintaining a shared vision on maritime security issues

The United States seeks to build a network of like-minded security partners to combat common challenges and create a free and open Indo-Pacific with a rules-based foundation. More bilateral or multinational fusion centers should be designed to improve maritime security with a shared vision. There is a broad regional agreement on the importance of MDA in the South China Sea,[44] and INL should take advantage of this rare consensus by working closely with partnering countries to coordinate and amplify efforts that improve MDA in order to counter transnational crime in the region. Although such efforts may face challenges as despite the fact that countries agree on the importance of MDA, they still have different visions of what MDA is and what it can achieve. However, active participation and consistent messaging can resolve potential conflicts and it is important for INL to act as a leader in establishing this shared vision with other nations in the region.

ASEAN countries share a strategic interest in maintaining a stable, safe, and secure maritime region, but countries have different priorities for particular security issues. These different priorities should be taken into account when considering multinational fusion centers. The value in every country's participation will help information sharing at these multinational fusion centers go from being a liability to an asset. Currently, Indonesia and Malaysia are not participating countries of IFC, which is mainly due to historical political distrust and to their conflicting views on maritime security. Since disagreements could lead to more conflicts, **INL could help facilitate participation in multinational fusion centers and work to establish a shared vision with participating nations,** as multinational fusion centers with full participation are crucial to facilitating information sharing and capability support.

Not only do countries need to have a shared vision in establishing MDA policies, but also a **shared lexicon** to communicate that vision, coordinate action, and avoid conflicts. Understanding different lexicons used to describe incidents in each country is also crucial in reducing the likelihood of miscalculation and conflict, which would undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on all actors. An example of a shared lexicon would be the terminologies adopted for Standard Marine Communication Phrases, or Seaspeak, which is a set of key phrases in English designed to facilitate communication between ship captains whose native tongues differ.[45]

---

[44] U.S. Department of Defense. (2015). *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*.

[45] U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2020, January 13). *What is Seaspeak?*

Another example of efforts to reduce misunderstanding at sea is the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), a 2014 agreement that aims to reduce the chance of an incident at sea between signatory countries. A total of 21 countries are part of the agreement including major stakeholders in the South China Sea such as Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, and the U.S.. The CUES provides a standardized navigation and communication protocols for use when ships meet at sea, including a standardized set of language-independent communication protocols to allow navies to communicate at sea absent a common language. In July 2014, a U.S. Navy vessel was able to use CUES during an unplanned encounter with Chinese vessels, which resolved a misunderstanding between the two navies. With the growing number of maritime disputes, **it is crucial to establish a common code of conduct to reduce risk of unintentional conflict at sea**. INL can also work with ASEAN and other regional partners **to establish a set of common terminology or an operational level hotline** to encourage more reliable communication and reduce potential conflict.

5 Expanding Partnerships
Expanding MarSec partnerships to include the private sector, international organizations

Maritime security (MarSec) partnerships should go beyond cooperation and communication between NMSPOCs, and they need to involve broader groups of actors in more flexible formats to enhance efficiency. INL should **encourage private-public information sharing partnerships in multilateral maritime security partnerships and this could include incentives for greater private sector participation**. This would have the added benefit of allowing states to optimize resource allocation by diffusing expertise knowledge among diverse members in the partnerships.

The complexity of dynamics, regional expanse and porosity of the South China Sea necessitates information sharing as a tool for coordination, and multilateral partnerships must be established to deepen MDA.[46] These multilateral partnerships should include governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental groups like the shipping industry, harbor safety committees, consortia in the Global Maritime Community of Interest (GMCOI), National Maritime Security Advisory Committee (NMSAC) and other expertise private sector association committees in private-public-partnerships (PPP).[47] However, the "principal-agency" problems exist in the private-public partnerships due to different stakeholders involved, and it is crucial to align goals in the design of partnerships.

A good example of a private-public partnership is the Maritime Infrastructure Recovery Plan (MIRP) under the National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS), which sets a good model for private sector entities to engage in operational and advisory processes of maritime infrastructure and cargo

---

[46] Raap-Hooper, M. (2015). Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, *America's Security Role in the South China Sea*. Center for Strategic and International Studies.
[47] Department of Homeland Security. (2005, October). *National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness*.

flow restoration, as the major owners and operators of vessels to collaborate with federal governments, i.e. government-private sector information sharing system.[48]

The mFish Initiative launched by the US Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014 is another example of the **effectiveness of public-private partnerships in improving open-access MDA.** mFish partnerships include the State Department Office of Global Partnerships, Ministry of Indonesia's Marine Affairs and Fisheries, EcoHub and the Global System for Mobile Communications Association.[49] Through government sponsorship, private sector technology, and international organizations partnerships, the project has connected underserved fishing communities with markets to improve economic conditions for fishing villages, as well as raised the sustainable fishing skills of local communities. The project uses mobile phone GPS technology to provide real-time information sharing to fishmen, seafood industries and other stakeholders to monitor illegal fishing and trace supply chain for better ecology in the region.[50] This initiative shows the potential for private sector mobile services and data analytics technology and commercial satellite imagery to be leveraged to improve MDA and prevent transnational crime.[51]

6 Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation
Enhancing local cooperation with a focus on MLE within multinational fusion centers

Specific task forces or units within multinational fusion centers should be established for coast guards or their national equivalents to come together on a regular basis to discuss common challenges and opportunities. These specialized units within multinational fusion centers could also become forums where INL can leverage expertise and **provide workshops on maritime law enforcement training, technology, planning and equipment**.

Multinational fusion centers have developed unique networks that include navies, coast guards, and maritime rescue centers to name a few. However, multinational fusion centers have limited capacity at local level due to narrow operational jurisdiction of information sharing and the efforts to raise MDA have so far been insufficient.[52] Multinational fusion centers like the IFC focus heavily on navy-to-navy cooperation despite the crucial role that local law enforcement agencies and coast guards

---

[48] Department of Homeland Security. (2006, April). *The Maritime Infrastructure Recovery Plan for The National Strategy for Maritime Security*.

[49] mFish. *The mFish Initiative*.

[50] Kaplan, M. (2018, March 2). *A Brief History of mFish*. Medium.

[51] Greenway, S. R., & Sipes, C. J. (2018, March). *Maritime Domain Awareness in the South China Sea: An Operational Picture Design*. Calhoun: The Naval Postgraduate School Institutional Archive.

[52] Jackson, V., Rapp-Hooper, M., Scharre, P., Krejsa, H., & Chism, J. (2016). *NETWORKED TRANSPARENCY: Constructing a Common Operational Picture of the South China Sea*. Center for a New American Security.

must play in arresting, indicting and prosecuting transnational criminals.[53] It is also important to involve contributions from other local authorities in the region other than coast guards and navies; the collaboration between NMSPOCs would facilitate local collaboration and further enforce MDA to solve maritime security issues. Given the cross-border nature of transnational crime, maritime law enforcement agencies in the region would benefit greatly from being able to share timely operational intelligence and trends with their peers in neighboring states. The existing structure of multinational fusion centers makes them an ideal forum for such cooperation and exchange to take place, in order for all states to improve their understanding of the regional threat landscape to better disrupt and prevent transnational crime.

As some governments might not have the capacity to manage operations involving high-tech equipment, or lack key personnel to receive and process the data, law enforcement capacity building is crucial to developing cooperation between national coast guards or equivalent maritime law enforcement agencies. However, there remains the challenge that not all states have coast guards, and there is often competition between navies and coast guards over budget and jurisdiction. Furthermore, countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia which play important roles in key regional waterways like the Malacca Straits, the Sunda Straits, and the Lombok Straits, need to be present in partnerships.

---

[53] Singapore Ministry of Defense. (2019, May 14). *Fact Sheet on Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and Launch of IFC Real-Time Information-Sharing System (IRIS)*.

Joint Operations and Exercises

Overview

This section lays out the most significant multilateral forums for maritime security cooperation in the South China Sea,[54] and then goes on to explore how the US might engage with these forums most productively in exerting a positive influence on maritime security cooperation to help states operationalize their increased MDA capacity and combat transnational crime.

The Malacca Straits Patrol

The Malacca Straits Patrol was established in 2006 by Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand to ensure the security of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The framework grew out of the MALSINDO trilateral coordinated navy patrols initiated in 2004 to combat transnational threats to the littoral states. This effort is widely considered successful, particularly in combating piracy and sea robbery: the total number of attacks dropped from 38 in 2004 to only 12 in 2005.[55] The initiative has since evolved "in structural, cultural, policy, technological, and relational ways in order to become more effective" in achieving its broader mandate.[56] The **"Eyes in the Sky" Combined Air Maritime Patrols** reinforce sea patrols with air surveillance, and the **Malacca Straits Patrol Information System** facilitates information- and intelligence-sharing among participating agencies, allowing them to react to unfolding incidents in real time.

Joint Maritime Security Exercises

In 2018, ASEAN and China held their first joint naval exercises involving personnel from all ten ASEAN member states (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar sent observers, but not vessels). The **China-ASEAN Maritime Exercise** – a navy-to-navy operation – was executed off the shore of Zhanjiang, in southern China's Guangdong province.[57] The joint exercise was considered a milestone for the PRC's defense diplomacy, as well as China-ASEAN relations. However, this collaboration did not

---

[54] To compile a comprehensive list of the myriad bilateral and multilateral agreements, treaties, laws, alliances, partnerships, informal arrangements, military relations, and forums which shape interstate interactions in the South China Sea is both beyond the scope of this report and tangential to its purpose: to highlight a few key avenues by which INL can exert a positive influence on maritime security cooperation to combat transnational crime. We therefore focus on the critical juncture between the forums in which there is the greatest engagement by regional states, and those which it is practically and politically feasible for the U.S. to engage.

[55] MINDEF Singapore. (2016, Apr 21). *Fact Sheet: The Malacca Straits Patrol*.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Li, W. (2018, Oct 23). *China, ASEAN begin joint naval drills*. China Daily.

address the long-standing territorial disputes between China and four of the participating ASEAN states – Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, and the Philippines – nor did it do much to quell anxieties over the impact that rising U.S.-China tensions would have on Southeast Asia.[58]

In 2019, the United States launched its own inaugural joint naval drills with ASEAN – the **ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX)** – which covered a vast area stretching from the coast of Thailand to Vietnam's Gulf of Tonkin, and down to Singapore. [59] 1,260 military personnel, eight warships, and four aircraft from all ten ASEAN states and the U.S. participated. This exercise coincided with a weeks-long standoff between China and Vietnam over the energy-rich Vanguard Bank and complaints by the Philippine authorities about Chinese "bullying" in the South China Sea.[60] Some perceived these drills as a US attempt to compete more openly with China in the region, though both the US and ASEAN have insisted that they were organized in order to deepen multilateral engagement in the region, including with China.[61]

Maritime security cooperation does not stop at participating countries' respective navies. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has played an important role in building the capacities of Southeast Asian coast guards through training and educational opportunities, equipment transfers, and joint exercises. Priority has been given to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam for **USCG Security Sector Assistance** since at least 2015.[62] For the Philippines, this has featured the training of more than 1,500 Philippines Coast Guard personnel and 60 officers per year, in the Philippines and the US; as well as US government funding of the Philippines' NMSPOC, the National Coast Watch Center (NCWC).[63] With Indonesia, the focus has been on enhancing the technical capabilities of its NMSPOC, BAKAMLA, and professional training of its workforce. Also in 2019, the USCG partnered with BAKAMLA on a multilateral engagement for regional coast guards on IUU fishing and drug trafficking under the **Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI)**, in which Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam also participated.[64] Finally, the USCG also participates in the annual **Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT)** exercises that bring together navies and coast guards from across the region.[65]

[58] Zhou, L. (2018, Oct 22). *China embarks on first joint naval drills with Asean as US tensions simmer in South China Sea*. South China Morning Post.

[59] Heydarian, R.J. (2019, Sept 5). *US, ASEAN float together in South China Sea*. Asia Times.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Heydarian, R.J. (2019, Sept 22). *ASEAN Wants a U.S. Counterbalance to Chinese Regional Ambitions*. The National Interest.

[62] U.S. Coast Guard. (2015, Jul). *USCG Security Sector Assistance Strategy*.

[63] Searight, A.E. (2020, Mar 10). *Statement before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation*. U.S. Congress.

[64] Erviani, N.K. (2019, Jun 30). *Southeast Asian countries complete maritime law enforcement exercise*. The Jakarta Post.

[65] Veloicaza, C. (2019, Aug 19). *Indo-Pacific Nations Participate in 18th SEACAT Exercise*. US Navy.

ASEAN Initiatives

Maritime security has been a primary concern of the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)** since its founding. At the 15th ARF session in Singapore in 2008, a concept paper was presented by the Indonesian delegation for the establishment of an **ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ARF ISM-MS)**, in order "to provide a venue for ARF to discuss further, identify, and coordinate ARF's maritime security efforts."[66] The ARF ISM-MS has since taken the leadership role in producing maritime security work plans for the ARF and sharing maritime security-related information and resources.

The aim of the ongoing negotiations for an **ASEAN-China South China Sea Code of Conduct (COC)** is to provide a legally-binding framework that will govern safe navigation in the South China Sea as well as standardized, agreed-upon mechanisms for maritime conflict resolution. The COC is meant to replace the largely political **Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)**, which was signed in 2002 but has had a negligible impact on the levels of trust between claimant states or their conduct in the South China Sea. In 2018, major progress was made when the ASEAN members and China agreed on a Single Draft Negotiating Text (SDNT) that would serve as the basis for negotiations, and set a deadline for finalization of the Code of Conduct in 2021.[67] However, these negotiations have stalled due to the contracting parties' disagreements over key issues, such as whether or not the COC should be legally binding and what mechanisms should be used for settling disputes that arise from its implementation.[68]

Policy Recommendations

7	# Information Operationalization
	Streamlining the translation of maritime domain information into concrete operations

INL should encourage its partners in the region to pursue the common goal of **operationalized maritime security, with a suite of complementary tools and processes** that integrate well and help fill gaps in individual states' security postures. One solution is to improve the tactical grid by better connecting disconnected nodes of information. **Setting up hotlines, liaison offices, and systems of prior notice for major operations** between the task forces of different countries would facilitate greater domain awareness and unity of effort in combating transnational crime. More technical measures may include improvements across a wide range of capacities such as **data storage, processing power, and technology stacks at individual fusion centers** and their functionalities.

---

[66] ASEAN Regional Forum. *Concept paper for the Establishment of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on MS).* Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
[67] Yong, C. (2018, Aug 2). *Asean, China agree on text to negotiate Code of Conduct in South China Sea.* The Straits Times.
[68] Quang, N.M. (2019, Jun 29). *Saving the China-ASEAN South China Sea Code of Conduct.* The Diplomat.

In the domain of maritime security, information operationalization refers to the process of analyzing incoming information about real or potential security threats and using that information to address security risks in real time. Having an NMSPOC or multinational fusion center that tracks a wide range of threat actors across a broad area is the crucial first step in this process, but operationalizing information runs deeper than examining the threat landscape through the use of detection capabilities. It requires getting critical information to the relevant implementing agencies in a timely manner and in a concise format, so that this information can directly inform real-time operations in the field.

One successful example is the Malacca Straits Patrol, which coordinates sea patrols while facilitating the sharing of information between ships and their naval operational centers of different countries.[69] As a result, piracy and armed robbery have decreased significantly in the region which is testament to the efficacy of intricate naval exercises and regularly scheduled combined law enforcement actions. This partnership integrates both sea- and air-based assets for coordinated multinational patrols, as well as maintains an information-sharing system that directly informs operations. This coordination and distribution of effort allows participating states to magnify the impact of their scarce law enforcement resources, minimize duplication of effort and false alarms, and maintain a more comprehensive picture of the regional threat landscape. In addition, from March 2018, hotlines between China and a number of ASEAN member states formulated an extension of the Malacca Straits Patrol which allowed Chinese search-and-rescue teams to assist Malaysian authorities in the rescue of an overturned dredging vessel in the Malacca Strait.[70]

8 Expanded Joint Exercises
Increasing the participation of national coast guards in bi- and multilateral joint exercises

The United States' increasing focus on great power competition with China has in some ways drawn attention away from the significance of U.S. engagement with Southeast Asia and other partners in the Indo-Pacific for reasons other than containing China's rise. The U.S. Coast Guard's recent moves to step up engagement with allies and partners in the region has been warmly welcomed, with particular emphasis being placed on the increasing frequency and visibility of bilateral and multilateral coast guard engagements.[71] The capabilities and resources of regional coast guards remain insufficient to meet the rising security challenges described earlier in this report, and the U.S. is ideally positioned to support the growth and development of regional maritime law enforcement capacities through joint exercises and operations.

---

[69] MINDEF Singapore. (2018, May 31). Fact Sheet: The Malacca Straits Patrol.
[70] ASEAN. (2018, March 27-28). Co-Chair's Summary Report, 10th ASEAN Regional Forum: Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security. Brisbane, Australia.
[71] Searight, A. E. (2020, March 10). *U.S. Coast Guard cooperation with Southeast Asia: Maritime Challenges and Strategic Opportunities*. Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Though navy-to-navy cooperation is an important part of the maritime security puzzle in the South China Sea as elsewhere, in this highly-contested region, coast guard-to-coast guard cooperation is just as important – or even more so. For one, coast guard cooperation is perceived as a "safe space" for countries like Vietnam and the Philippines, where naval cooperation remains sensitive; for another, it enhances the littoral countries' ability to combat "grey zone" coercion by the Chinese Coast Guard and so-called "maritime militias" without triggering a military confrontation.[72] Finally, inter-coast guard cooperation with U.S. involvement and guidance can mitigate regional stakeholders' instincts to follow in China's stead and militarize their coast guards, treating them as a tool for asserting sovereignty rather than fighting maritime crime. China's aggressive use of its coast guard and "maritime militias" for grey-zone coercion in contested territory have fundamentally reshaped many of the littoral states' outlooks on the nature and purpose of a coast guard.[73] It therefore falls to the U.S. (and its allies, see below) to continue to strongly encourage the non-violent, non-coercive resolution of territorial disputes; the building of coast guard capacities towards better maritime law enforcement and greater cooperation; and the observation of international laws and norms regarding maritime security and conduct at sea.

The majority of U.S. joint exercises in the region have been navy-to-navy, with the notable exceptions of the annual SEACAT and SEAMLEI joint exercises. These multilateral initiatives bring together regional coast guards (and, in the case of SEACAT, navies as well) for extensive professional exchange and hands-on training. These opportunities are designed to enhance individual countries' MLE capacities, facilitate information-sharing, and enable seamless cooperation across the broadest possible spectrum of MLE agencies.[74] Therefore, INL should **encourage the incorporation of coast guards and other MLE agencies into bilateral and multilateral joint exercises and operations**.

It is highly likely that any U.S. efforts to play a larger role in MLE capacity-building in the South China Sea will be perceived by some as an attempt to thwart China's interests in the region. However, by placing emphasis on the crime-fighting aspect of regional coast guards' mandate, the US can make a credible case (supported by its allies and partners in the region) that these joint exercises and operations are intended to increase stability and prosperity in the region, not to threaten China.

---

[72] Ibid.
[73] Morris, L. (2017, Mar 8). *The Era of Coast Guards in the Asia-Pacific is Upon Us.* RAND Corporation.
[74] Erviani, N. K. (2019, June 30). *Southeast Asian countries complete maritime law enforcement exercise*. The Jakarta Post.

9 Donor State Coordination

Improving coordination among donor states to maximize impact and avoid inefficiencies

A recurring theme has been that strengthened and expanded partnerships are at the heart of increasing maritime security in the South China Sea. This report expands that concept of cooperation to mean not only partnerships between the US and the Southeast Asian nations, but partnerships with other "donor states" – those in a position to offer assistance and support. Established donors – members of the OECD such as Australia, Japan, and the UK – have historically been the chief sources of foreign aid and capacity-building assistance to the region.[75] However, in recent years, emerging powers such as China and India have shifted the balance, as the 2008 global financial crisis forced traditional donors to exercise fiscal restraint. These new donors have prioritized infrastructure spending over other forms of assistance – and placed less of an emphasis on good governance.[76]

In recent years, several major OECD donors have offered vessels to Southeast Asian states seeking to bulk up their MLE assets. In 2015, the US handed over two new ships to the Philippine navy to boost its maritime security capabilities, in addition to the two USCG cutters it already possessed.[77] In 2017, the USCG delivered a high-endurance cutter and six patrol boats to the Vietnamese Coast Guard for maritime law enforcement and search-and-rescue operations.[78] In 2019, it was announced that Vietnam would receive another coast guard cutter sometime in 2020 to "improve the Vietnam Coast Guard's Maritime Domain Awareness."[79] Japan, which has its own Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy that closely mirrors that of the Pentagon, is also a major contributor to maritime security capacity-building in the region. Over the past few years, it has donated patrol boats, maritime surveillance aircraft, and spare helicopter parts to the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia, and even offered the latter anti-submarine aircraft.[80] Australia has provided substantial military aid to several of its nearest neighbors, most notably five vessels delivered to the Philippine navy in 2015-2016.[81]

Coordination advocates argue that the profusion of donor states and agencies can cause problems for donors and recipients alike. For example, donor states often focus on the same needs in a country or domain, and may duplicate each other's efforts in the absence of coordination. In addition, experts argue that a donor trend toward supporting higher numbers of lower-value projects dilutes the

[75] Jimbo, K. (2015, Apr 1). *Japan-US-Australia Cooperation on Capacity Building in Southeast Asia*. From *US-Japan-Australia Security Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges*, ed. Yuki Tatsumi. Stimson Center.

[76] Stromseth, J.R. (2012, October 24). *The New Face of Foreign Aid in Asia*. The Asia Foundation.

[77] Parameswaran, P. (2015, November 18). *US Gives the Philippines 2 New Vessels Amid South China Sea Tensions*. The Diplomat.

[78] Reuters. (2017, May 26). *U.S. delivers ship to Vietnam coast guard*.

[79] Olson, W. (2019, November 20). *US to give Vietnam another coast guard cutter amid rising tensions in South China Sea*. Stars and Stripes.

[80] Yeo, M. (2019, May 31). *Much to China's ire, Japan's regional influence is becoming the norm*. Defense News.

[81] Parameswaran, P. (2016, March 28). *Australia Gives the Philippines Another Military Boost*. The Diplomat.

impact of assistance and aid, neglecting activities that have high fixed costs and are more efficient on a larger scale such as basic infrastructure improvements and technical empowerments.[82] Donor state engagement in the South China Sea is further complicated by political tensions – not only between regional states, but in the broader context of U.S. geostrategic competition with China. As the standoff between Washington and Beijing intensifies, attempts by donor states allied or aligned with the U.S. to build maritime security capacity in Southeast Asia may well be perceived as attempts to "create rival blocs, deepen fault lines or force countries to take sides."[83] In fact, several Southeast Asian states have expressed deep concern about this possibility, with regional leaders from Singapore, Indonesia, and even Australia warning foreign powers against treating engagement in the Indo-Pacific as a derivative of great power competition.[84] Therefore, while bilateral capacity-building activities have value, "there is growing momentum to connect such efforts through **cooperative frameworks such as bilateral-plus-one (i.e., Japan-US-ASEAN, Japan-Australia-ASEAN, and US-Australia-ASEAN) and trilateral-plus-one (such as Japan-US-Australia-ASEAN)**."[85] These multilateral fora offer donor states opportunities to engage the Southeast Asian nations on their own terms, as well as to coordinate more closely with each other to maximize impact.

Though respective approaches to maritime security capacity-building differ in Washington, Tokyo, and Canberra, increasing effort is being made to share operational concepts. During President Obama's 2014 visit to Tokyo, the United States and Japan released a joint *Fact Sheet: U.S.-Japan Global and Regional Cooperation*, which highlighted the potential for bilateral cooperation in Southeast Asia. This was reiterated at the 2013 **U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee Meeting**, with a specific emphasis on collaboration to build the littoral states' maritime domain awareness and maritime security capabilities. The **Japan-Australia Summit Meeting** also highlighted the importance of regional capacity-building. The joint statement *Special Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century* emphasized not only bilateral, but trilateral security cooperation including the U.S. Finally, the media release from the **US-Japan-Australia Trilateral Summit Meeting** identified "trilateral exercises, maritime security capacity building and maritime domain awareness" as some of the key objectives of trilateral engagement in the region in the 21st century.

The European Union has also demonstrated a strong commitment to collective security and stability in Southeast Asia, with security cooperation between the EU and ASEAN growing substantially since the turn of the century.[86] The two regularly hold **EU-ASEAN High-Level Maritime Security Dialogues**, though the former is still perceived as a peripheral actor in the region.[87] In the ARF, the EU co-chairs (with Vietnam and Australia) the Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security. The **ASEAN-**

[82] Emmanuel Fort and Javier Santiso. (2010). *Crushed Aid: Why is Fragmentation a Problem for International Aid*. Vox Europe.

[83] Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in his keynote address at the Shangri-La Dialogue, 31 May 2019.

[84] Stromseth, J. (Oct 2019). *Don't Make Us Choose: Southeast Asia in the throes of US-China rivalry*. Brookings Institution.

[85] Jimbo, K. See above.

[86] Grare, F. (2019, Jun 3). *Defining New Grounds for Cooperation Between the EU and ASEAN*. Carnegie Endowment for Peace.

[87] Ibid.

EU Working Plan of Action 2018-2022 lists several concrete examples of ongoing security cooperation efforts, though these remain largely at the sub-strategic level.[88]

Finally, the **ARF** is arguably the most inclusive and impactful forum for cooperation and coordination, since it includes not only the ASEAN states and OECD partners such as the U.S., Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, and the European Union, but also "emerging powers" such as India, Russia, and (most importantly) China.[89] INL could do more to **leverage these fora for coordination and cooperation among donor states**, not only in the setting of overarching policy priorities but in the implementation of concrete joint initiatives.

---

[88] Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN-EU Working Plan of Action 2018-2022.*
[89] A list of major ARF meetings and events in FY2020 relating to maritime security is provided in the Appendices of this report, including dates, locations, and points of contact. It should be noted, however, that this schedule is likely to be significantly altered due to the global outbreak of the coronavirus and the resulting restrictions on work and travel. See Appendices section A: Tables. Also available on the ASEAN Regional Forum website.

A Note on COVID-19 and Recent Developments in the South China Sea

Southeast Asia has been hit hard by Covid-19, with Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines all suffering major outbreaks.[90] Simultaneously, China has been conducting military drills and deploying large-scale military assets to the South China Sea, as well as making strides in the exploitation of energy resources in disputed waters.[91] This bodes ill for the security interests of the littoral states and for regional stability as a whole. It also makes INL's task of improving maritime security cooperation – *including* with China – all the more urgent and necessary.

The Philippines and Malaysia have both placed their capitals under weeks-long, military-enforced lockdowns; Rodrigo Duterte and top Filipino security officials including Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana are in self-imposed quarantine; and AFP chief General Felimon Santos Jr. has tested positive for the virus.[92] Our own forces in the region have not been spared: last month, the virus was detected on board the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, which had made a port call in Vietnam. As of this writing, 660 of the sailors on board have tested positive and one has died.[93]

In late February and early March, just as the virus struck the Western world, Beijing conducted its most successful extraction of natural gas within a single day in the northern region of the South China Sea.[94] Presenting itself as a global leader at a time of crisis, China has engaged in "mask diplomacy" while simultaneously conducting major anti-submarine and aircraft carrier drills in contested territory.[95] Since the outbreak, Beijing has also announced the construction of new "research stations" on military bases on Fiery Cross Reef and Subi Reef, landed military aircraft on Fiery Cross Reef, and deployed maritime militias around the Spratly Islands.[96]

On 2 April 2020, a Vietnamese fishing vessel sank after contact with a Chinese Coast Guard maritime surveillance ship near the disputed Paracel Islands.[97] The episode – the second this year – has heightened tensions between the two most vocal claimants to disputed territories in the South China Sea, both active participants in the ongoing ASEAN-China Code of Conduct negotiations. Shortly thereafter, the State Department issued a strongly-worded statement expressing its concerns about

---

[90] Google News Covid-19 Statistics Tracker.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Heydarian, R.J. (2020, Apr 1). *China seizes Covid-19 advantage in South China Sea*. The Asia Times.

[93] Ali, I. & Stewart, P. (2020, Apr 16). *Most sailors testing positive for COVID-19 on the USS Theodore Roosevelt showed no symptoms of infection*. Reuters.

[94] Ibid.

[95] The state media even went so far as to portray these exercises as part of the state's fight against the pandemic: "[A]n aircraft carrier is a large warship with many people concentrated in its cabins, making it vulnerable to infectious diseases. Being able to successfully conduct related missions indicated that the Liaoning has done a great job in controlling the epidemic," according to Beijing-based naval expert Li Jie. Quoted in the Chinese state-sponsored *Global Times*.

[96] Rajagopalan, R.P. (2020, Apr 10). *The Danger of China's Maritime Aggression Amid COVID-19*. The Diplomat.

[97] From the official Vietnamese statement regarding the incident by Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative Le Thi Thu Hang on 4 April and the official Chinese statement by Foreign Ministry representative Hua Chunying on 3 April.

China's behavior, and further noted that this was "the latest in a long string of PRC actions to assert unlawful maritime claims and disadvantage its Southeast Asian neighbors in the South China Sea."[98] In a rare public rebuke of Beijing, the Philippines Ministry of Foreign Affairs also came out with a statement of solidarity with Viet Nam regarding the incident.[99] The Jokowi administration has also taken note of the Chinese maritime militias which have been harassing Indonesian fishermen around the Natuna Islands.[100] Though Jakarta has not been keen to raise the issue via political or diplomatic channels, the leadership of the Indonesian armed forces have publicly expressed frustration at Beijing's activities.[101]

The increasingly fraught political and security context in the South China Sea will further complicate US efforts to strengthen MDA and bolster maritime security cooperation to combat transnational crime in the region. However, the U.S. State Department can offer critical support to its allies and partners in these uncertain times. While progress at the strategic level is unlikely in the current political climate, the sense of urgency and vulnerability prompted by this global crisis can also be leveraged by INL to rally regional stakeholders behind a common cause: combating transnational crime.

---

[98] From the official US statement by State Department representative Morgan Ortagus on 6 April.
[99] Rajagopalan, see above.
[100] Yulisman, L. (2020, Jan 9). *Jokowi visits Natuna Islands as stand-off with China continues*. The Straits Times.
[101] In an editorial for *The Jakarta Post,* Kornelius Purba writes: "For millions of Indonesians, China's diplomat has crossed the line by openly challenging Indonesia's territorial integrity. Their pride as a nation has been wounded, for right or wrong reasons. 'China can easily do it to smaller members of ASEAN, but not with us', was the common reaction of Indonesians on social media." (2020, Jan 6). *China playing with fire over claim on Natuna waters*. The Jakarta Post.

Conclusion

Focusing on crime in the maritime domain, **this report identified insufficient maritime domain awareness (MDA) as an overarching problem that hampers maritime law enforcement and undermines regional security.** Improving MDA will help the littoral states develop a more comprehensive picture of the threat landscape, identify trends, and coordinate their efforts to detect, interdict, and deter transnational crime. However, the complex and multi-layered nature of MDA requires a similarly multidimensional approach to assistance, as an uncoordinated or disorganized approach runs the risk of overwhelming partners and even increasing inefficiency.

This report identified three lines of effort for INL engagement with regional stakeholders to improve and operationalize MDA in an organized manner: 1) Build national MDA capacity through national fusion centers, or National Maritime Single Points of Contact (NMSPOCs); 2) Foster regional MDA through multinational fusion centers; and 3) Strengthen maritime law enforcement cooperation through joint operations and exercises. These policy recommendations focused on increasing human cooperation and the effectiveness of existing tools and institutions, rather than introducing new technological assets, in the belief that this approach will be more cost-efficient in the short term and operationally effective in the long term.

To ensure unity of effort, it is crucial to maintain close communication with regional counterparts through country teams, regional offices and liaisons, especially given the high sensitivity of the South China Sea regarding sovereignty disputes. It is also essential that INL – if it agrees with this approach – communicate the strategy broadly to its regional offices and to all of its implementers. Barring a clear vision, INL's implementers (be they IOs, private sector contractors, or other government agencies) may be tempted to provide the training and equipment that they are most familiar and comfortable with, which erodes the unity of effort needed to achieve the goal of a wider regional MDA.

By promoting cooperative relations among the regional nations in maritime law enforcement and synchronizing the engagement within the agencies and the donors, INL **can leverage its resources and expertise** to increase the law enforcement capabilities of individual littoral states, and **demonstrate the value of increased cooperation and foster a networked approach to regional security in the South China Sea.**

Acknowledgements

Appendices

State of National Coast Guards/Equivalent Agencies in Southeast Asia[102]

Country	Coast Guard/Equivalent	Date Founded	Host Organization
Brunei	Marine Police	1921 (RBPF Founding)	Royal Brunei Police Force
Cambodia	N/A, managed by Royal Cambodian Navy (RCN)	N/A	N/A
Indonesia	BAKAMLA	2015	Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs
Malaysia	Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA)	2005	Ministry of Home Affairs
Laos	N/A, managed by Laos Navy	N/A	N/A
Myanmar	N/A, managed by Myanmar Navy	N/A	N/A
Philippines	Philippines Coast Guard (PCG)	1967	Department of Transportation
Singapore	Police Coast Guard	1992	Singapore Police Force
Thailand	N/A, Coast Guard Squadron operates under Royal Thai Navy	N/A, 1992	N/A, Royal Thai Navy
Timor-Leste	N/A, managed by naval component of Falintil-FDTL	N/A	N/A
Vietnam	Vietnam Coast Guard (VCG)	2013 (previously Vietnam Marine Police, 1993)	Ministry of National Defense

---

[102] Parameswaran, P. (2019, February). Managing the Rise of Southeast Asia's Coast Guards. The Wilson Center.

Overview of Major Upcoming ARF Maritime Security-Related Events, FY2020[103]

Name of Event	Location	Tentative Date(s)	Contact(s)
6th ARF Open-Ended Study Group on CBMs to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs	Tokyo, Japan	21 Apr 2020	ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat Email: myasean@kln.gov.my ASEAN-Singapore National Secretariat Email: MFA_ASEAN_Singapore@mfa.gov.sg ARF ISM on ICTs Desk Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Email: arf-ism-icts.japan@mofa.go.jp
ARF Defence Officials Dialogue (DOD)/ ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence-Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD)	Honolulu, HI, USA	27-28 Apr 2020	ASEAN- Viet Nam National Secretariat Email: asean.mfa@mofa.gov.vn; asean.mfa.vn@gmail.com Ministry of Defence of Viet Nam Email: thanganh1482@gmail.com Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs US Department of State Email: ColemanCA@state.gov; schmidtag@state.gov

---

103 Available on the ASEAN Regional Forum website. This schedule is likely to change due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and ensuing restrictions on travel and gatherings in groups.

ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Mitigation Part 1 & 2	Guam, USA	11-15 May 2020	Directorate for ASEAN Political-Security Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia Email: arf.indonesia@kemlu.go.id Asia Regional Division New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs Email: Thomas.Appleton@mfat.govt.nz Office of Multilateral Affairs, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs US Department of State Email: ColemanCA@state.gov
ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Mitigation Part 3	New Zealand	7-10 Jul 2020	Directorate for ASEAN Political-Security Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia Email: arf.indonesia@kemlu.go.id Asia Regional Division New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs Email: Thomas.Appleton@mfat.govt.nz Office of Multilateral Affairs, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs US Department of State Email: ColemanCA@state.gov
14th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons Meeting	Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar	TBD	ASEAN-Myanmar National Secretariat Email: dgasean@gmail.com Department of Asian Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China Email: li_xinbo@mfa.gov.cn

17th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime	Auckland, New Zealand	TBD	ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat Email: myasean@kln.gov.my ARF Team, European Union Email: ARF-TEAM@eeas.europa.eu Asia Regional Division New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs Email: Thomas.Appleton@mfat.govt.nz
3rd ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation	Alicante, Spain	TBD	ASEAN-Viet Nam National Secretariat Email: asean.mfa@mofa.gov.vn; asean.mfa.vn@gmail.com Australia-ASEAN Desk Email: australia.asean@dfat.gov.au ARF Team, European Union Email: ARF-TEAM@eeas.europa.eu
12th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security	Alicante, Spain	TBD	ASEAN-Viet Nam National Secretariat Email: asean.mfa@mofa.gov.vn; asean.mfa.vn@gmail.com Australia-ASEAN Desk Email: australia.asean@dfat.gov.au ARF Team, European Union Email: ARF-TEAM@eeas.europa.eu
ARF Workshop on Maritime Law Enforcement Promoting Comprehensive Approach to Address Maritime Crimes	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	TBD	ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat Email: myasean@kln.gov.my ARF Team, European Union Email: ARF-TEAM@eeas.europa.eu

17th ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC)	Vietnam	Q2 of 2020	ASEAN-Viet Nam National Secretariat Email: asean.mfa@mofa.gov.vn; asean.mfa.vn@gmail.com Ministry of Defence of Viet Nam Email: thanganh1482@gmail.com
ARF Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)	Vietnam	Q2 of 2020	ASEAN-Viet Nam National Secretariat Email: asean.mfa@mofa.gov.vn; asean.mfa.vn@gmail.com
27th ASEAN Regional Forum	Vietnam	Q3 of 2020	ASEAN-Viet Nam National Secretariat Email: asean.mfa@mofa.gov.vn; asean.mfa.vn@gmail.com

Overview of National Fusion Centers (NMSPOCs) in Southeast Asia

Thailand - Thai-MECC

Thailand's **Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC)** coordinates between the six main Thai maritime agencies: the Royal Thai Navy, Marine Police, Fisheries Department, Marine Department, Custom Department, and Maritime and Coastal Environment Department.[104] Thai-MECC was first established in 1997, but underwent restructuring in 2019 with its focus changing from 'coordination' to a more 'command' centred approach.[105] The original Thai-MECC had faced many problems with coordination in part due to inter-agency competition over jurisdiction. The restructuring included hierarchical changes that have given Thai-MECC clear authority over other agencies, doing away with jurisdictional ambiguity and disagreements. The Thai-MECC is now chaired by the Prime Minister of Thailand directly, with the Navy's Commander in Chief as Deputy Director.[106]

Thai-MECC's objective is to collect, analyze and share maritime information, to coordinate the prevention, protection and suppression of illegal activities at sea, and to assist search and rescue operations at sea. The backbone of Thai-MECC is its Maritime Information Sharing Center (MISC), which gathers information from different agencies' platforms, analyzes the information, and disseminates intelligence across agencies. The MISC also has existing international and regional collaborations for information sharing with: the U.S. Navy Combined Maritime Forces Central Command, the IFC and ReMIX, ReCAAP, the Malacca Straits Patrol, and the ASEAN Info-Sharing Portal. Thai-MECC also has command centers for specific maritime crimes, with a Command Center Combating Illegal Fishing (CCCIF), and multi-disciplinary task forces to tackle human trafficking and forced labour in the fishing industry.

Indonesia - BAKAMLA

The **Indonesian Maritime Security Agency** (Indonesian: *Badan Keamanan Laut Republik Indonesia*, or **BAKAMLA***)* was formed in 2014 by President Joko Widodo as a non-ministerial government institution which reports directly to the President through the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs. Bakamla is mandated to coordinate all the law enforcement agencies at sea. Its function ranges from conducting monitoring and patrol in the country's water to establishing national policies for maritime safety and security. Furthermore, Presidential Regulation No. 178 (2014) grants BAKAMLA the authority to, among other things, "synergize the information system of security and safety in the territorial waters of Indonesia and the jurisdiction of Indonesia."

Before 2014, BAKAMLA was a non-structural institution known as the Coordinating Agency for the Security of the Republic of Indonesia (**BAKORKAMLA**). Though its top leadership is selected from the Indonesian Navy (and uses a similar ranking system), the agency is not under the control of, and is

---

[104] *Thai-MECC presentation to the ASEAN Regional Forum* (2019, January)
[105] Scott, E. (2019, October 22) *From coordination to command: making Thailand's maritime security governance more efficient?*. Safe Seas.
[106] Bangkok Post. (2019, September 14). *Maritime body restructured to tackle IUU*.

not associated with, the Indonesian National Armed Forces. Most BAKAMLA candidates are trained at the Marine Safety and Security Academy (AKKL) in Surabaya. BAKAMLA is also not associated with the **Indonesia Sea and Coast Guard (KPLP)**, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and is responsible for ensuring the safety of shipping within the Indonesian Maritime Zone. However, the two agencies have similar roles and functions.

When President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo swore in the new chief of BAKAMLA in February 2020, he stated that he envisioned BAKAMLA as the Indonesian coast guard rather than merely a coordinating body for the country's maritime security agencies. With at least a dozen different national agencies responsible for maritime security affairs in the country, it should surprise no one to hear that even with the creation of BAKAMLA, coordination continues to be a challenge. The newly-inducted chief of BAKAMLA acknowledged that there was an issue of overlapping authority among state institutions as well as laws concerning maritime affairs. It appears that Jokowi intends to continue his streamlining efforts by merging the KPLP and BAKAMLA to form a new unified Indonesian Coast Guard in the 2020-2024 timeframe.

Philippines - NCWC

The **National Coast Watch Council (NCWC)** runs the National Coast Watch System (NCWS) which is established by the support of Australia and the US as an inter-agency coordination mechanism on maritime security to enhance the operational readiness in the country's maritime domain.[107] NCWC is the central inter-agency body producing policy guidelines and strategies for the NCWS. The NCWS is chaired by the Executive Secretariat, which consists of members of various agencies: Transportation and Communications, National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Interior and Local Government, Justice, Energy, Finance, Environment and Natural Resources, and Agriculture.[108]

The policies formulated by NCWC are facilitated by the National Coast Watch Council Secretariat which provides technical and administrative support. At operational level, the **National Coast Watch Center** (also NCWC) which was established in 2015 by the US (DTRA) assistance conducts maritime security operations under the 24/7 monitoring system of Philippine maritime domain in accordance with the strategy and policy guidance issued by the Council.[109] The Center's fundamental tasks are categorized into four areas: surveillance, MDA; planning and coordination; and detection, response and recovery.[110] The monitoring is conducted at four CWS stations equipped with radars, an Automated Information System (AIS), UHF-band radios, high-powered binoculars, and infrared and color cameras.[111]

---

[107] Rabasa, A., & Chalk, P. (2012). *Non-Traditional Threats and Maritime Domain Awareness in the Tri-Border Area of Southeast Asia: The Coast Watch System of the Philippines*. Rand.

[108] Republic of the Philippines the National Coast Watch System. *NCW ORGANIZATION*.

[109] Parameswaran, P. (2017, December 12). *US-Philippines Coast Guard Cooperation in the Spotlight with Coast Watch Center Visit*. The Diplomat.

[110] Republic of the Philippines. (2015, April 28). *Briefer: National Coast Watch Center*.

[111] Rabasa, see above.

Some of the challenges they face are a lack of capacity (i.e. maritime aids to navigation (ATON) and maritime, communications system, and maritime database),[112] a lack of transparency and sometimes tension between the Navy and Coast Guard, and an absence of "command" structure compared to Thai-MECC. The areas of further considerations would be establishing a maritime security strategy which clarifies the role of each maritime agency within the framework[113]. Moreover, their long term aim is to bridge the NCWC with other national or regional MDA centers which will expand coverage of MDA in the regional water.[114]

Singapore - NMSS

The **National Maritime Security Strategy (NMSS)**, unveiled in 2011, represents Singapore's Whole-of-Government approach to maritime security and law enforcement. Within this framework, policy direction is provided by the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), while operations are managed by the five key agencies -- the Republic of Singapore Navy, the Police Coast Guard, the Maritime Port Authority, Singapore Customs, and the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority -- and other partners.[115] The NMSS's main purpose is to use its sense-making processes to harmonise information, assess threats across multiple domains, and coordinate timely operational responses.[116]

The **Singapore Maritime Crisis Centre (SMCC),** established in 2013 as part of the NMSS framework, is staffed by senior officers from a wide array of maritime security agencies tasked with presiding over the formation of the **National Maritime Common Operating Picture (NMCOP)**. It is made up of the National Maritime Sense-making Group and the National Maritime Operations Group. The SMCC has spearheaded efforts to tighten the linkages between Singapore's various maritime security agencies and enhance their interoperability in the key areas of sense-making and threat assessment; doctrine and operations planning; conduct and monitoring of current and future operations; capability development; and conduct of training and exercises.

At the operational level, Singapore has a Navy-led **Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF)**, which was formed in 2009 as part of the restructuring of the Singapore Navy's Coastal Command. Its role is to ensure Singapore's maritime security acts as a data fusion and coordination center for all national maritime agencies. The Commander of the MSTF reports directly to the Chief of Defence Force, but in peacetime the Chief of Navy has oversight over the MSTF's operations. Thus, the MSTF has the ability to co-opt assets from national agencies to facilitate a unified response to maritime security threats. It

[112] Republic of the Philippines Department of Transportation. Ferre, C., E. (2016, December 19). Survey On Maritime Transport Safety.

[113] Edwards, S. (2019, October 15). *Growing, Yet Cautious, Optimism – Maritime Security In The Philippines*. Safe Seas.

[114] Rabasa & Chalk, see above.

[115] Bowers, I. & Koh, S.L.C. eds. (2019). *Grey and White Hulls: An International Analysis of the Navy-Coastguard Nexus.* Palgrave Macmillan.

[116] Singapore Ministry of Defense. (2015, August 5). *Keynote Address by Second Minister for Defence Mr Lui Tuck Yew at the 17th Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO)*.

also works closely with international partners and the shipping community to share maritime information.

Brunei - NMCC

The Royal Brunei Marine Police was first established in 1975 with a little over 40 personnel and is one of the key maritime security arms of the Department of Operations whose mission is to safeguard the territorial waters of Negara Brunei Darussalam.[117] There is limited open source information on the specifics of their operations but the cases handled by the Brunei marine police include theft and robbery, counterterrorism, fisheries management, customs, counter-narcotics, and immigration. Experts have pointed out that in order for the Brunei marine police to move forward they would need acquisition of new assets, new surveillance technology system and upgrading of their marine police base.

In July 2012, the Brunei government signed an MoU through the National Maritime Coordination Centre (NMCC) of the Prime Minister's Office between the government and the Royal Brunei Technical Services to jointly establish the infrastructure and command centre of the **National Coastal Surveillance System**.[118] The NMCC is a project under the Prime Minister's Office established to coordinate, assist, and collate information amongst maritime enforcement agencies in the country to efficiently conduct maritime security monitoring and enforcement with the support of the latest technology system at best value for money. The NMCC, formed in February 2010, is the information-sharing centre for security-related activities in the maritime areas either at the national or regional level. The responsibility of NMCC covers EEZ and territorial waters and the Brunei Bay. This plan was put forward with the understanding that effective surveillance and coordination among the enforcement agencies are critical in ensuring the safety in the maritime zone of the country.

Utilizing the latest technology available at the time, especially coastal surveillance radar and command and control as the key enabler, was one of the core objectives in the management plan of NMCC and technological advancement still remains its key priority. The expectation is that this system would enable NMCC to unite MDA in real-time to be shared with other maritime enforcement agencies and aspire to assist in decision-making and more effective response action in any maritime incidence. Simultaneously, it would also maximize assets used by various agencies to act in a more integrated manner. The establishment of NMCC was a joint effort which took into consideration the interest of many stakeholders including the RBAF, Marine Police, Marine Department, Fisheries Department, Royal Brunei Customs and Excise Department as well as Immigration and National Registration Department.

---

[117] Jumat, Matusin. (2015, December 1). *15th Annual Global MDA: Maritime Security & Coastal Surveillance.* Stream B: Emerging Strategies and Technological Systems for Inter-Agency Cooperation across Asia
[118] Borneo Post (2012, July 11). MoU Signed To Enhance Security In Brunei Maritime Zone.

Malaysia - MECC (formerly)

Malaysia initially set up a Joint Inter-Agency **Maritime Enforcement Coordination Center (MECC)** to serve as its NMSPOC in 1982, run by the National Maritime Coordination Committee. The center coordinated the monitoring and enforcement activities in the Malaysian EEZ especially among the Fisheries Department, the Marine Police, and the Royal Malaysian Navy and Airforce.[119] However, with the formation of the **Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA)** in 2006, the MECC was incorporated into MMEA which has created challenges for other agencies to take part in the MECC.[120] This lack of coordination has undermined the MECC's functions to be a NMSPOC of Malaysia.[121] On 28 April 2017, the MMEA was formally rebranded as the **Malaysia Coast Guard** for international identification purposes.[122] It is not clear what body or bodies currently serve(s) as the country's NMSPOC.

Cambodia - NCMS

To promote institutional capacity and inter-agency coordination on maritime security, Cambodia created the **National Committee on Maritime Security (NCMS)** in December 2009. [123]The center's main missions are to enhance maritime sovereignty and strengthen the enforcement of rules and good order at sea. NCMS is also a national mechanism to facilitate coordination among institutions and ministries working on maritime affairs. There are four operational principles of the NCMS: 1) MDA 2) sustainable protection of national interest at sea 3) deterrence of all maritime threats 4) and rapid response to incidents at sea. To facilitate the joint operation of combined forces, the NCMS has constructed its own frontline command structure located at the Ream Maritime Base. Connecting key institutions such as the maritime forces, national police forces, and officers from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Transport, Fishery Department, Customs, and Ministry of Environment has improved, although with limited resources, to implement a common maritime policy. But it certainly goes without saying that there is an urgent need to further strengthen the capacity of NCMS.

As part of regional cooperation, Cambodia sent mid-level officers to the IFC at Changi naval base in Singapore. In addition, Cambodia has also signed ReCAAP, actively participated in the ASEAN-led cooperation mechanism such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM), ADMM Plus, ASEAN Maritime Forum, and Extended ASEAN Maritime Forum to name a few.[124] At the sub-regional level, it also participates in the Gulf of Thailand (GOT) Maritime Law Enforcement Interoperability Initiatives. Narrowing the capacity gap in maritime security is a key area of regional maritime cooperation that Cambodia is interested in, but the country needs more outside support in strengthening its capacity to address maritime security threats. As it is, MDA and expertise on

[119] Marsh, J. B. (1992). *Resources and environment in Asia's marine sector*. Washington: Taylor & Francis.
[120] Maritime Institute of Malaysia. (2019, March 13). *The National Maritime Single Points of Contact (NMSPOC) – Work-Study Visit to Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-West (JIATF-W) and the Narcotics Task Force (NTF)*.
[121] Sebastian, M. A. (2018, September 25). Agencies need to get organised to fight maritime crime.
[122] Dolbow, J. (2019, February 21). Malaysia Coast Guard Is One to Watch.
[123] Vannarith, C. (2018, May 9). Maritime security: Cambodia's take. *Khmer Times*
[124] Vannarith, C. (2017). *Security Outlook of the Asia Pacific Countries and Its Implications for the Defense Sector.* The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan, Joint Research Series No. 15.

international maritime laws are said to be limited and experts point out that international assistance is needed to enhance national legal frameworks and institutions on maritime affairs.

Vietnam - MSIC

In 2013, Vietnam restructured its Marine Police to become the **Vietnam Coast Guard (VCG)**, directly under the Ministry of National Defense, and established the **Vietnam Fisheries Surveillance Force (VFSF)** under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Both were intended to address the non-traditional maritime security threats with which the littoral country is faced in the South China Sea. However, this study found very little information in the public domain in English regarding Vietnam's domestic maritime security information-sharing and coordination mechanisms. Though one English-language source mentions a **Vietnam Maritime Security Information Centre (MSIC)**, no further information is provided as to this agency's composition, command structure, or operations.

A preliminary study of Vietnamese-language sources in translation suggests that the MSIC was established by Article 8 of Decree 170/2016/ND-CP directly under the Vietnam Maritime Administration, and that its organization and staffing fall under the purview of the Ministry of Transport.[125] The MSIC is responsible for various tasks which require interagency coordination such as disseminating information on anomalies at sea within the national maritime agencies, exchanging information related to maritime security with international organizations. It appears that the MSIC facilitates "maritime security information connection practice," or communications between seaport enterprises, shipping companies, the MSIC, and agencies responsible for preventing and combating terrorism. The rules and regulations for the MSIC's information-sharing and operations are dictated by a series of Prime Ministerial Decisions and government Circulars pertaining to "marine security information."[126]

---

[125] CỤC HÀNG HẢI VIỆT NAM [English: Vietnam Maritime Administration]. (2020, Mar 3). *Cục Hàng hải Việt Nam công bố các quyết định về công tác cán bộ* [English: "The Vietnam Maritime Administration publishes decisions on staffing"].
[126] VietnamBiz. (2020, Jan 7). *Trung tâm Thông tin an ninh hàng hải (Maritime Security Information Centre) là cơ quan nào?* [English: "What is the Maritime Security Information Centre?"].

Overview of Multinational Fusion Centers

Information Fusion Centre (IFC)

The **Information Fusion Centre (IFC)** is a regional maritime security center established by the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) in 2009, aiming to facilitate information sharing and collaboration. The IFC plays a vital role in providing information to international navies, national coast guards and maritime agencies to combat illegal maritime security threats.[127] The IFC has a range of multinational collaborations with 97 International Liaison Officers (ILO) from 41 countries, as well as close connections with the shipping community through quarterly meetings and a Voluntary Community Reporting (VCR) system. The IFC is one of the four Technical Leading Navies of the Trans-Regional Maritime Network (T-RMN), and it works with the **Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Centre** in Italy, the **Maritime Surveillance Information System** of India, and Brazil's **Maritime Traffic Information System** to improve information sharing on a global scope using common platforms such as the Western Pacific Naval Symposium's **Regional Maritime Information Exchange**, the ASEAN **Information Sharing Portal**, and the **Malacca Straits Patrol Information System (MSP-IS)**.

The IFC has played a significant role in regional collaboration on maritime security issues, contributing to a 62% decline in regional incidents of piracy and sea robbery from 200 in 2015 to 76 in 2018, as well as a 92% decline in the Straits of Malacca in the same period. [128] The **Real-Time Information-Sharing System (IRIS)** has integrated IFC major functioning as the information sharing hub in Asia by offering live maritime situation pictures from different sources and stakeholders such as navies, coast guard operation centres, and VCR. However, daily implementation of international obligations creates the possibility of inconsistent interpretation and application of law enforcement for different countries.

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)

The **Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)** was the first government-to-government regional agreement on piracy and robbery at sea in Asia and it entered into force in 2006. ReCAAP has 20 signatory states, as well as links to inter-governmental agencies like the IMO, INTERPOL, and the IFC in Singapore.[129] The ReCAAP Agreement outlines three major types of cooperation: information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements, and it carries out these goals through an Information Sharing Centre (ISC) based in

---

[127] Kitchen, C. & Chapsos, I. (2015) *Strengthening Maritime Security Through Cooperation*. IOS Press.

[128] MINDEF Singapore. (2019, May 14). *Fact Sheet on Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and Launch of IFC Real-Time Information-Sharing System (IRIS)*.

[129] The contracting parties of ReCAAP are as follows: Australia, Japan, Singapore, Bangladesh, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Brunei, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, the UK, the PRC, the Netherlands, the US, Denmark, Norway, Vietnam, India, and the Philippines. ReCAAP also has partnerships with the IMO, INTERPOL, the Asian Shipowners' Association, Bimco, Intertanko, the OCIMF, the IFC and the WMU.

About ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre |combating maritime robbery, sea piracy.

Singapore.[130] The ISC communicates maritime security-related information among contracting maritime parties and holds annual workshops covering international laws, prosecution and emergencies to enhance the capacity building aiming to improve information sharing and practices of piracy and robbery in Asian seas.

In 2018, the ISC was declared a Centre of Excellence for information sharing in combating piracy and maritime armed robbery. In the same year, senior maritime law enforcement and regulatory officers of sixteen countries -- including the US and China -- participated in the Focal Point Senior Officers' Meeting (FPSOM) held by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries in South Korea to discuss measures to counter piracy and sea robbery in Asia. The total incidents of 2018 reported to ReCAAP have decreased by 25% (year over year) to the lowest level in a decade.[131] The ISC has been recognized as a "Centre of Excellence" for information-sharing to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea by the 12th annual Governing Council Meeting. However, only superficial consensus-building has been possible among participating governments, meaning that little progress has been made in terms of operational or tactical cooperation.

International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Center (IMB PRC)

Established in 1992 and funded by donations, the **International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Center (IMB PRC)** based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia is a non-governmental agency under the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). It is the only independent piracy reception center in the world, providing shipmasters and ship operators with 24-hour free service to report piracy, sea robberies and hijacking. The PRC provides services covering piracy and robbery with live reports, warnings, and a **24-Hour Maritime Security Hotline**.

The main goal of the IMB PRC is to raise maritime safety awareness in the shipping industry. The PRC collects information about the ship attacks and robbery in the world as a single point of contact for shipmasters to report piracy and robbery. And shares transparent and timely data with the local law enforcement agencies with international maritime organizations (IMO), governmental, inter-governmental and industry law enforcement bodies for assistance and better understanding of piracy nature. The PRC liaises with response agencies via broadcasts Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) Safety Net Services and alerts Company Security Officers by email.

According to the IMB's latest report, the incidents dropped dramatically in the South China Sea since 2015. Only 3 hijackings were reported off East coast Malaysia in 2017.[132] However, there is no obligatory mandate for shipmasters to report, suggesting the subject matters are mainly based on voluntary choice focusing on commerce and trade.

---

[130] Sun, Zhen. 2016. *Tenth Anniversary of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combatting Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*. Asia-Pacific Journal of Ocean Law and Policy.
[131] Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). *About ReCAAP*.
[132] ICC International Maritime Bureau (2020)

Pacific Fusion Centre

In 2018 Australia announced it will work with its regional partners to support the creation of a new **Pacific Fusion Center.**[133] The new Pacific Fusion Center will provide strategic analysis of information to help strengthen MDA and provide security alerts and advice for Pacific security agencies. It will fuse information from multiple sources, including Australia, to equip Pacific decision makers with the information they need to better identify and respond to security threats, such as illegal fishing, people smuggling and narcotics trafficking. This Pacific Fusion Center still remains in the conceptual stage, and future steps over the creation of the centre have yet to be discussed.

---

[133] Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon Marise Payne. (2018, September 5). *Australia to support new Pacific Fusion Centre*.

Overview of Major Joint Operations and Exercises in Southeast Asia

To compile a comprehensive list of the myriad bilateral and multilateral agreements, treaties, laws, alliances, partnerships, informal arrangements, military relations, and forums which shape interstate interactions in the South China Sea is both beyond the scope of this report and tangential to its purpose: to highlight a few key avenues by which INL can exert a positive influence on maritime security cooperation to combat transnational crime. We therefore focus on the critical juncture between the forums in which there is the greatest engagement by regional states, and those which it is practically and politically feasible for the U.S. to engage.

The Malacca Straits Patrol

The Malacca Straits Patrol was established in 2006 by Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand to ensure the security of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.[134] The framework grew out of the MALSINDO trilateral coordinated patrols initiated in 2004 to combat transnational threats to the littoral states. This effort is widely considered successful, particularly in combating piracy and sea robbery: the total number of attacks dropped from 38 in 2004 to only one in 2011.[135] The initiative has since evolved "in structural, cultural, policy, technological, and relational ways in order to become more effective" in achieving its broader mandate.[136] For example, coordinated sea patrols are now reinforced by the **"Eyes in the Sky" Combined Maritime Air Patrols**, or combined maritime air patrol over the straits using maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) from all participating countries in Combined Mission Patrol Teams to provide air surveillance. Information sharing is conducted via the **Malacca Straits Patrol Information System (MSP-IS)**, a common platform managed by the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) in Singapore, which allows deployed air and sea assets to quickly pass information about an unfolding incident to all Monitoring and Action Agencies (MAAs) on a real-time basis.[137]

Joint Maritime Security Exercises

In 2018, ASEAN and China held their first joint naval exercises involving personnel from all ten ASEAN member states (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar sent observers, but not vessels). The **China-ASEAN Maritime Exercise** – a navy-to-navy operation – was executed off the shore of Zhanjiang, in southern China's Guangdong province.[138] The joint exercise was considered a "milestone" for the PRC's defense diplomacy, as well as China-ASEAN relations. However, this collaboration did not address the long-standing territorial disputes between China and four of the participating ASEAN states

---

[134] Singapore Ministry of Defense. (2015, Apr 21). *Fact Sheet: The Malacca Straits Patrol*.

[135] ICC International Maritime Bureau. *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Report for the Period 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2013*.

[136] Anderson, M. (2016, Feb). *The Malacca Strait Patrol: A Maritime Security Network Analysis*. Leiden University working paper.

[137] Singapore Ministry of Defense. (2015, Apr 21). *Fact Sheet: The Malacca Straits Patrol*.

[138] Li, W. (2018, Oct 23). China, ASEAN begin joint naval drill. *China Daily*.

– Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, and the Philippines – nor did it do much to quell anxieties over the impact that rising U.S.-China tensions would have on Southeast Asia.[139]

China has held at least two other major naval drills with the ASEAN states since 2018. This includes the simulated naval drills in Singapore in August of the same year and the **Joint Maritime Drill** in Qingdao, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC.[140]

In 2019, the United States launched its own inaugural joint naval drills with ASEAN – the **ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX)** – which covered a vast area stretching from the coast of Thailand to Vietnam's Gulf of Tonkin, and down to Singapore.[141] 1,260 military personnel, eight warships, and four aircraft from all ten ASEAN states and the U.S. participated. This exercise coincided with a weeks-long standoff between China and Vietnam over the energy-rich Vanguard Bank and complaints by the Philippine authorities about Chinese "bullying" in the South China Sea.[142] Some perceived these drills as a US attempt to compete more openly with China in the region, though both the US and ASEAN have insisted that they were organized in order to deepen multilateral engagement in the region, including with China.[143]

Besides conducting regular multilateral maritime drills with Southeast Asian countries – as it has for decades – the U.S. also spearheads **bilateral and "mini-lateral" naval exercises** with regional allies such as the Philippines and Thailand, as well as strategic partners such as Singapore and Vietnam. In its recently-released **Indo-Pacific Strategy**, the U.S. Department of Defense emphasized that fostering these relationships -- especially with "key players" such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam -- was "central in our efforts to ensure peace and underwrite prosperity in the Indo-Pacific."[144]

Maritime security cooperation does not stop at participating countries' respective navies. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has played an important role in building the capacities of Southeast Asian coast guards through training and educational opportunities, equipment transfers, and joint exercises. Priority has been given to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam for **USCG Security Sector Assistance** since at least 2015.[145] For the Philippines, this has featured the training of more than 1,500 Philippines Coast Guard personnel and 60 officers per year, in the Philippines and the US; as well as US government funding of the Philippines' NMSPOC, the National Coast Watch Center (NCWC).[146] With Indonesia, the focus has been on enhancing the technical capabilities of its NMSPOC, BAKAMLA, and professional

[139] Zhou, L. (2018, Oct 22). China embarks on first joint naval drills with Asean as US tensions simmer in South China Sea. *South China Morning Post.*

[140] Heydarian, R.J. (2019, Sept 5). US, ASEAN float together in South China Sea. *Asia Times.*

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Heydarian, R.J. (2019, Sept 22). ASEAN Wants a U.S. Counterbalance to Chinese Regional Ambitions. *The National Interest.*

[144] U.S. Department of Defense. (2019, Jun 1). *The Department of Defense Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnership, and Promoting a Networked Region.*

[145] (2015, Jul). USCG Security Sector Assistance Strategy. *U.S. Coast Guard.*

[146] Searight, A.E. (2020, Mar 10). Statement before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation. *U.S. Congress.*

training of its workforce. Also in 2019, the USCG partnered with BAKAMLA on a multilateral engagement for regional coast guards on IUU fishing and drug trafficking under the **Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI)**, in which Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam also participated.[147] Finally, the USCG also participates in the annual **Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT)** exercises that bring together navies and coast guards from across the region.[148]

ASEAN Initiatives

Maritime security has been a primary concern of the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)** since its founding. At the 15th ARF session in Singapore in 2008, a concept paper was presented by the Indonesian delegation for the establishment of an **ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ARF ISM-MS)**, in order "to provide a venue for ARF to discuss further, identify, and coordinate ARF's maritime security efforts."[149] The ARF ISM-MS has since taken the leadership role in producing maritime security work plans for the ARF and sharing maritime security-related information and resources.

The aim of the ongoing negotiations for an **ASEAN-China South China Sea Code of Conduct (COC)** is to provide a legally-binding framework that will govern safe navigation in the South China Sea as well as standardized, agreed-upon mechanisms for maritime conflict resolution. The COC is meant to replace the largely political **Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)**, which was signed in 2002 but has had a negligible impact on the levels of trust between claimant states or their conduct in the South China Sea. In 2018, major progress was made when the ASEAN members and China agreed on a Single Draft Negotiating Text (SDNT) that would serve as the basis for negotiations, and set a deadline for finalization of the Code of Conduct in 2021.[150] However, these negotiations have stalled due to the contracting parties' disagreements over key issues, such as whether or not the COC should be legally binding and what mechanisms should be used for settling disputes that arise from its implementation.[151]

---

[147] Erviani, N.K. (2019, Jun 30). Southeast Asian countries complete maritime law enforcement exercise. *The Jakarta Post.*
[148] Veloicaza, C. (2019, Aug 19). Indo-Pacific Nations Participate in 18th SEACAT Exercise. *US Navy.*
[149] ASEAN Regional Forum. Concept paper for the Establishment of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on MS). *Association of Southeast Asian Nations.*
[150] Yong, C. (2018, Aug 2). Asean, China agree on text to negotiate Code of Conduct in South China Sea. *The Straits Times.*
[151] Quang, N.M. (2019, Jun 29). Saving the China-ASEAN South China Sea Code of Conduct. *The Diplomat.*

Additional Sources

Asean Regional Forum ASEAN. (2018, March 27-28). Co-Chairs' Summary Report 10th Asean Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting On Maritime Security. Retrieved from http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Co-Chairs-Summary-Report-of-10th-ARF-ISM-on-MS-final-ii.pdf

Asean Regional Forum ASEAN. (n.d.). ASEAN Regional Forum Work Plan For Maritime Security 2018-2020. Retrieved from http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ARF-Maritime-Security-Work-Plan-2018-2020.pdf

Association of Southeast Asian Nations. (2019, June 23). *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.* Retrieved from https://asean.org/asean-outlook-indo-pacific/

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon Marise Payne. (2018, September 5). *Australia to support new Pacific Fusion Centre*. Retrieved from https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-release/australia-support-new-pacific-fusion-centre

Bateman, Sam. (2003, January). Coast Guards: New Forces for Regional Order and Security. *East-West Center*. Retrieved from https://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/api065.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=31902

Carr, S., & U.S.Coast Guard. (n.d.). Coast Guard, Navy complete joint fisheries patrol in Oceania. Retrieved from https://www.cpf.navy.mil/news.aspx/110193

Center for Strategic & International Studies: China Power Project (2019, May 21). Are maritime law enforcement forces destabilizing Asia? Retrieved from https://chinapower.csis.org/maritime-forces-destabilizing-asia/

Central Military Commission of Vietnam. (2013). Resolution 806-NQ/QUTW on Defence International Integration and Diplomacy Until 2020 and Beyond.

Chalk, Peter et al. (2009). *The Evolving Terrorist Threat to Southeast Asia: A Net Assessment.* RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG846.html

Chapsos, Ioannis; & Malcolm, James. (2016, December 4). Maritime security in Indonesia: Towards a comprehensive agenda? *Marine Policy* 76: 178-184.

Cheney-Peters, S. (2015, April 1). Joint Patrols and U.S. Coast Guard Capacity. *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*. Retrieved from https://amti.csis.org/joint-patrols-and-u-s-coast-guard-capacity/

Chinese vessels shadow PH-US Coast Guard drills near Panatag. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://globalnation.inquirer.net/175248/chinese-vessels-shadow-ph-us-coast-guard-drills-near-panatag

Coast Guard, Navy Complete Joint Oceania Maritime Security Initiative. (2018, May 1). U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. Retrieved from https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/1509299/coast-guard-navy-complete-joint-oceania-maritime-security-initiative-patrol-in/

Collaborative Innovation Center of South China Sea Studies. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://nanhai.nju.edu.cn/

Council on Foreign Relations. (2014, May 14). *South China Sea Tensions*. Retrieved from https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/south-china-sea-tensions

Cronin, P. M., & Ott, M. C. (2018, February 17). Deepening the US-Indonesian Strategic Partnership. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/deepening-the-us-indonesian-strategic-partnership/

Cronin, P. M.; Kaplan, R. D., & Rogers, W. (2012). Cooperation from Strength. *Center for a New American Security*. Retrieved from https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/cooperation-from-strength-the-united-states-china-and-the-south-china-sea

Cronin, Patrick; & Neuhard, Ryan. (2020, January 8). Total Competition: China's Challenge in the South China Sea. *Center for a New American Security*. Retrieved from https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/total-competition

Damayanti, Angel. (2019, April). Indo-Pacific Maritime Cooperation: ASEAN Mechanisms on Security Towards Global Maritime Governance. *Journal Global & Strategies* 13(1). Retrieved from https://e-journal.unair.ac.id/JGS/article/view/10636

DeRidder, Kim; Nindang, Santi. (2018, March 28). Southeast Asia's Fisheries Near Collapse from Overfishing. *Asia Foundation*. Retrieved from https://asiafoundation.org/2018/03/28/southeast-asias-fisheries-near-collapse-overfishing/

Dillon, D. (2001, May 10). Priorities for Southeast Asian Policy. *The Heritage Foundation*. Retrieved from https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/priorities-southeast-asian-policy

Dutton, Peter. (2014, January 14). China's Maritime Disputes in the East and South China Sea. *U.S. Naval War College*. Retrieved from https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol67/iss3/2/

DW. (2019, October 10). Indonesian minister stabbed by IS-linked couple. Retrieved from https://www.dw.com/en/indonesian-minister-stabbed-by-is-linked-couple/a-50787039

Ebbinghausen, Rodion. (2019, January 14). Terror attacks spotlight growing 'IS' threat in Southeast Asia. *DW*. Retrieved from https://www.dw.com/en/terror-attacks-spotlight-growing-is-threat-in-southeast-asia/a-18538632

Ebbinghausen, Rodion. (2019, October 15). Southeast Asia in the crosshairs of 'Islamic State. *DW*. Retrieved from https://www.dw.com/en/southeast-asia-in-the-crosshairs-of-islamic-state/a-50839626

Eleventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime. (2017, September 20). ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism. Retrieved from http://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ACPoA-on-CT-Adopted-by-11th-AMMTC.pdf

Fravel, M. Taylor. (2011, December). China's Strategy in the South China Sea. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 33(3): 292-319. Retrieved from https://taylorfravel.com/documents/research/fravel.2011.CSA.china.strategy.scs.pdf

Government of Indonesia. (2014). Presidential Regulation No. 178. Retrieved from https://www.global-regulation.com/translation/indonesia/2962989/presidential-regulation-number-178-by-2014.html

Government of Vietnam. (2012, December 20). Government's Decree No. 107/2012/ND-CP defining the functions, tasks, powers, and organizational structure of the Ministry of Transport.

Government of Vietnam. (2016, December 27). Decree 170/2016/ND-CP. Retrieved from http://hethongphapluatvietnam.net/decree-no-170-2016-nd-cp-dated-december-27-2016-regulation-on-announcement-receipt-processing-and-transmission-of-maritime-security-information.html

Government of Vietnam. (2016). Overall Strategy for International Integration Through 2020, Vision to 2030.

Government of Vietnam. (2017). Resolution of the 12th National Party Congress.

Guo, Changgang. (2016, September 17). South China Sea: Pivotal quandaries in controlling piracy. *Foreign Policy News*. Retrieved from https://foreignpolicynews.org/2016/09/17/south-china-sea-pivotal-quandaries-controlling-piracy/

Hofmeister, Wilhelm; and Rueppel, Patrick (eds). (2014). Maritime Security and Piracy: Common Challenges and Responses from Europe and Asia. *EU-Asia Dialogue: Shaping a Common Future for Europe and Asia.* Retrieved from https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=00ca482c-6ebf-8d25-4ac9-cee4c44df207&groupId=252038

Hong, Nong. (2016, June). The South China Sea Dilemma: A Political Game of International Law. *Journal of Political Risk* 4(6). Retrieved from https://www.jpolrisk.com/the-south-china-sea-dilemma-a-political-game-of-international-law/

Hou, L. (2009, August 21). *China, Vietnam hold joint patrol in Beibu Gulf. China Daily.* Retrieved from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/guangxisessions/2009-08/21/content_9393908.htm

Hunt, L. (2012, December 8). U.S. Increasing Military Presence in the Philippines. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2012/12/u-s-increasing-military-presence-in-the-philippines/

International Fusion Centre. (n.d.). About IFC. Retrieved from https://www.ifc.org.sg/ifc2web/app_pages/User/common/aboutus.cshtml

Jenne, N. (2017). Managing Territorial Disputes in Southeast Asia: Is There more than the South China Sea? *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*.

Jumat, Matusin HJ. (2017). Maritime Security as a Joint Responsibility: Building Capabilities Through Multilateral Interaction and Cooperation Between Royal Brunei Marine Police and Other Enforcement Agencies. *Maritime Security & Coastal Surveillance Conference*. Retrieved from http://www.iqpc.com/media/1000532/39088.pdf

Jumat, Supt. Matusin Hj. (2015). Maritime Security as a Joint Responsibility. *Royal Brunei Police Force*. Retrieved from http://www.iqpc.com/media/1000532/39088.pdf

Kim, J. (2015). Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea: Implications for Security in Asia and Beyond. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*.

Kuok, Lynn. (2019, November). How China's Actions in the South China Sea Undermine the Rule of Law. *Brookings*. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-chinas-actions-in-the-south-china-sea-undermine-the-rule-of-law/

Kutin, Nikola; Vallée, Thomas. (2015, April 21). Maritime Issues in Cambodia. Conference paper at National University of Management, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282973671_Maritime_Issues_in_Cambodia

Los Angeles Times. (2016, July 25). Southeast Asian nations give weak rebuke to China over South China Sea dispute. Retrieved from https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-south-china-sea-asean-20160724-snap-story.html

Mahnken, Thomas. (2011, February 21-22). Indo-Pacific Maritime Security in the 21st Century. Conference proceedings, sponsored by the U.S. Naval War College and Lowy Institute for International Policy. *Lowy Institute*. Retrieved from https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/indo-pacific_maritime_security_in_the_21st_century_0.pdf

Maritime Security & Coast Surveillance Indonesia. (2018, April 24-25). Event Report: Safeguarding Indonesian Maritime Sovereignty Through a 360° Active Defence Strategy.

Ministry of Defence of Vietnam. (1998). Vietnam: Consolidating Defence, Safeguarding the Homeland. [Vietnam's first Defense White Paper.]

Ministry of Defence of Vietnam. (2004). Vietnam's National Defence in the Early Years of the 21st Century. [Vietnam's second Defense White Paper.]

Ministry of Defence of Vietnam. (2007). Vietnam's Maritime Strategy Toward the Year 2020.

Ministry of Defence of Vietnam. (2009). Vietnam National Defence. [Vietnam's third Defense White Paper.]

Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Kingdom of Cambodia. (2017, 30 Nov-1 Dec). Cambodian Presentation on Maritime Safety Progress and Challenges. Presented at the Workshop on Strengthening Transport Operational Connectivity among CLMV-T, hosted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

Nampi, DK, & Rajib. (2019, June 18). *ICG co-hosts 12th ReCAAP ISC capacity building workshop in capital from June 19*. Government of India Ministry of Defence. Retrieved from https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=190507

National Government of Brunei Darussalam. (2018, September 17). Integrated Country Strategy: Brunei Darussalam. Retrieved from https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ICS_Brunei_UNCLASS_508.pdf

National Institute for South China Sea Studies. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.nanhai.org.cn/

Pacific Fusion Centre. (2020, March 3). Our Focus. Retrieved from https://www.pacificfusioncentre.org/

Pandjaitan, Luhut. (2017, April 27). Remarks at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

Parameswaran, P. (2016, April 10). US Kicks Off New Maritime Security Initiative for Southeast Asia. *The Diplomat.* Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2016/04/us-kicks-off-new-maritime-security-initiative-for-southeast-asia/

Philippine Daily Inquirer. (2018, December 13). U.S. and Philippine Coast Guards Conduct Maritime Law Enforcement Training. Retrieved from https://ph.usembassy.gov/us-and-philippine-coast-guards-conduct-maritime-law-enforcement-training/

Proceedings from the Conference on Comprehensive Maritime Security Cooperation, hosted by the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. (2019, August 1-28). *Security Dynamics in Regional Seascapes.*

Rajagopalan, Rajeswari Pillai. (2019, November 1). What Does ASEAN's Evolving Approach to the South China Sea Issue Mean for Vietnam? *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/what-does-aseans-evolving-approach-to-the-south-china-sea-issue-mean-for-vietnam/

Ramakrishna, Kumar. (2004, December 19). Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Ideological and Political Dimensions. *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2004: 54-60. Retrieved from https://www.rsis.edu.sg/staff-publication/1034-terrorism-in-southeast-asia/

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre. (2018, June 12). Situation of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia. Retrieved from https://www.recaap.org/resources/ck/files/reports/annual/ReCAAP%20ISC%20Annual%20Report%202018.pdf

Rider, David. (2016, April 21). Malacca Strait Patrols. *Maritime Security Review*. Retrieved from https://www.marsecreview.com/2016/04/malacca-strait-patrols/

Roach, J. Ashley. (2014, August). Malaysia and Brunei: An Analysis of their Claims in the South China Sea. *Center for Naval Analysis*. Retrieved from https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/IOP-2014-U-008434.pdf

Russell, Martin. (2016, December). At a glance: Illegal fishing in south-east Asia. *European Parliamentary Research Service*. Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/dase/dv/dase1412_4c1_/dase1412_4c1_en.pdf

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. (2019, January 24). *Event report: Maritime Domain Awareness.* Retrieved from https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ER190425_Maritime-Domain-Awareness.pdf

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. (2018, July 25). *Event Report: ASEAN Mechanisms for Maritime Security Cooperation – Surveying Priorities*. Retrieved from https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ER181227

Shoji, T. (2012). Vietnam, ASEAN, and the South China Sea: Unity or Diverseness? *NIDS Journal of Defense and Security.*

Singapore Ministry of Defence. (2020, May 14). *Fact Sheet on Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and Launch of IFC Real-Time Information-Sharing System (IRIS)*. Retrieved from https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2019/May/14may19_fs

Spiess, Robin. (2019, July 15). Southeast Asia's modern-day pirate problem. *Southeast Asia Globe*. Retrieved from https://southeastasiaglobe.com/black-spots/

The Borneo Post. (2012). MoU Signed To Enhance Security In Brunei Maritime Zone. Retrieved from https://www.theborneopost.com/2012/07/11/mou-signed-to-enhance-security-in-brunei-maritime-zone/

The Jakarta Post. (n.d.). Southeast Asian countries complete maritime law enforcement exercise. Retrieved from https://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2019/06/30/southeast-asian-countries-complete-maritime-law-enforcement-exercise.html

Ton, Anh Duc (2018, March). Vietnam's Maritime Security Challenges and Regional Defence and Security Cooperation. *Sea Power Centre - Australia*. Retrieved from https://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/CMDR_Anh_Duc_Ton_Vietnams_Maritime_Security_Challenges_0.pdf

U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area. (2016, January). Strategic Intent Fiscal Year 2015-2019. Retrieved from https://www.pacificarea.uscg.mil/Portals/8/Documents/PACAREA%20Strategic%20Intent%20-%202016%20-%20final%20for%20release.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. (2019, June 1). Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region. Retrieved from https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF

U.S. Department of the Navy; U.S. Coast Guard. (2007, October). A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower. Retrieved from https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=479900

US Department of State. (n.d.). *Europe and Asia*. Retrieved from https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/inl/regions/europeasia/index.htm

Valencia, Mark J. (2018, September 17). Maritime Security Cooperation in the South China Sea: Sailing in Different Directions. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/maritime-security-cooperation-in-the-south-china-sea-sailing-in-different-directions/

Walsh, Eddie. (2011, November 1). Brunei Darussalam's National Security Strategy. *Center for Security Studies*. Retrieved from https://css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/133571/pdf

Wu, J. (2019). 论中国在南海政策的转变. *亚太安全与海洋研究*. Retrieved from http://www.charhar.org.cn/newsinfo.aspx?newsid=14705

Wu, Shicun; Zou, Keyuan (eds). (2014). *Non-Traditional Security Issues and the South China Sea.* Retrieved from http://clok.uclan.ac.uk/11784/1/9781409461937

Yang, L. (2018). 中国周边海洋问题：本质、构成与应对思路. *Academy of Ocean of China*. Retrieved from http://aoc.ouc.edu.cn/81/72/c9821a229746/pagem.htm

海洋法的国家实践：对南海地区法律文化共同体的思考. (2017). *中国南海研究院*. Retrieved from http://www.nanhai.org.cn/paper_c/235.html