



“MARITIME THREATS WORKSHOP”

United States Army Pacific’s: Defense Environmental and International Cooperation (DEIC) Workshop

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The United States-Republic of the Philippines strengthened their strategic partnership when representatives of the two countries co-hosted the *Maritime Threats Workshop* held in Cebu, Republic of the Philippines on 26-30 July 2004, focused on promoting multilateral interoperability and cooperation on maritime and environmental issues that foster terrorism; identifying maritime and transnational threats; discussing solutions to these issues; developing maritime protection capabilities; encouraging military support to civil authority; facilitating international and interagency cooperation (to include NGO/IOs); and strengthening the bonds between the military and civilian organizations. The multilateral workshop is the fourth of a series of U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) Defense Environmental Cooperation Conference.

The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations & Environment), the United States Army Pacific (USARPAC), and United States Army War College-Center for Strategic Leadership co-sponsored the workshop hosted by the Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense and conducted in coordination with The Reef Check Foundation, a UN recognized non-governmental organization (NGO). The workshop identified opportunities for regional defense security cooperation in responding to maritime and marine resource threats. This workshop was a follow-up to the December 2003 Defense Environmental and International Cooperation Conference held in Manila, Philippines. The Cebu workshop brought together military and civilian professionals from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and United States including international academicians, governmental and military subject matter experts, and non-governmental organizations.

Maritime Security Challenge in Southeast Asia

In his keynote address, Republic of the Philippines Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASEC) for Policy and Special Concerns, Hon. Alejandro P. Melchor III, described five Southeast Asia maritime security challenges: piracy, maritime terrorism, transnational criminal trafficking operations, refugees and illegal migration, and protecting energy routes. Maritime security is increasingly critical to Southeast Asia’s economy. The globalized, hi-technology world order not only poses new security challenges, but also spawns a host of global transnational threats, which are increasingly maritime in nature. Southeast Asia is the most piracy-prone region. The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) estimates global piracy and sea-robbery losses at \$25 billion per year. Shipping has become a lucrative target because 90-95 percent of world freight is moving by sea, vast areas of the sea are ungoverned/non-policed, and the use of “skeleton crews” on higher tech ships makes them more vulnerable. Another disturbing trend is the emergence of organized pirate gangs featuring multi-ship operations, military tactics, and the increasing use of violence during their attacks. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) recently reported

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a sharp rise in the number of ship crews killed the first half of 2004, twice the corresponding rates of 2003, and the highest number of piracy-related killings in over a decade. Attacks in the Malacca Strait have risen by 33 percent and IMB reports no signs the attacks will abate without “serious steps to address the problem.”

ASEC Melchor discussed the close relationship between terrorism and other transnational threats in the maritime environment. He stated terrorists may be training for attacks on maritime economic targets, including the growing cruise line industry, which provides an alternative venue for mass casualty attacks. Terrorists view an attack in the Strait of Malacca as an opportunity to cause an economic crisis.

Maritime transnational threats are global in scope, reflect a business-like professional approach and sophistication, and benefit from transnational alliances and networking with criminal groups, terrorists, separatists, and insurgents, and a growing capacity to challenge state governments and economies. Moreover, protection of the maritime domain is growing in importance as world energy consumption is expected to increase 60 percent by 2020 and 93 percent of Asia’s oil will come from the Middle East by 2010. Thus, the role of the military in protecting energy routes, sea-lines of communication, and chokepoints will increase.

ASEC Melchor offered a strategic vision, in which Southeast Asia serves as an economic dynamo, feeding economic growth centers in Northeast Asia, as well as fueling U.S. and other global economies. However, he also warned that terrorism and other marine and maritime security threats could derail this vision. He believes regional militaries must prepare to address transnational challenges, especially maritime threats. He made a clear case for multilateral cooperation, new security mindsets, and an urgent need for a regional framework to address maritime security challenges.

Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI)

A major topic of the workshop was the PACOM Combatant Commander’s Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI). The participants agreed that the globalized, interconnected, and interdependent nature of the world today demands an approach similar to RMSI because it is difficult for single nations to provide for their own security. Delegates discussed several proposals to promote regional multilateral defense cooperation and develop the flexibility necessary to respond to maritime threats.

Unsecured or ungoverned seas are potential havens for transnational threats including criminal or terrorist activity providing relatively inexpensive and inconspicuous movement. The United States and the Southeast Asian states clearly have “shared security interests,” and RMSI provides a plan of action to address these transnational maritime threats. It emphasizes information sharing, providing cueing of emerging threats, contributing to the security of international seas, and most important creating an environment hostile to terrorism and other criminal activities. The RMSI will empower each nation to take the action it deems necessary to protect itself in its own waters, thereby enhancing the region’s collective security. The delegates agreed on the following recommendations:

- Delegates concur with PACOM’s key imperatives to successfully implement the RMSI.
- The ability to secure challenging littoral regions and territorial sea requires established protocols and procedures to integrate coast guard and navy operations eliminating seams at sea.
- Interagency cooperation among a wide array of agencies and ministries is required to synchronize all elements of national and international power in support of regional maritime security activities.
- Delegates emphasized the importance of port security initiatives and security of trade.
- Suggested Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) initiatives be emphasized by the use of existing forums and international/regional programs, where appropriate to address RMSI objectives, in order to avoid establishing additional mechanisms.

- The international shipping industry needs standardized shipping documents and registrations forms. Presently, the forms and information required by each country vary which leads to forgeries. The delegates recommended use of only one state's ministry issue shipping and registration papers instead of the numerous organizations issuing papers today, and that new procedures common to all nations be developed to issue documents and prevent forgery.
- Small Arms trafficking exacerbates internal conflicts in the region emphasizing the need for laws requiring screening of containerized cargo.
- Limited communications and information sharing with other nations in the region hamper maritime security efforts. The countries need common communications equipment and information exchange procedures to facilitate this cooperation.
- A long-term solution to the terrorist threat is to facilitate economic development in robust partnership with the private sector in areas prone to terrorism.
- It is important to raise the level of awareness of the public on maritime threats and transnational threats by working with the research community, NGOs, and the media.
- The delegates recommended the region pursue Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) support and leverage their initiatives for maritime security. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has mechanisms to assist navies to work together conducting confidence-building measures very similar to RMSI without the necessity to call it RMSI.

Maritime Resource and Territorial Seas Protection

The NGO Reef Check Foundation conducted briefings on arsenic and dynamite fishing interdiction methods and establishing “community-based” programs to support local civil authority in protecting the economically and environmentally critical coral reefs and coastal areas. Delegates saw first hand in Cebu the success of Reef Check and Philippine efforts to stop the deterioration of their coastal resources by forming a conservation and education foundation to promote and undertake community, local government, and private sector-based coastal resource management practices. They have established successful marine sanctuaries and other protected areas, conducted research on the coastal environment, and proven the value of governance of coastal resources to the local community and fisherman. To assist their efforts, Reef Check has established many long-term partnerships with businesses such as tourism, diving, and marine aquarium industries. A member of the UN's global coral reef monitoring network, Reef Check brings together and educates government agencies, the private sector, environmental groups, and local community members and empowers them to work together to implement sustainable management of their reefs for future generations. Reef Check teaches and employs a standard, scientifically rigorous method using indicators sensitive to human impact of economic and ecological value to monitor the health and protect coral reefs and coastal areas. They taught workshop delegates how to form and train a reef survey team on their collection of four types of data: site description based on 30 measures of human impacts, measures of seabed coverage by different substrate types, “indicator” fish, and invertebrate counts. Creating community-based teams enhances local governance and builds governmental legitimacy in isolated island regions.

The Way Ahead

A Philippine delegate recommended conducting a workshop to determine a maritime security strategy and exploring the potential of establishing naval patrols in Sulu area with invitations to RP, U.S., Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. Also discussed was another workshop to establish maritime security strategy/naval patrols in Northwest Philippines area with invitations to RP, U.S., Japan, Thailand, India, South Korea, Vietnam, and China. The delegates also proposed that maritime security and RMSI implementation would be good themes for future interagency seminars.

Delegates recommended inserting additional Maritime Security Operations/Maritime Interdiction Operations (MSO/MIO) objectives into existing bilateral and multilateral exercises in the region including CARAT exercise (Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, and U.S.). Offshore facility protection objectives could also be added. Regular Civil Military Operations should be conducted along the patrol routes to establish government presence along the less developed areas of each country. An expanded Multilateral Maritime Defense Cooperation will be required, especially for those countries that share common sea borders, in order to be able to counter the transnational crime, alien smuggling, drugs, and terrorism. A less structured military organization similar to SEATO should be reestablished, to conduct joint maritime patrols with Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET) aboard the respective naval vessels.

Emphasis by the international and interagency community is needed to promote and fund long-term economic development programs by the international community that focus on areas of Southeast Asia that are prone to terrorism and maritime threats.

Delegates discussed private sector cooperation to facilitate RMSI and Joint Interagency Task Force-West assistance and to promote RMSI efforts in the region in coordination with U.S. Embassies and PACOM. Maritime security projects could be added to ongoing civil affairs projects, for example, building facilities for port security or reef protection projects.

Delegates from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand expressed interest in establishing reef monitoring and marine conservation activities for both the military and civilian sectors of their governments. The delegates plan to discuss the Reef Check Foundation program with their government agencies. Delegates offered to determine military and civilian organizations and points of contact in their country to coordinate further cooperative activities. A Philippine delegate suggested including reef monitoring and coastal protection as objectives in a future BALIKATAN military exercise.

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