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MSP PERSPECTIVES



Expanding Maritime Patrols in Southeast Asia

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Attention from various quarters is currently focused on the possible expansion of counter-piracy sea patrols in Southeast Asia. There are several strands and potential modalities to this.

An ASEAN-led Maritime Force?

In March, the Commander of the US Seventh Fleet was reported by media to have mooted the establishment of an “ASEAN-led maritime force” in the South China Sea. His remarks at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition were made during a panel discussion on how to address the spread of piracy to the south-western reaches of the South China Sea.

However, international media reports conflated this with earlier comments suggesting that Japan could in future expand its naval and air presence into the South China Sea, and appeared to infer US support for a more expansive patrol concept for Southeast Asian navies in the context of maritime territorial disputes with China. The ease with which such statements can be taken out of context highlights the difficulty in differentiating issues of maritime security from strategic factors in the South China Sea. This has also reinforced Southeast Asian countries’ caution about embracing maritime security initiatives at a collective level in the South China Sea. As a result, like-minded ASEAN states have tended to pursue maritime capacity building and cooperation bilaterally or mini-laterally.

US efforts to boost maritime security and domain awareness in Southeast Asia are broadly tailored to reflect this patchwork reality, with Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief providing a common denominator template for defence-led engagement across ASEAN’s various multilateral security forums. There is no indication that the US Navy is pushing for a new maritime patrol initiative in the region.

Myanmar MSP observership?

In a separate development, Malaysia’s Defence Minister has invited Myanmar as an observer to the Malacca Strait Patrols (MSP) counter-piracy initiative. Participation until now has been limited to Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Although the coordinated patrols are often credited with containing piracy and armed robbery in the Strait, the paucity of public data on MSP activities makes an empirical judgement about their effectiveness

impossible. Their major operational limitation is that the patrols are coordinated rather than joint, in deference to sovereignty concerns. Given Myanmar’s capabilities, observer status or full membership would be unlikely to contribute much to the MSP’s operational effectiveness. The invitation is nonetheless noteworthy as a nod towards the Indian Ocean, a traditional blind spot for ASEAN and the source of multiple maritime security challenges. Securing Myanmar’s cooperation in the outer approaches to the Malacca Strait could be aimed beyond counter-piracy, to include stemming the seaborne outflux of Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar – a particular concern for Kuala Lumpur. However, Singapore and Indonesia have yet to signal their approval. Singapore’s maritime security focus lies currently to the east.

Piracy patrols east of Singapore?

Singapore has been exploring the possibility of introducing coordinated patrols east of the Singapore Strait including the nearby reaches of the South China Sea. A major shortcoming of the MSP’s geographical limitation is that the deterrent value of the sea patrols does not extend much beyond the Straits themselves. Since piracy is mobile, the threat may be displaced to the South China Sea. Singapore has received support from Malaysia and Vietnam, both of which have broader reasons for cross-bracing maritime security relations with their ASEAN partners in the South China Sea.

However, Indonesia is unlikely to agree to an expansion of the MSP. First, piracy continues to occupy a lower niche in Jakarta’s threat perceptions and would be viewed as a distraction from President Joko Widodo’s ‘Maritime Fulcrum’ aspirations. Second, the MSP remain coordinated rather than joint largely in deference to Jakarta’s reluctance to allow Singaporean or Malaysian vessels to patrol within the portions of the Straits that are Indonesia’s territorial waters.

ASEAN-led naval and maritime security cooperation continues to move forward, though not yet to the level that would support a Southeast Asia-wide joint or coordinated patrol force, or even an expansion of the Malacca Strait Patrols. However, an ad hoc counter-piracy arrangement to cover the south-western South China Sea is within reach for ASEAN’s like-minded.

This item is based on an RSIS commentary published on 7 April 2015.

NAVAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY



Wikimedia Commons, U.S. Department of Defense ([link](#))

VIETNAM | 30 APRIL | REUTERS

Vietnam buys submarine-launched land attack missiles to deter China

Vietnam is arming its expanding submarine fleet with land attack missiles that could be capable of reaching Chinese coastal cities, a choice of weapon likely to be seen as provocative by China in the ongoing South China Sea dispute. A little-noticed filing to the United Nations made by Vietnam last year, and reviewed by Reuters, shows it has bought the Russian-made land attack variant of the Klub missile for its state-of-the-art Kilo attack submarines.

[Full Report](#)

PAKISTAN | 1 APRIL | DAWN

Pakistan to buy eight submarines from China

The Ministry of Defence told a parliamentary committee on Tuesday that eight submarines were being purchased from China to address force imbalance with India. "The National Security Committee has approved, in principle, the acquisition of eight Chinese submarines," Additional Secretary of the ministry Rear Admiral Mukhtar Khan informed the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Defence.

[Full Report](#)

powered attack submarines, just completed by a Chinese shipyard and a waiting delivery.

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CHINA | 3 APRIL | CHINA DAILY

Chinese Navy to get 3 new nuclear subs

Three cutting-edge nuclear-powered attack submarines have been manufactured and will soon be commissioned by the Chinese navy, according to media reports. China Central Television showed a satellite picture earlier this week of three submarines anchored at an unidentified port, saying the vessels are China's most advanced Type-093G nuclear-

INDIA—UNITED STATES | 3 APRIL | REUTERS

U.S. says would back India buying U.S. aircraft carrier technology

The U.S. government would support selling General Atomics' electromagnetic launching system for aircraft carriers, and other key technologies, to India, the Pentagon's chief weapons buyer told Reuters on Friday.

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PHILIPPINES | 5 APRIL | MANILA BULLETIN (PHILIPPINES NEWS AGENCY)

DND postpones bid opening for missile-armed MPACs

Bid opening and submission for the Department of National Defense (DND)'s missile-equipped MPAC (multi-purpose assault craft) is postponed until such time the Department of Budget and Management has

released the funds needed for the project's implementation.

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CHINA | 6 APRIL | WANT CHINA TIMES

Liaoning carrier's main builder now making Type 052D destroyers

A second Chinese shipbuilder has begun construction of the People's Liberation Army's Type 052D destroyer, reports Huanqiu, the Chinese-language website of the nationalistic Global Times tabloid. Citing leaked photos from a military discussion forum, the report said the Dalian Shipbuilding Industry Company in northeast China's Liaoning province is building a Type 052D destroyer and has so far completed the ship's hull.

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INDIA | 6 APRIL | BUSINESS STANDARD

First Scorpene undocks; sea trials next, commissioning in 2016

Kalvari, the first of the Indian Navy's six Scorpene class stealth submarines, was today "undocked" here, paving the way for sea trials and its eventual commissioning in September, 2016. The event was witnessed by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, who warned that for future projects, there will be a penalty for delay and reward for early completion.

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CHINA—THAILAND | 8 APRIL | WANT CHINA TIMES

Beijing offers sweetener for Thailand to buy Chinese subs

China will offer a 10-year loan to Thailand if the latter chooses to acquire Chinese-made submarines over that of its competitors, reports Huanqiu, the Chinese-language website of the nationalistic Global Times tabloid.

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INDONESIA—UNITED STATES | 9 APRIL | ANTARA NEWS

Indonesia, US navies conduct maritime air patrol in Natuna

Indonesian and US navies aircraft conducted a joint maritime air patrol around Natuna waters here on Thursday as part of a Sea Surveillance Exercise 15 to improve the capabilities of the two countries navy personnel.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 18 APRIL | TODAY

Building programme 'giving China control of vital routes'

China's island building programme in the South China Sea may result in it gaining control of some of the world's most important waterways, the United States' most senior military commander for Asia said. "If this activity continues at pace — those would give them de facto control" of the maritime territory they claim, Admiral Samuel Locklear, head of the US Pacific Command, told the US Senate.

[Full Report](#)

PHILIPPINES—UNITED STATES | 19 APRIL | MANILA BULLETIN (AFP)

PH-US war games expanded

Thousands of American and Filipino soldiers will kick off on Monday their expanded war games, showcasing a deepening defense alliance as alarm bells ring over China's aggressive reclamation works in the disputed West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN | 20 APRIL | FOCUS TAIWAN

Taiwan to send P-3C on surveillance missions over South China Sea

The Ministry of National Defense (MND) confirmed for the first time Monday that the military will dispatch P-3C submarine-hunting aircraft on surveillance missions to the country's territory in the South China Sea in the future.

[Full Report](#)

VIETNAM | 20 APRIL | TUOI TRE

Vietnam to add 2 locally-built warships to naval fleet this quarter

The Vietnam People's Navy will add warships to its fleet in the next two months following the recent successful test run of two fast-attack missile ships of

the Molniya class, the first of its kind to have locally, according to government website chinhphu.vn.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN—UNITED STATES | 29 APRIL | REUTERS

Japan considering joint U.S. air patrols in South China Sea – sources

Japan's military is considering joining the United States in maritime air patrols in the South China Sea in response to China's increasingly assertive pursuit of territorial claims, a Japanese and a U.S. source familiar with the discussions said.

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CHINA—UNITED STATES | 30 APRIL | REUTERS

China says U.S. welcome to use civilian facilities in South China Sea

The United States and other countries will be welcome to use civilian facilities China is building in the South China Sea for search and rescue and weather forecasting "when conditions are right", China's navy chief has told a senior U.S. officer.

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MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY



Wikimedia Commons, U.S. Navy ([Link](#))

AUSTRALIA | 24 APRIL | ASIAONE (AFP)

New treaties needed to tackle illegal sea trade: Australian police

New regional agreements are needed to tackle criminal gangs using the world's oceans for illegal fishing and smuggling, a top Australian maritime officer said, calling the lucrative trade an "imminent threat" to global security. International syndicates were plying the high seas, illegally fishing for rare species, smuggling drugs, weapons and even body parts with few constraints, according to New South Wales Marine Police Inspector Joe McNulty.

[Full Report](#)

RUSSIA | 2 APRIL | MARINELINK.COM

Russian trawler sinks with 54 dead

At least 54 people died when a Russian trawler sank off the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia's Far East, media reports say. The Dalniy Vostok sank in the Sea of Okhotsk, 330 km (205 miles) west of Krutogorovsky settlement in the Kamchatka region and 250 km south of the city of Magadan.

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CANADA—FRANCE | 7 APRIL | OTTOWA CITIZEN

Canada hands over command of Combined Task Force 150 to France

Canada handed over command of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) to France at a ceremony in Manama, Bahrain, according to the Canadian Forces. This concludes the second time Canada has commanded one of the Combined Maritime Forces' (CMF) multinational maritime forces in the greater Middle East region.

[Full Report](#)

N. KOREA—MEXICO | 9 APRIL | WORLD MARITIME NEWS

North Korea threatens action over freighter held by Mexico

A North Korea-flagged general cargo ship Mu Du Bong and its crew have been illegally detained in Mexico since July 2014, and North Korea will undertake "necessary measures" to release it, the country's Deputy UN Ambassador An Myong Hun was reported by Reuters as saying.

[Full Report](#)

S. KOREA | 14 APRIL | KOREA TIMES

S. Korea Navy improves maritime rescue capability

The Navy said Tuesday that it has deployed a CH-47 helicopter to the southern port city of Jinhae, South Gyeongsang Province, to improve rescue services in maritime disasters. The helicopter, the biggest in the South Korean military, has state-of-the-art equipment and a crew of a dozen.

[Full Report](#)



S. KOREA | 14 APRIL | IHS MARITIME 360

South Korea plans feasibility study for Sewol salvage

South Korean government is trying to determine if it is viable to hoist the capsized ferry, Sewol, from the Yellow Sea. During a press conference in Seoul on 13 April, the country's Minister of Public Safety and Security, Park In-yong, said he would facilitate a feasibility study.

[Full Report](#)

PHILIPPINES | 16 APRIL | BUSINESS WORLD

Maritime piracy down by half, Philippine Coast Guard says

Maritime piracy in the Philippines dropped by 50 percent compared with last year, according to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG). Latest data from the Coast Guard showed that incidents of piracy and armed robberies against ships in Philippine waters fell to seven last year, from 14 in 2013.

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INDIA—PAKISTAN | 17 APRIL | DAILY NEWS & ANALYSIS

47 Indian fishermen captured by Pakistan; 8 boats seized

The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (MSA) has apprehended 47 fishermen and seized eight of their boats near the International Maritime Boundary, an office-bearer of National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) said on Friday.

[Full Report](#)

EUROPE | 19 APRIL | DEUTSCHE WELLE

EU leaders call emergency meeting after hundreds die in refugee shipwreck

The EU's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said the bloc's foreign ministers would perform an initial assessment of the accident in Luxembourg on

Monday. As many as 700 people were feared dead after a fishing boat packed with migrants sank off Libya's coast on Sunday.

[Full Report](#)

THAILAND | 21 APRIL | BANGKOK POST

Thai Navy: Piracy in Malacca Strait down

A senior naval officer on Tuesday claimed there has been a decrease in the number of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Strait of Malacca following joint efforts by four countries. Rear Adm Chaiyanun Nuntawit, deputy chief of the Naval Intelligence Department, was speaking after a meeting on maritime security in the strait at a hotel in Phuket.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 21 APRIL | ICC-CCS

One coastal tanker hijacked every two weeks in SE Asia: ICC IMB

A small coastal tanker is hijacked by pirates in South East Asia every two weeks on average, a report from the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has revealed. South East Asia accounts for 55% of the world's 54 piracy and armed robbery incidents since the start of 2015.

[Full Report](#)

S. KOREA | 22 APRIL | WALL STREET JOURNAL

South Korea plans to raise sunken Sewol ferry

South Korea said Wednesday it would attempt to raise the Sewol ferry whose sinking last year killed more than 300 people, after thousands hit Seoul's streets over the weekend to protest the government's handling of the disaster.

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EUROPE | 23 APRIL | THE GUARDIAN

EU summit to offer resettlement to only 5,000 refugees

Only 5,000 resettlement places across Europe are to be offered to refugees under the emergency summit crisis package to be agreed by EU leaders in Brussels on Thursday. A confidential draft summit statement seen by the Guardian indicates that the vast majority of those who survive the journey and make it to Italy – 150,000 did so last year – will be sent back as irregular migrants under a new rapid-return programme co-ordinated by the EU's border agency, Frontex.

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CTF commander hails 'safe' Seychelles port, but warns against complacency

Although there has not been a successful pirate attack recorded in the Indian Ocean in the last two years, the need for vigilance and international collaboration is more pressing than ever. This was emphasized by the commander of the Combined Task Force (CTF-150), which is a multinational task force responsible for ensuring maritime security and countering terrorism, Captain René-Jean Crignola of the supply ship 'Var', which has been stationed in Port Victoria since April 27.

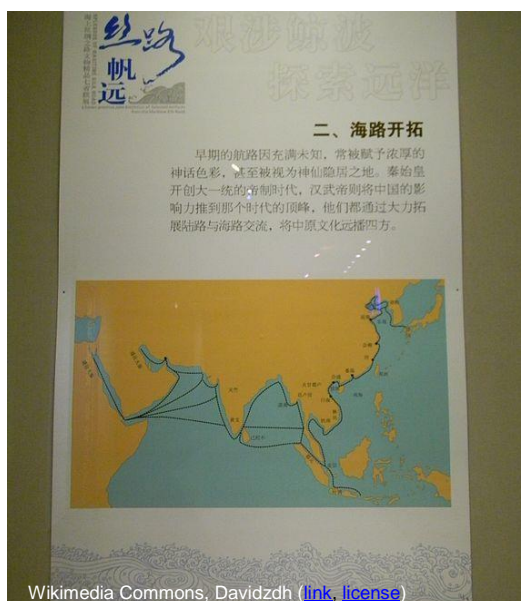
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Delegation calls for More Philippine merchant marine officers, help from U.S.

As Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was preparing to speak before a joint session of Congress on expanding trade in the Pacific, a delegation of legislators and businessmen from the Philippine maritime industry were meeting with transportation officials and would later meet with their American counterparts to find means to better educate their ratings and put more officers aboard the world's merchant fleet.

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SHIPPING, PORTS AND THE MARITIME ECONOMY



CHINA—INDONESIA | 16 APRIL | WANT CHINA TIMES (XINHUA)

Maritime Silk Road may help Indonesia reboot marine economy

China's Maritime Silk Road (MSR) initiative could greatly benefit Indonesia should it be aligned with the idea initiated by the Indonesian president, Joko Widodo, to make the archipelago nation the world's maritime axis, analysts said. "Maritime highway is actually not a new thing as it is very much reminiscent to Indonesia's ancient history which has excellent maritime transport serving islands across the country during the old kingdom era," Umar Juoro, an Indonesian economic and development analyst said Thursday in an exclusive interview with Xinhua in his office.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 2 APRIL | HELLENIC SHIPPING NEWS (MOORE STEPHENS)

Shipping confidence hits two-and-a-half year low

Overall confidence levels in the shipping industry fell during the three months to February 2015 to their lowest level for two-and-a-half years, according our latest Shipping Confidence Survey.

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strained between the two countries over the wartime past and territorial disputes in the East China Sea.

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CHINA—JAPAN | 6 APRIL | REUTERS

Japan to hold finance dialogue with China, could discuss AIIB

Japan and China plan to hold finance discussions in Beijing in June, which could include topics such as the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Finance Minister Taro Aso said on Tuesday. The talks would mark the first bilateral finance dialogue since Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took office in late 2012 as diplomatic relations have been

INDONESIA | 7 APRIL | JAKARTA POST

\$9.3b of FDI pledged to maritime sector

Indonesia is expected to receive US\$9.3 billion in investment in the maritime sector from four countries amid the government's drive to develop the maritime sector, the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) has said.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA—VIETNAM | 8 APRIL | MARITIME EXECUTIVE

China, Vietnam consider joint offshore development

China and Vietnam agreed to friendly negotiations, and the possibility of joint development projects, to settle their differences over the resource rich South

China Sea. A joint communique carried by Xinhua said that both countries had a candid exchange of views on their maritime differences when China's president and the head of Vietnam's Communist Party met this week.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN—INDONESIA | 10 APRIL | WORLD MARITIME NEWS

Japan still keen on building seaport in Indonesia

Last week's cancellation of the plan to build the Cilamaya port has not deterred Japan from its intention to build a seaport in Indonesia, Yusron Ihza Mahendra, Indonesia's Ambassador to Japan was reported by the local Antara News as saying.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 12 APRIL | REUTERS

China-led AIIB will be lean, clean and green – official

The China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will be lean, clean and green, its interim chief said, playing down concerns over transparency and standards governing the institution.

[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES—CHINA | 16 APRIL | REUTERS

U.S. to keep engaging China on Asian infrastructure bank: official

The United States will further engage China to encourage a Beijing-led development bank to embrace high governance standards, a U.S. official said on Wednesday. Washington has generally given the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank a chilly reception, warning that it has yet to embrace the standards established over the last 70 years by the world's big development organizations such as the World Bank.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA—PAKISTAN | 16 APRIL | PAKISTAN TODAY

China gets 40-year rights on Pakistani port

China has been granted operation rights for 40 years at a port in Gwadar, a strategic deep-water seaport in Pakistan, Hong Kong-based Phoenix TV reported. Infrastructure construction is nearly complete and the port could be put into full use by the end of the year, Dostain Khan Jamaldini, chairman of the Gwadar Port Authority, was quoted as saying.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 20 APRIL | CHANNEL NEWSASIA (DOW JONES)

China unveils investment restrictions for free trade zones

China on Monday (Apr 20) unveiled its long-awaited list of restricted areas of investments for the nation's four free trade zones. In a statement on China's main government website, the list included a total of 122 items, down slightly from the 139 that were put in place for the Shanghai Free Trade Area, which was opened in September 2013.

[Full Report](#)

THAILAND—MYANMAR | 21 APRIL | REUTERS

Italian Thai, Rojana to ink first phase of Dawei development by June

Italian Thai Development Pcl and Rojana Industrial Park will ink a \$1.7-billion deal to develop the first phase of the long-delayed Dawei industrial zone in southeastern Myanmar by June, Thailand's deputy transport minister said on Tuesday.

[Full Report](#)



GLOBAL | 22 APRIL | SEATRADE GLOBAL

IMO urges offshore to explore possibility of global governance

The IMO secretary-general Koji Sekimizu has urged the offshore marine industry to explore the possibility of having a global governance similar to the shipping sector. The offshore marine industry is "considered new" to the UN organisation, unlike the shipping sector which is already heavily regulated, Sekimizu told delegates at the Sea Asia 2015 offshore marine forum.

[Full Report](#)

ARCTIC | 23 APRIL | BANGKOK POST (AFP)

Arctic nations meet under threat of new Cold War

The thawing of the polar ice promises Arctic nations new opportunities to open ocean trade routes and offshore oil fields. But the chill in relations between

Western powers and their Arctic neighbor Russia could make the North a frontline in a new Cold War.

[Full Report](#)

HONG KONG—SINGAPORE | 24 APRIL | SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Hong Kong loses out to Singapore in race to develop Asian shipping hub

Hong Kong has lost out to Singapore in the race to develop Asia's most comprehensive hub for shipping and related businesses, a leading figure in the city's shipping industry said yesterday. "In the context of [fostering] a maritime cluster, Hong Kong is no longer able to compete," Tung Chee-chen, chairman of Orient Overseas Container Line, told an industry conference in Singapore.

[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES—JAPAN | 29 APRIL | BBC

Abe and Obama look to 'swift conclusion' of Trans-Pacific Partnership deal

US President Barack Obama has said the US and Japan are working towards a "swift and successful conclusion" to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Mr Obama was speaking at a joint press conference with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is in Washington on a state visit.

[Full Report](#)