

Featured *MSP Perspective*:

Understanding Piracy in Southeast Asia – p. 1

By Sam Bateman

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MSP PERSPECTIVES



Understanding Piracy in Southeast Asia

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Recent media reports have suggested that Southeast Asia is now the major global 'hot spot' for global piracy and armed robbery against ships. That may be true in terms of absolute numbers of reported attacks, but before making sweeping statements about the seriousness of piracy in the region, it is necessary to look more closely at the figures. Of the 150 or so actual and attempted attacks in the region in 2014, about two-thirds involved ships at anchor or in port while about 60 per cent were categorised as relatively minor or as incidents of petty theft. All the most serious attacks involved the hijacking of small product tankers and the actual or attempted theft of some or all of their oil cargos.

Three factors are important considerations – how serious is an attack in terms of level of violence involved or economic loss incurred; the type and size of vessel attacked; and whether or not the vessel was underway or stopped at anchor or in port. Without appreciating these factors, it is impossible to make realistic assessments of the nature of the threat and the counter-measures required.

Many reported incidents constitute either petty theft or unsuccessful attempts to board. These may have gone unreported in the past, but are now reported due to the publicity given to piracy and greater awareness of the reporting channels available. Rather than an under-reporting of attacks due to concerns of ship masters about the insurance implications of attacks or possible delays due to subsequent investigations, over reporting could well be the case. Statistics may also be inflated by ships reporting any close approach by small craft as an 'attempted attack'.

Any ship may be attacked while stopped if the appropriate precautions are not taken and vigilance exercised. Attacks on vessels underway are more illuminating in terms of causal factors related to particular types of vessel, and actions required to provide greater security. The vulnerability of a ship underway depends on factors such as ship size, speed, freeboard and size of crew with small ships much more vulnerable than larger vessels. The vulnerability of a ship at anchor, stopped or in port does not depend on its size and type.

Two organisations in the region collect data on incidents of piracy and sea robbery – the Information Sharing Centre (ISC) established in Singapore by the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), and the Kuala Lumpur-based Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) of the International Maritime

Bureau (IMB). These are very different organisations – the PRC is a private sector initiative funded by shipping interests, particularly the insurance sector, while ReCAAP is a governmental organisation. The PRC was established in 1991 but the ISC was not operational until 2006.

ReCAAP classifies each incident of piracy and sea robbery according to level of violence and economic loss involved. The PRC, however, does not classify incidents and counts an incident of petty theft from a ship at anchor as equivalent to a major incident of ship hijacking. With the greater majority of incidents in the region being ones of petty theft, the PRC's reports can give a distorted picture of the threat of piracy. The media with its preference for 'bad news' stories tends to use the absolute figures presented by the PRC rather than the more nuanced reports from ReCAAP.

ReCAAP provides authoritative advice both to governments and industry on the actions necessary to counter the threat of piracy and sea robbery. It is important to get these responses correct to ensure the best use of limited national capacities.

The shipping industry has been calling for additional patrolling at sea and some navies have promoted the idea of joint patrols of areas where attacks are occurring. These would help but countering piracy is not that simple. Concerted action is required by others with a stake in eliminating piracy and sea robbery – shipowners must ensure their ships follow best security management practices – providing this security is a cost of 'doing business' for industry; close cooperation is required by regional police forces, port authorities and customs authorities; national maritime administrations must ensure vessels flying their national flag are complying with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, and conduct inspections of visiting ships to confirm compliance with this Code; and port authorities must take action to ensure the security of ports and anchorages under their control.

While it is rarely acknowledged in media commentaries, greater security in ports and anchorages prone to attacks is one of the most pressing requirements to reduce the incidence of piracy and sea robbery in the region. In this regard, recent initiatives by Indonesia, including designating recommended anchorage areas off key ports that are more actively patrolled, are to be welcomed.

This item is based on an RSIS commentary published on 13 May 2015.

NAVAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY



JAPAN | 25 JUNE | ECONOMIC TIMES (AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE)

Japan may consider joining US forces in South China Sea patrols: Military

Japan's military may join US forces on patrol in the South China Sea, the nation's top uniformed officer said in an interview published Thursday, as Tokyo seeks a greater security role. China's recent moves to build artificial islands have created "very serious potential concerns" for Japan, Katsutoshi Kawano, chief of the Joint Staff of the Japan Self-Defence Forces (SDF), said in an interview with the Wall Street Journal.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 1 JUNE | WANT CHINA TIMES

Maritime tensions put China center stage at Shangri-La Dialogue

Tensions in the South China Sea and the rising power of the People's Liberation Army Navy have placed China center stage at the 14th Shangri-La Dialogue, reports Duowei News, a US-based political news outlet.

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA | 2 JUNE | THE GUARDIAN

South China Sea: Australia won't rule out expanded surveillance flights

The Australian government has not ruled out expanding its existing program of surveillance flights over the South China Sea amid regional tensions over China's land reclamation activities in disputed territory.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA—UNITED STATES | 6 JUNE | SUNDAY GUARDIAN

Delhi gets U.S. help in tracking China subs

The United States is giving its biggest push yet to forging common ground with India against China by raising an issue which finds deep resonance here: Chinese expansionism.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA—MALAYSIA | 10 JUNE | TODAY

KL hardens S China Sea stance after 'intrusion'

Malaysia may be recalibrating its low-key approach on overlapping claims in the South China Sea, with a minister indicating that Kuala Lumpur would protest against an intrusion by a Chinese coast guard vessel into the waters of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) north of Borneo.

[Full Report](#)



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INDIA | 10 JUNE | ECONOMIC TIMES

India's first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant undocked

India today undocked its first indigenously-built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant at a simple ceremony at Cochin Shipyard Limited here. The ship, built at CSL, will undergo a series of fitment and trial processes before it is ready for propulsion and inducted into the Navy, CSL officials said.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 10 JUNE | REUTERS

China military conducts drills near Taiwan, Philippines

Chinese warships and aircraft on Wednesday passed through the Bashi Channel between Taiwan and the Philippines to hold routine planned exercises in the Western Pacific, China's Defense Ministry said.

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA—INDIA | 14 JUNE | TIMES OF INDIA

India and Australia to hold 1st joint naval exercise

India and Australia will undertake their first joint naval exercise later this year even as the two along with Japan look at the possibility of a trilateral exercise, a move that will likely rile China.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA—MALAYSIA | 16 JUNE | JAKARTA POST

Indonesia to query Malaysian maneuvers near Ambalat

The government said on Monday that it would demand an explanation from Malaysia over frequent violations of Indonesia's borders by Malaysia's military in North Kalimantan, as part of a diplomatic approach to resolve the border issue.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA—JAPAN | 19 JUNE | JAPAN TIMES

Japan, China agree to hasten setup of maritime communication system

Japan and China agreed Friday to speed up the process of setting up a maritime communication mechanism as part of efforts to avert accidental clashes in nearby waters, at a time when their once-frosty relations have been thawing, despite a continuing dispute over the Senkaku Islands.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN—PHILIPPINES—UNITED STATES | 22 JUNE | JAPAN TIMES

Japan, U.S. join Philippines in South China Sea navy drills

The U.S. and Japan are conducting separate military drills with the Philippines near disputed islands in the South China Sea, signaling support for the country as China builds out reclaimed reefs in the waters.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 23 JUNE | ECONOMIC TIMES

Indian warships in Cambodia, Thailand on South China Sea deployment

Indian warships today entered Cambodia and Thailand as part of a two-month-long operational deployment in South China Sea in pursuant of India's 'Act East' Policy. The Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet ships under the command of Rear Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh are on operational deployment to South East Asia and Southern Indian Ocean.

[Full Report](#)

NORTH—SOUTH KOREA | 25 JUNE | YONHAP NEWS AGENCY

N. Korea deploys buoys near inter-Korean sea border

North Korea has installed several buoys near the tensely guarded western maritime border, military sources said Thursday, prompting the South Korean authorities to analyze its intentions. "North Korea has set up around 10 buoys smaller than 1 meter just north of our islands of Baengnyeong and Yeonpyeong near the Northern Limit Line (NLL)," a military source said, referring to the de facto inter-Korean sea border in the Yellow Sea.

[Full Report](#)

THAILAND | 26 JUNE | BANGKOK POST

Chinese win bid to supply subs to Thai navy

The navy has picked Chinese submarines costing 12 billion baht each to be commissioned in the force, a source on the procurement committee says. The majority of the 17-strong committee voted to buy three Chinese submarines, saying it was the "best value for money".

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 30 JUNE | DEFENSE WORLD

Wenchong Shipyard delivers Mobile Landing Platform to PLA Navy

China's Guangzhou's Wenchong shipyard has handed over first mobile landing platform (MLP), known as vessel 868, to the PLA Navy on Friday. Vessel 868 is similar to its American MPL counterpart.

[Full Report](#)

MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY



ASEAN | 30 JUNE | MALAY MAIL

Malaysia to call for Asean meeting on security of regional waters

Malaysia will call for a special meeting of Asean defence ministers in mid-August to discuss on cooperation and issues related to security of the region's waters. Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein today said the hijacking of the Malaysian merchant ship, MT Orkim Harmony, on June 11 showed prevailing weaknesses in security control over the region's waters.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 1 JUNE | SUN DAILY

MMEA advises fishing boats to install COSPAS-SARSAT tracking devices

The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) has advised fishing boats to install "Cospas-Sarsat" detectors to facilitate their detection in the event of an emergency while at sea.

[Full Report](#)

THAILAND—UNITED STATES | 6 JUNE | BANGKOK POST

Joint migrant searches to end Thursday

A joint aerial operation between Thailand and the US to search for "boat people", including Rohingya, in the Andaman Sea will end next Thursday as no migrants have been found so far.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 4 JUNE | JAKARTA POST

Indonesian Government forms another anti-illegal fishing task force

The government has stepped up its maritime law enforcement by preparing a presidential decree that will lay the groundwork for the establishment of a new task force to combat illegal fishing, according to a government official.

[Full Report](#)

BRUNEI | 6 JUNE | BORNEO BULLETIN

RBN, POLMAR conclude Exercise SEMBILANG 11/15

THE Royal Brunei Navy (RBN) and the Marine Police of Royal Brunei Police Force (POLMAR) concluded the joint exercise code-named Exercise SEMBILANG 11/15 which was conducted from June 2 to 5.

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN | 7 JUNE | CHINA POST

Taiwan Coast Guard holds drill, includes two new patrol ships

Taiwan's Coast Guard held a major maritime exercise Saturday in the southern city of Kaohsiung, after two new home-grown patrol vessels were formally commissioned to enhance the country's patrol capabilities.

[Full Report](#)



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AUSTRALIA | 8 JUNE | ABC NEWS

Customs Cape Class Patrol Boats struggling to find permanent berth

They are a significant part of Australia's border security, particularly in northern waters, but the new Customs Cape Class Patrol Boats are yet to find a secure, permanent berth in Darwin, which Customs described in March as its main operating port.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA—SOUTH KOREA | 8 JUNE | YONHAP NEWS AGENCY

Chinese fisherman gets jail term for illegal fishing in Yellow Sea

A Chinese fisherman was Monday sentenced to one year in prison for illegally fishing in South Korean waters near the disputed inter-Korean sea border. The 49-year-old captain of a Chinese boat, whose identity has been withheld, was found guilty of fishing illegally at the South Korean maritime border, known as the Northern Limit Line on April 14, 2014.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA—PHILIPPINES | 9 JUNE | PHILIPPINE STAR

Palawan RTC orders 9 jailed Chinese fishermen freed

A Philippine court has ordered the release of nine Chinese fishermen who served a year in prison for

poaching and taking hundreds of endangered giant sea turtles from a disputed South China Sea shoal, a court staffer said Tuesday.

[Full Report](#)

PHILIPPINES | 13 JUNE | PHILIPPINE STAR

House OKs 3 bills protecting Philippine territorial waters

The House of Representatives has passed three measures aimed at protecting the country's territorial waters and marine resources, Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. announced before the chamber adjourned on Wednesday.

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA—INDONESIA | 13 JUNE | REUTERS

Australia stoops to 'new low' if boat payment confirmed: Indonesia

Australia would have stooped to a "new low" if reports that its navy paid people-smugglers bound for Australia thousands of dollars to turn back their boat are true, an Indonesian government official said on Saturday.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 15 JUNE | ASIAONE (THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK)

Missing Malaysian tanker carrying fuel worth \$5.4 million

A Malaysian-registered tanker carrying nearly 7.5 million litres of RON95 petrol has gone missing in the waters off Johor's east coast. Enforcement officials are now searching for the missing tanker, which became uncontactable some 31.5km (17 nautical miles) off Pulau Aur since 8.54pm last Thursday.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN | 17 JUNE | JAPAN TIMES

MSDF anti-piracy mission off Somalia to be extended by another year

Japan plans to extend by another year the deployment of Maritime Self-Defense Force personnel to combat piracy in waters off Somalia in East Africa, a Japanese government source said Tuesday. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet is expected to approve the extension in early July to help ensure the security of an important sea lane for Japan and as Tokyo's proactive contribution to maintaining international peace and stability, the source said.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 19 JUNE | CHANNEL NEWSASIA

Hijacked tanker Orkim Harmony released, pirates flee: Malaysian officials

The hijacked oil tanker Orkim Harmony has been released by pirates, who fled in the ship's rescue boat, Malaysian navy and maritime officials said on Friday (Jun 19).

[Full Report](#)

INDIA—SEYCHELLES | 26 JUNE | BUSINESS STANDARD

INS Teg docks at Seychelles for joint surveillance of its EEZ

INS Teg, a stealth frigate of the Navy today docked at Seychelles' Port Victoria to carry out joint surveillance of the archipelago nation's Exclusive Economic Zone. The visit of INS Teg coincides with Seychelles' National Day celebrations on June 29 in which a 25-member marching contingent and Naval Band will participate.

[Full Report](#)

SHIPPING, PORTS AND THE MARITIME ECONOMY



SINGAPORE | 9 JUNE | ASIAONE (STRAITS TIMES)

Singapore tops list of important maritime capitals

Singapore has retained its top spot as the most important maritime capital. It emerged first among 15 cities that were benchmarked in five categories: shipping centres, finance and law, technology, ports and logistics, and attractiveness and competitiveness.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 3 JUNE | MARINELINK.COM

Malaysian shipping masterplan by year-end

The Malaysian Shipping Masterplan draft, which seeks to identify issues and make recommendations on the criticality of the shipping industry, will be ready by 2015-end, Bernama reported as Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai saying.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 4 JUNE | LLOYD'S LOADING LIST

Indonesian new transport focus 'to boost trade volumes'

The increased maritime and transport focus of the new Indonesian government led by President Joko Widodo is primed to boost trade volumes in the years ahead, according to one leading container shipping executive.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA—CHINA | 4 JUNE | JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

Carriers vie for growing India-China traffic

China United Lines, part of Unitrans Group, has become the latest ocean carrier to try to tap growing demand on the intra-Asia trade lane by introducing a direct service between India and China.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA—INDONESIA | 4 JUNE | JAKARTA GLOBE

Malaysia to get a piece of Jokowi's Maritime Axis

A group of Malaysian companies, represented by investment firm Amanah Nusantara International, has announced plans to invest \$5.3 billion in developing maritime infrastructure in Cirebon, West Java, over the next three years.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 5 JUNE | ECONOMIC TIMES

Rs 6,000 crore (Rs 60b) port to come up near Mumbai in three years

The country's 13th major port will come up at Dahanu near here on fully reclaimed land and the project envisaging an investment of up to Rs 6,000 crore is likely to be completed over the next three years, the Centre announced today.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 5 JUNE | IHS MARITIME 360

Liner shipping industry to remain under pressure

The unabated trend of ultra-large container ship (ULCS) orders means the liner shipping industry will remain under pressure, said Italian broker Banchemo Costa.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE—CHINA | 11 JUNE | IHS MARITIME 360

PSA, BPG, PIL form joint venture to run Chinese port

Singapore-listed port operator PSA International has signed a joint venture (JV) agreement with Beibu Gulf Port Group (BPG) and Pacific International Lines (PIL) to operate a new container terminal in Qinzhou, Guangxi, China.

[Full Report](#)

SRI LANKA—CHINA | 12 JUNE | NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Suspended mega Chinese project had no cabinet approval: Sri Lanka Minister

The State-owned Chinese company which was executing the US \$ 1.4 billion Colombo Port City project, has not produced, till date, the cabinet approval and a crucial environmental clearance certificate pertaining to the project, Sri Lankan Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake has revealed.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 24 JUNE | WANT CHINA TIMES (XINHUA)

China's maritime economy outpaces overall GDP growth

China's maritime output has grown at a faster pace than the country's GDP in the past five years, the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) said on Tuesday. According to its report on China's maritime development for 2015, the average annual growth rate of maritime output exceeded that of GDP by 0.22

percentage points during the 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015).

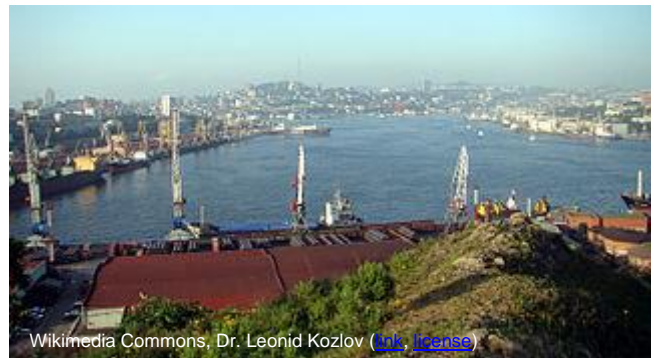
[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 25 JUNE | LLOYD'S LOADING LIST

Singapore starts further expansion

PSA has started the phase 3 and 4 development of its new Pasir Panjang terminal (PPT) at Singapore, the world's second largest container hub after Shanghai. When the new phases become operational in 2017, the S\$3.5 billion project will offer 6,000 metres of quay length and up to 18 metres draft.

[Full Report](#)



RUSSIA | 29 JUNE | PORTNEWS

Vladivostok's free port to boost regional economy: official

The creation of Russia's first free port, which is now underway here in Russia's largest Far Eastern city, will boost trade and regional economy, a local official said. The move will ease customs regulations, lead to the introduction of tax incentives for port operators, and lower the costs for ships coming into the port, said Primorsky Territory Governor Vladimir Miklushevsky.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA—THAILAND | 29 JUNE | WANT CHINA TIMES

Thailand denies canal deal with China, opts for oil pipeline

A deputy prime minister of Thailand has denied reports that Bangkok and Beijing have reached an agreement to develop the Thai Canal across the Kra isthmus, calling the project "stupid" and revealing that the country is now contemplating an oil pipeline that will not require consultation with China, reports Hong Kong newspaper Ming Pao.

[Full Report](#)

IMO elects South Korea's Ki-tack Lim to top post

South Korea's Ki-tack Lim, president of the Busan Port Authority, has been elected as the new secretary-general of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). He will take the helm from incumbent, Japan's Koji Sekimizu, on 1 January 2016, for an initial four years.

[Full Report](#)