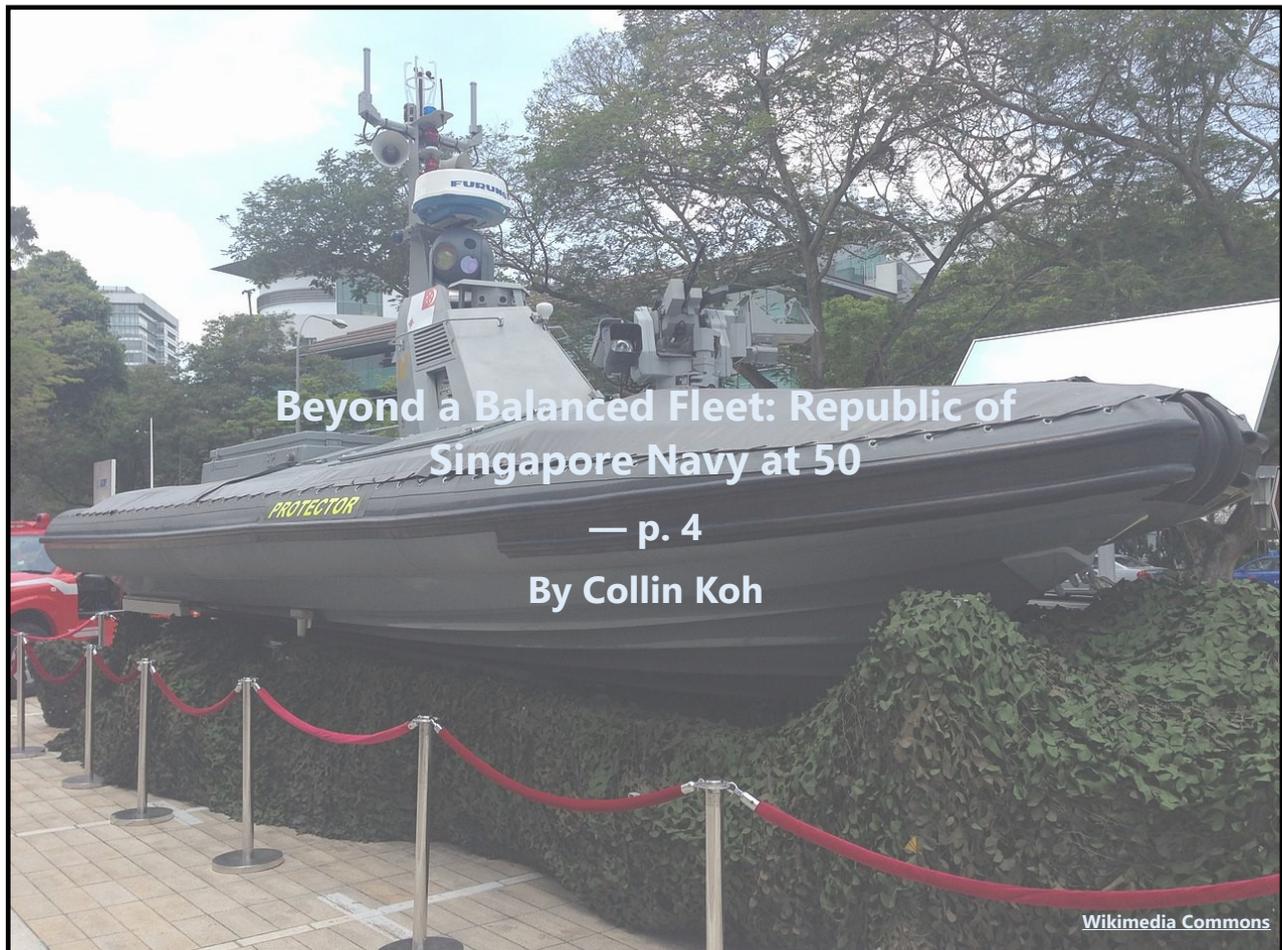


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RSISMSP@ntu.edu.sg

Maritime Security Programme, RSIS

Editorial Team

Rajni Nayanthara Gamage
Philipp Martin Dingeldey
Collin Koh



Author

Collin Koh

Research Fellow, Maritime Security Programme

As the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) enters its 50th anniversary, there is indeed much to celebrate about given its humble beginnings. Over the decades, it has moved on a trajectory that most navies would aspire towards, which is to become a balanced fleet capable of undertaking a whole range of missions across the peace-war spectrum. In this regard, the Navy gradually built on and enhanced its capabilities since the late 1980s, becoming by now a totally different animal from what it was five decades ago when it first started out with a handful of rickety old gunboats.

At present and in the foreseeable, the Navy is anticipated to remain focused on its immediate region – Southeast Asia and its adjacent waters in the Western Pacific – while continuing to be involved as a robust instrument of Singapore's foreign policy, which includes contribution to international security such as multinational counter-piracy operations under the Combined Task Force 151 off Somalia.

To stay viable as a relevant tool in furthering the country's national interests within the region and abroad, the RSN must continue to evolve; if necessary, anticipate technological and operational trends ahead and adapt accordingly. One key challenge that the service would face in the process of evolving to stay relevant, concerns manpower.

This is an especially thorny issue considering that like its sister services, the RSN recruits 18-21 year olds fresh out of college or from the pool of National Service enlistees. However, Singapore's persistently low birth rates mean that the number of young men to be enlisted in 2025 will be 25 percent lower than present figures. Furthermore, the Navy faces a problem that some other navies – big and small alike – are also facing, taking for example the New Zealanders. And it is especially so the case for developed economies, where the militaries must vie for human capital with lucrative sectors such as shipping and offshore industries.

Therefore, as the RSN continues to become even more state-of-the-art in the future, it will continue to endure manpower crunch. Fortuitously, the service plans to overcome this

challenge using multiple measures. One is to attract more mid-careerists as well as doubling the proportion of women serving as navy regulars from the current 7 percent.

Another is to tap on technology, with the fleet also tipped to shrink somewhat. Notably, eight Independence class Littoral Mission Vessels (LMVs) are in the process of replacing 11 older, smaller and less capable Fearless class patrol vessels built in the 1990s. The crew size on board the LMVs is also smaller – at 23 compared to 30 on the predecessor. The Navy will also increasingly rely on unmanned technologies to fulfil its goal of becoming “smarter, sharper and stronger”. Besides new manned platforms, it is ploughing efforts into expanding unmanned capabilities through a multi-pronged strategy that includes sourcing technologies and know-how from foreign partners, or indigenously developing them.

Nonetheless, as the RSN copes with foreseeable shrinking size through adapted manpower policy and technological infusions, it is also honing its operational skillsets, especially its ability to conduct “out-of-area” operations. It is tipped to conduct a new, more complex exercise codenamed Pacific Griffin in August 2017 with its American counterpart in waters off Guam. It is also expanding its external outreach also warrants attention, for instance upgrading the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) to facilitate quicker information-sharing with external partners. A Submarine Safety Information Portal is also established to ameliorate regional submarine-related risks.

Notwithstanding its inherent constraints, especially manpower, the RSN looks set to make further advancements in its capabilities. It may present a noteworthy example of how a small navy could transcend its physical size to punch above its weight in the face of present fiscal and geopolitical uncertainties.

This is an abridged version of “Beyond a Balanced Fleet: A Sharper, Smarter and Stronger Republic of Singapore Navy Beyond 2017,” published in Naval Forces, Vol. XXXVIII, No. III/2017, pp. 4-5.



SINGAPORE | 16 MAY | THE STRAITS TIMES

First International Maritime Review ends on high note

As the morning wore on, the clear blue skies were covered by dark clouds and the calm waters were occasionally broken by choppy waves.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN | 1 MAY | THE MAINICHI

Japan guards U.S. military vessel for 1st time under security legislation

Japan launched a mission to guard a U.S. military vessel on May 1 for the first time under security legislation that came into force in March 2016, sources close to the government said.

[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES | 2 MAY | USNI NEWS

House Armed Services Committee Looking At 25-30 Year Pace For Reaching 355 Ship Navy

The chairman of the House Armed Services seapower and projection forces subcommittee believes the Navy can reach a 355-ship fleet in the 25- to 30-year timeframe, given industrial base capacity and expected funding levels.

[Full Report](#)

MYANMAR | 3 MAY | THE IRRAWADDY

Burma Army Reveals Ambition to Own Submarine

Deputy Defense Minister Maj-Gen Myint Nwe has announced the Burma Army's ambition to own a submarine.

[Full Report](#)

THAILAND | 4 MAY | KHAOSOD

Admiral Behind Submarine Deal Defends Need for 'Dream Weapon'

For seven years, Adm. Suriya Pornsuriya commanded a submarine division which didn't have a single submarine.

[Full Report](#)

Continue on page 6

SINGAPORE | 5 MAY | THE STRAITS TIMES

Singapore's first Littoral Mission Vessel RSS Independence now fully operational

Singapore navy's first-of-class Littoral Mission Vessel (LMV) RSS Independence is now fully operational to safeguard the country's waters, protect its sea lines of communication and contribute to regional peace and security.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 5 MAY | THE TIMES OF INDIA

Need to expand 'operational footprint' in Indian Ocean Region: Navy Chief

Admiral Sunil Lanba has asked his top commanders to assiduously work towards expanding the Navy's "operational footprint" in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) in the backdrop of India and China jostling for the same strategic space in the region.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-SRI LANKA | 13 MAY | REUTERS

Sri Lanka rejects Chinese request for submarine visit: sources

Sri Lanka has rejected China's request to dock one of its submarines in Colombo this month, two senior government officials said on Thursday as the Indian prime minister landed in the island nation.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 13 MAY | SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

Chinese defence adviser says Djibouti naval facility is a much-needed 'military base'

An influential Chinese defence adviser explicitly called the navy installation China is establishing in the East African country of Djibouti a "military base" and said China will need more facilities like it to protect the nation's growing overseas interests.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE-THAILAND-UNITED STATES | 13 MAY | THE STRAITS TIMES

Three navies go for Carat to boost readiness, cooperation

The navies of Singapore, Thailand and the United States have held their first Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (Carat) exercise, which focused on conventional maritime warfare capabilities such as anti-air and anti-surface operations.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 16 MAY | CHANNEL NEWSASIA

Singapore Navy to add 2 more submarines to fleet

Two more Type-218SG submarines will be added to

the Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) fleet from 2024, Minister for Defence Ng Eng Hen announced at this year's International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (IMDEX) Asia on Tuesday (May 16).

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA | 16 MAY | DEFENSE NEWS

Australia prime minister: Shipbuilding plan is 'an end to the boom and bust pattern'

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull launched Australia's long-awaited naval shipbuilding plan on May 16, including the construction of submarines, frigates and offshore patrol vessels, costing A\$89 billion (US \$66.12 billion), in Australian shipyards.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 23 MAY | UPDATE PHILIPPINES

Navy commissions first 3 Attack Crafts with missile provisions

The country's first three multi-purpose attack craft (MPAC), with provisions for missile armament, was formally turned over and commissioned into the Philippine Fleet during short ceremonies at the Naval Base Heracleo Alano, Sangley Point, Cavite City Monday.

[Full Report](#)



UNITED STATES | 25 MAY | CNN

South China Sea: US warship challenges China's claims with first operation under Trump

A US Navy destroyer has sailed close to a disputed South China Sea island controlled by China for the first time under US President Donald Trump.

[Full Report](#)

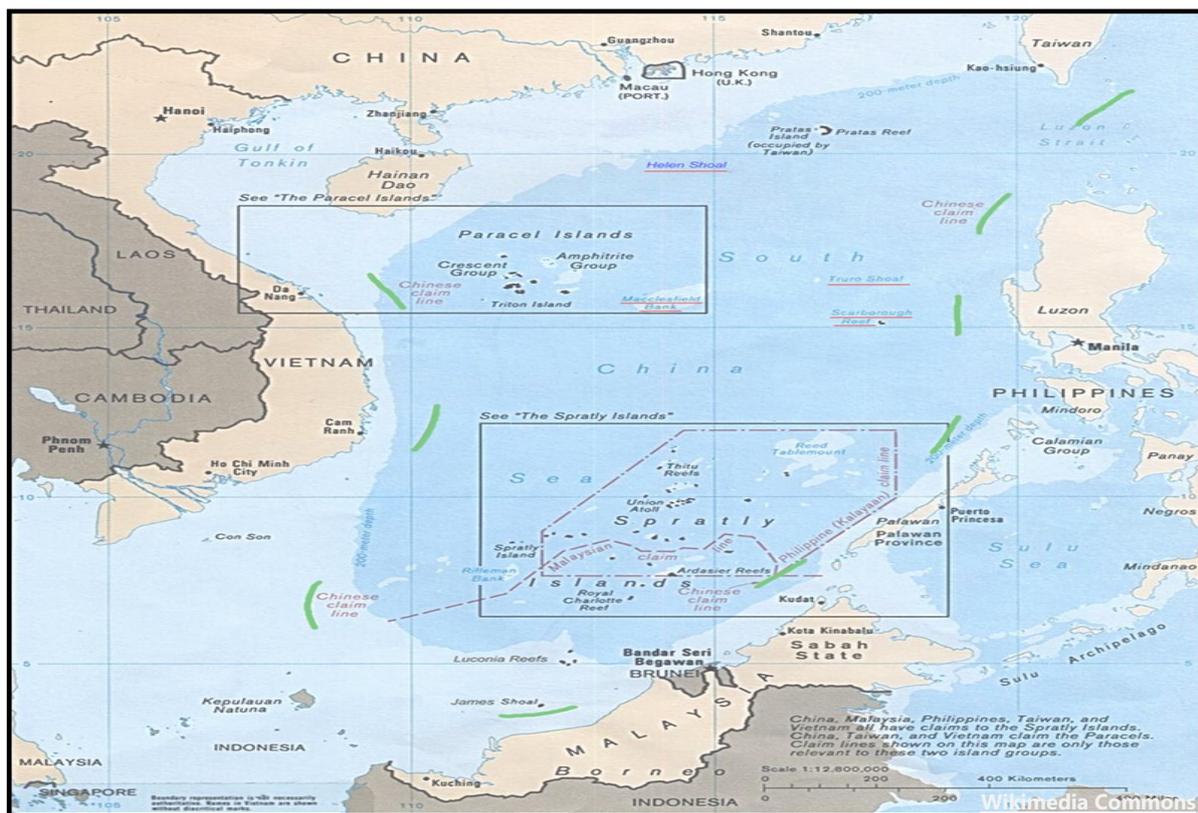
CHINA | 29 MAY | SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

China plans undersea observation system 'for science and national security'

China plans to build a massive underwater observation system that will cover the disputed East and South China seas.

[Full Report](#)

MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY



CHINA-ASEAN | 18 MAY | TODAY

China, Asean agree on code of conduct framework in South China Sea

China and South-east Asian countries agreed on Thursday (May 18) to a framework for a code of conduct in the disputed South China Sea, an important first step towards managing tensions in the region.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 3 MAY | BUSINESS MIRROR

Security escort urged for Celebes Sea vessels

The business community in Mindanao plans to petition Malacañang to make the Navy and the Coast Guard to make escorting cargo vessels and cargo on roll-on, roll-off (Roro) trips a regular or routine service in the Celebes Sea.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA-JAPAN-THE PHILIPPINES | 16 MAY | GMA NEWS

PHL, Indonesia, Japan coast guards start maritime pollution exercise

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and its Indonesian and Japanese counterparts kicked off this year's Maritime Pollution Exercise (MARPOLEX) in Bali, Indonesia on Tuesday.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-JAPAN | 19 MAY | REUTERS

Japan scrambles jets over China drone flight near disputed islets

Japan scrambled fighter jets on Thursday after four Chinese coastguard vessels entered what Japan considers its territorial waters near disputed East China Sea islets and a drone-like object flew near one ship, Japan said.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-UNITED STATES | 19 MAY | THE WASHINGTON POST

Chinese fighters buzz U.S. spy plane, underlining differences over surveillance, N. Korea

Two Chinese fighter jets this week buzzed a U.S. spy plane that sniffs out nuclear radiation as it flew over the seas between China and North Korea, underlining Beijing's discomfort with American surveillance and differences in the countries' approach to the threat posed by the regime in Pyongyang.

[Full Report](#)

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CHINA-THE PHILIPPINES | 20 MAY | THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Maritime cooperation, security initialed in Philippine-China meeting

Philippine and Chinese delegations initialed the terms of reference (TOR) that would be a platform for confidence-building measures to promote maritime cooperation and security, a joint press release from a meeting meant to manage disputes in the South China Sea said on Friday.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA-VIETNAM | 23 MAY | THE JAKARTA POST

RI seeks release of patrol crew member held hostage in Vietnam via diplomacy

The Indonesian and Vietnamese authorities have agreed to adopt a diplomatic approach in a bid to settle a clash that occurred between maritime authorities of both countries in the Natuna waters, Riau Islands, on Sunday, which saw a crew member of an Indonesian patrol boat taken hostage by the Vietnamese coast guard.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 24 MAY | THE HINDU

India mulling over tsunami early warning system in South China Sea

The government is exploring the possibility of setting up a tsunami early warning system in the disputed South China Sea, which has been witnessing China's growing assertiveness.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-UNITED STATES | 26 MAY | USNI NEWS

Official: Pair of Chinese Fighters Unsafely Intercept U.S. Navy Aircraft Over South China Sea

Two Chinese fighters unsafely intercepted a U.S. Navy P-3C Orion anti-submarine warfare aircraft over the South China Sea this week, a U.S. defense official told USNI News on Friday.

[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES-VIETNAM | 26 MAY | USNI NEWS

Former U.S. Cutter Morgenthau Transferred to Vietnamese Coast Guard

The U.S. Coast Guard transferred a Hamilton-class cutter to the Vietnam Coast Guard during a Thursday ceremony in Hawaii.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA-SRI LANKA | 27 MAY | THE HINDU

Sri Lanka floods: Navy sends three ships for relief operations

As death toll mounts in Sri Lanka due to incessant

floods and landslides, Indian Navy has stepped in to assist its southern neighbour and dispatched several ships to Colombo with personnel and relief material.

[Full Report](#)



SOUTH KOREA | 27 MAY | REUTERS

S. Korea's anti-piracy unit searches for Mongolian ship off Somalia

South Korea has dispatched its anti-piracy naval unit to waters off Somalia after communication with a Mongolian fishing vessel was cut when it requested help, fearing it was being followed by a suspected pirate vessel.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA-MAURITIUS | 28 MAY | THE INDIAN EXPRESS

India and Mauritius sign deal on maritime security

In a bid to ramp up bilateral cooperation on maritime security, India and Mauritius on Saturday signed a maritime security agreement after extensive talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the visiting Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA-BANGLADESH | 31 MAY | FIRSTPOST

Indian Navy ship rescues 27 in cyclone-hit Bangladesh, one more vessel with relief material on its way

After Sri Lanka, the Indian Navy has rushed two ships for relief and rescue operations in cyclone-hit Bangladesh, Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba said on Wednesday.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN-THE PHILIPPINES | 31 MAY | UPDATE PHILIPPINES

Japan, PH coast guards conduct exercise in Davao

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Japan Coast Guard (JCG) are conducting the 12th Maritime Law Enforcement Exercise from May 30 to June 2 at vicinity waters off Davao.

[Full Report](#)



INDIA | 1 MAY | LIVE MINT

Major ports in India to take satellite port route for expansion

Government-run ports in Chennai, Paradip and JNPT in Mumbai are developing satellite ports as part of their expansion plans.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 2 MAY | THE STRAITS TIMES

Singapore to be LNG bunker-ready by 2020: Koh Poh Koon

Singapore plans to be liquefied natural gas (LNG)-bunker ready in the next three years, said Dr Koh Poh Koon, senior minister of state for Ministry of Trade and Industry and National Development.

[Full Report](#)

ASIA-PACIFIC | 4 MAY | LLOYD'S LOADING LIST

Intra-Asia port congestion

Ports in Asia critical to the textile sector but struggling with congestion are disrupting intra-Asia shipping services and supplies to garment importers in Europe.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 5 MAY | THE JAKARTA GLOBE

Jokowi Instructs Maritime Industries to Boost Seaport Development

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has called for more infrastructure development projects and increased sea toll routes to boost the country's maritime industry.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 5 MAY | REUTERS

Malaysia's clogged oil shipping lanes underscore failure to reduce glut

Record amounts of unsold fuel show an OPEC-led agreement to cut production in the first half of 2017 has yet to tighten the market.

[Full Report](#)

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JAPAN | 5 MAY | NIKKEI

Japan shipbuilders look to innovate their way out of slump

Japanese shipbuilders are joining forces to develop self-navigation systems and other technology that could help them escape damaging price competition with Asian rivals.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-MYANMAR | 5 MAY | REUTERS

Exclusive: China seeks up to 85 percent stake in strategic port in Myanmar

China is looking to take a stake of up to 85 percent in a strategically important sea port in Myanmar, according to documents reviewed by Reuters, in a move that could heighten tensions over China's growing economic clout in the country.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 8 MAY | LLOYD'S LOADING LIST

Congestion in China

Chinese ports are currently encountering a nasty bout of congestion brought on by a number of coalescing factors.

[Full Report](#)



CHINA-SRI LANKA | 8 MAY | THE HINDU

Ports Authority concerned over Hambantota

It is not just New Delhi or Washington that is worried about Colombo's proposed deal to sell a deep-sea port in Hambantota to a Chinese company. Sri Lanka's ports authority has "fundamental concerns" over the proposed deal, its Chairman Dammika Ranatunga said.

[Full Report](#)

SOUTH KOREA | 11 MAY | YONHAP NEWS

S. Korean firms to pitch for clean energy ships at maritime fair

South Korea's major shipyards are scheduled to attend

an international shipping exhibition to be held in Norway later this month to showcase their cutting-edge shipbuilding know-how in clean and fuel-efficient ships, industry sources said Thursday.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 18 MAY | XINHUA

China Headlines: China succeeds in mining combustible ice in South China Sea

China has succeeded in collecting samples of combustible ice in the South China Sea, a major breakthrough that may lead to a global energy revolution, Minister of Land and Resources Jiang Daming said Thursday.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 19 MAY | CNN MONEY

Goodbye high seas, hello cubicle. Sailor – the next desk job.

Automation is storming the transportation sector, eliminating some jobs and turning others into desk jobs.

[Full Report](#)

SOUTH KOREA | 22 MAY | YONHAP NEWS

Chinese shipbuilders win huge chunk of orders from S. Korean shippers

Chinese shipbuilders have received orders from South Korean shippers to build 13 ships so far this year, while their South Korean rivals clinched deals from local shippers to build just seven ships.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 22 MAY | PLATTS

How can ship owners best deal with tighter IMO sulfur limits post-2020?

At the risk of stating the obvious, ship owners are in a tight spot.

[Full Report](#)

ASIA-PACIFIC | 30 MAY | LLOYD'S LOADING LIST

Intra-Asia riding high

Container traffic within Asia is flying according to trade statistics, but carriers are yet to feel the benefit.

[Full Report](#)