

## Featured *MSP Perspectives*:



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## NOTES

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Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Royal Thai Navy combined three separate events, namely, the International Fleet Review 2017, the inaugural ASEAN Multilateral Naval Exercise (AMNEX) and the 11th ASEAN Navy Chiefs' Meeting (ANCM) under the broad rubric of the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN International Fleet Review 2017, on 13-22 November. Amidst the pomp and grandeur – ASEAN and other regional navies turned out with some of their most sophisticated vessels, the event might well be easily misconstrued as mere pageantry.

Yet it should not obviate the fact that over these fifty years, ASEAN navies have grown steadily in terms of their overall capabilities and professionalism. Many of them started out by inheriting the equipment, training norms and organizational culture of their countries' former colonial masters, or patron powers back in those tumultuous Cold War decades. By and large, these navies were rather unimpressive back then – they were simply incapable of anything beyond brownwater operations. Even day-to-day missions against common occurrences of maritime security challenges, especially posed by non-state actors, could be problematic for want of sufficient manpower, resources and knowhow. Conventional warfighting at sea was largely limited to seaward defense against a potential amphibious attack, whereas protection of vital sea lines of communications – except for those plying through the closest territorial and internal waters – would be intermittent at best.

Funding priorities in the Cold War days dictated an emphasis on land and air forces, whereas navies in Southeast Asia were often relegated to an afterthought. This changed following the fall of the Soviet Union, coinciding with major developments in the realm of geopolitics and international maritime law. ASEAN governments came to realize the crucial importance of maritime defense and security, and thereby embarked on a spate of modernization to expand those brownwater fleets into, at best, a greenwater one. This remains work in progress, not least often susceptible to prevailing hurdles encountered along the way – the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-1998 being one example. Not to mention also the need for ASEAN governments to continue emphasizing socioeconomic development, which meant that some of them would still scourge for any little scraps of funding to build, operate and sustain a viable naval force.

Small as they may be – ASEAN navies continue to strive towards a more balanced capability. Thus far, as this golden jubilee event has amply demonstrated, ASEAN navies have come of age in terms of the extent of capabilities and professionalism they have accumulated over time. No longer are many of them strictly brownwater navies – several of them, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have deployed warships to international security operations in distant regions. Bluewater capabilities do not necessarily equate

to having a bluewater navy though. But the array of capabilities at their disposal gives some of these ASEAN navies, and their political masters, a wider berth of strategic options. After all, navies serve as a flexible tool of foreign policy, not just an exclusive province of great maritime powers.

That said, while ASEAN navies have come of age in terms of gaining a wider, more balanced spectrum of constabulary and warfighting capabilities, not least cultivated also through collaborative efforts with one another and with other regional counterparts, much work remains to be done. Southeast Asian waters continues to be fraught with complexity and uncertainties, facing a diverse array of maritime challenges both traditional and non-traditional in nature. Point to note is that capability and capacity are separate attributes for what makes a balanced and mission-capable navy. While having gained qualitative enhancements in capabilities – manifested in the increasing sophistication of each new asset brought into service – ASEAN navies continue to face unevenness in the distribution of capacities, and several of them still enduring teething capacity shortfalls while struggling to do more with less.

The way forward, in view of the persistence of capacity shortfalls, is naturally to place greater emphasis on cooperation. AMNEX is a noteworthy example of how ASEAN navies can collectively come together, but this exercise suits more of a "low hanging fruit" type of activity. The real test would be to engage in more frequent cooperative activities on a daily basis – moving beyond information-sharing (and of course, this aspect needs further strengthening), but also towards building greater levels of interoperability. If not ASEAN as a collective whole, "going mini-lateral" would be an ideal formula. In this regard, ASEAN made the maiden attempt with the Malacca Straits Patrols, and most lately, the Trilateral Maritime and Air Patrols in the Sulu/Celebes Seas.

These initiatives may exist as part of a hodgepodge of loosely-patterned intra-ASEAN maritime security cooperation well into the future. It might be time to look beyond those "low hanging fruits" and consider expanding the complexity and scope of engagements between navies commensurate with the growing modernity and sophistication of their fleets. This way, ASEAN navies (and alongside their "white hulled" civilian maritime law enforcement brethren) could demonstrate the ability of their governments to effectively cope with and keep in step with evolving maritime challenges, but also contribute towards adding substance to the notion of ASEAN community building and positing the bloc in the driving seat of the regional architecture.



UNITED STATES | 14 NOVEMBER | YONHAP

## **(Yonhap Feature) Three U.S. supercarriers showcase joint force against N. Korea**

Leading the largest demonstration of U.S. military power near North Korea in recent years, the USS Ronald Reagan's message was clear: We are bulky but nimble.

[Full Report](#)

PAKISTAN | 2 NOVEMBER | DAWN

## **Pakistan Navy buying vessels for special operations from US company**

Pakistan Navy has placed an order for two 75m Swift Corvettes from a US-based shipbuilding company, Swiftships, said the company's Chief Executive Officer Shehrazee Shah.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 3 NOVEMBER | ANTARA

## **Indonesia should create new maritime map: Minister**

Indonesia currently needs to prepare a new maritime map to overcome legal problems in the maritime field, Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan stated.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 6 NOVEMBER | HINDUSTAN TIMES

## **Indian Navy carrier may get US aircraft launching system**

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting US President Donald Trump on November 13, the India and the US made some progress with a proposed Indian Navy carrier to be fitted with electric propelled latest electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS) and powered by integrated electric propulsion.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-THE PHILIPPINES | 8 NOVEMBER | GMA NEWS

## **Duterte stops PHL build on Sandy Cay due to China protest —DND**

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Wednesday said President Rodrigo Duterte has ordered the stop to the construction on Sandy Cay due to strong opposition from China.

[Full Report](#)

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INDIA | 10 NOVEMBER | THE TIMES OF INDIA

### 'No question of letting US officials near INS Chakra': India dismisses Russian reports

The country's defence establishment has rejected Russian media reports that India allowed US military officials on board the nuclear-powered submarine INS Chakra, which has been leased from Russia for 10 years under a \$900 million deal.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 14 NOVEMBER | THE STRAITS TIMES

### RSN gears up amid regional challenges, with two new littoral mission vessels turning operational

Warship RSS Independence has begun its first overseas deployment since turning operational this May, with two other Littoral Mission Vessels (LMVs) ready for action too as the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) gears up amid growing regional challenges.

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN | 15 NOVEMBER | TAIPEI TIMES

### Presidency embroiled in Ching Fu case

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Ma Wen-chun yesterday accused the Presidential Office of pressuring the Ministry of National Defense to pay Ching Fu Shipbuilding Co NT\$2.4 billion (US\$79.52 million at the current exchange rate) months before the budget was set to be allocated so the company could carry out phase three of its plan to build minesweepers for the navy.

[Full Report](#)

NORTH KOREA | 16 NOVEMBER | CNBC

### North Korea is 'on an aggressive schedule' to develop a ballistic missile submarine

North Korea is reportedly moving closer to developing a submarine capable of firing ballistic missiles.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 16 NOVEMBER | CHINA DAILY

### China develops a catapult for planes

China has developed its own version of a cutting-edge device previously possessed only by the United States and is poised to use it to boost its aircraft carrier fleet's

combat capability.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN | 19 NOVEMBER | THE JAPAN TIMES

### Japan to expand SDF base in tiny but strategically important Djibouti

Japan has agreed to lease 3 hectares (7.4 acres) of empty land in the strategically important African country of Djibouti for use by Self-Defense Forces troops conducting antipiracy missions in the Gulf of Aden off Somalia, Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera has said.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 24 NOVEMBER | THE TIMES OF INDIA

### India conducts major exercise in strategically-located Andaman & Nicobar Islands

India has conducted a major military exercise in the strategically-located Andaman and Nicobar Island archipelago, which with requisite force-levels and infrastructure, can effectively act as a pivot to counter China's strategic moves in the Indian Ocean Region + (IOR) as well as ensure security of sea lanes converging towards the Malacca Strait.

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA | 25 NOVEMBER | THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

### All hands on deck in Turnbull government's German-led, four-company patrol ship plan

The Turnbull government has picked a German firm to design its new \$3.5 billion fleet of naval patrol ships but, in an unusual move, will split the building of the vessels between three companies across Adelaide and Fremantle.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 25 NOVEMBER | CHINA DAILY

### Live-fire exercises conducted by PLA base in Djibouti

The Djibouti Logistics Support Base of the People's Liberation Army conducted a live-fire exercise on Thursday with its heavy-duty weapons, according to the Chinese military.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 30 NOVEMBER | GLOBAL TIMES

### China showcases jet fighters at South China Sea island

The official Chinese media's broadcast of Chinese J-11B fighters entering a sealed hangar in the Xisha Islands showcases China's improving air and sea control of the South China Sea, a Chinese military expert said.

[Full Report](#)



ASEAN | 20 NOVEMBER | BANGKOK POST

## **Asean navies boost ties in fleet review**

Navy forces in Southeast Asian countries have agreed to bolster cooperation in dealing with security, disasters and environmental threats.

[Full Report](#)

ASEAN-CHINA | 1 NOVEMBER | CHANNEL NEWSASIA

## **China, ASEAN hold joint naval drills as tensions ease**

China and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have held their largest-ever joint maritime rescue exercise, signalling a lull in South China Sea tensions.

[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES | 1 NOVEMBER | USNI NEWS

## **Navy Stands Up Naval Surface Group WESTPAC to Train, Certify Forward-Deployed Ships**

U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Scott Swift stood up a new organization that will oversee the training and certification of forward-deployed surface forces.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 2 NOVEMBER | THE HINDU

## **India offers to share real-time maritime data**

India has made an offer to share intelligence of maritime movements in the Indian Ocean in real-time with 10 Indian Ocean littoral states.

[Full Report](#)

SOMALIA | 7 NOVEMBER | UN NEWS CENTRE

## **UN Security Council urges 'comprehensive response' to piracy off Somali coast**

Condemning the acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, the United Nations Security Council today called for a comprehensive response to prevent and suppress such acts and tackle their underlying causes.

[Full Report](#)

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### **Something fishy going on at sea**

Only half of the 800,000 tonnes of fish caught in Malaysian waters make it to shore every year, says the Fisheries Department.

[Full Report](#)

### **PCG: PH, China reach breakthrough in Coast Guard diplomacy**

The Philippines and China have established the Joint Coast Guard Committee on Maritime Cooperation.

[Full Report](#)

### **China, ASEAN to Begin Talks on S. China Sea Code of Conduct**

Foreign policy analysts remain skeptical about the agreement between China and Southeast Asian nations to officially start negotiations on a legally binding code of conduct to resolve disputes in the South China Sea.

[Full Report](#)

### **Sea combat training in Sri Lanka to upgrade skills in maritime security control**

Malaysian security and enforcement personnel will undergo sea combat training in Sri Lanka to strengthen and upgrade their skills in maritime security control.

[Full Report](#)

### **Japan vows ₱6.7 B assistance to strengthen PH maritime surveillance**

Japan vowed Tuesday to provide roughly ₱6.7 billion in assistance to help strengthen the maritime surveillance capability of the Philippines.

[Full Report](#)

### **8 rescued after US Navy aircraft crashes in Philippine Sea**

Rescuers plucked eight people to safety on Wednesday (Nov 22) south of Japan after a US Navy aircraft with 11 people on board came down in the Philippine Sea, the latest accident to hit American armed forces in East Asia.

[Full Report](#)



### **Indonesia Convenes International Conference to Address Ocean and Coastal Issues**

Indonesia this week convened an international conference to address ocean issues and the challenge of sustainable development faced by archipelagic and island states due to climate change.

[Full Report](#)

### **Maritime security: Isro to help track suspicious vessels through satellite imageries**

Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) will soon help agencies engaged in coastal and maritime security to track suspicious vessels and boats through satellite imagery.

[Full Report](#)

### **Singapore and India to boost cooperation in maritime security**

Singapore and India will step up cooperation in maritime security, Singapore's Ministry for Defence (MINDEF) said in a press release on Wednesday (Nov 29).

[Full Report](#)

### **Sea of Japan fishermen faced with double threat of missiles, suspicious boats**

Japanese fishermen who operate in the Sea of Japan are not only faced with the threat of missile launches from North Korea but also the recent arrival of suspicious boats from the same country -- causing them to feel both angry and concerned.

[Full Report](#)



SOUTH KOREA | 2 NOVEMBER | REUTERS

## Back from the abyss: South Korea's shipbuilders begin ascent to growth

Sparks light up the night-shift at giant shipyards on Korea's southeast coast, as welders and fitters at some of the world's biggest marine engineers forge next-generation container ships, oil rigs and even ice-breaking tankers in a bid to clamber out of a global industry abyss.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 1 NOVEMBER | PEOPLE'S DAILY ONLINE

## China's self-developed drilling platform finishes deep-sea test

China's self-developed semi-submersible drilling platform A5000 recently finished deep-sea testing, marking the country's further improvement in the manufacturing of high-end drilling equipment.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 4 NOVEMBER | JAKARTA POST

## World's first smart ship on trial voyage

The world's first smart ship, developed and built by China State Shipbuilding Corp, has started its first trial voyage in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA-IRAN | 6 NOVEMBER | REUTERS

## India cracks open Iran sea route to Afghanistan, bypassing rival

India is in talks with Iran to begin interim operations at a port in southeast Iran, officials say, proceeding cautiously on developing the facility at a time when the Trump administration has laid an aggressive new approach toward Tehran.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 9 NOVEMBER | STRAITS TIMES

## Rising sea levels, new shipping routes are why Singapore is interested in the Arctic: Tommy Koh

The icy Arctic is almost a world apart from sunny Singapore, but the Republic has many "defensive and aggressive" interests in the region, said Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh.

[Full Report](#)

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SINGAPORE | 10 NOVEMBER | REUTERS

### **Sinking feeling: Asian floating oil storage declines as crude market tightens**

The amount of oil stored on tankers around Singapore has dropped sharply in the last months, the latest indication that OPEC-led supply cuts are successfully tightening crude markets even as U.S. exports have soared.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 13 NOVEMBER | FITCH RATINGS

### **Tanker shipping oversupply to keep rates low in 2018**

A glut of new vessel deliveries and limited scrapping of older ships means the global tanker market will remain oversupplied in the near term, Fitch Ratings says.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 17 NOVEMBER | CLARKSON

### **Containership orderbook: not just a one horse race**

This year has seen a further shake up in the profile of the containership orderbook.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 19 NOVEMBER | ANTARA

### **Government seeks to increase fisheries exports**

The government is trying to decrease the import duty abroad, improve transportation system at home, and expand fishing vessels to increase domestic fish production, in an effort to boost fishery product exports.

[Full Report](#)

SINGAPORE | 20 NOVEMBER | STRAITS TIMES

### **MPA to facilitate remote ship surveys**

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) is working on an acceptance criteria for using remote inspection techniques such as drones to carry out ship surveys.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 20 NOVEMBER | STRAITS TIMES

### **Carey Island port project to go on as planned, Malaysia minister says**

The Malaysian government will develop the Carey Island port as planned, contrary to reports that the project has been put on hold, Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said.

[Full Report](#)



MALAYSIA | 22 NOVEMBER | STRAITS TIMES

### **Malaysia's Transport Minister says Port Klang lost some business to Singapore**

The lower revenue recorded by Port Klang last year (2016) is due to some international shipping companies shifting operations to Singapore.

[Full Report](#)

MYANMAR | 25 NOVEMBER | ELEVEN (MYANMAR)

### **Yangon's port under study for expansion**

Feasibility studies have been conducted for extending Yangon jetty to the mouth of the sea to be able to dock large ships, said Yangon's Chief Minister at a November 12 ceremony during a regular meeting of businessmen and women with Vice President (1) Myint Swe held at the UMFCCL.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 29 NOVEMBER | ANTARA NEWS

### **Indonesia, Denmark improve cooperation in maritime and energy fields**

The cooperation includes designing ship routes and mapping wind flows throughout Indonesian regions for establishing wind power plants.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 29 NOVEMBER | THE HINDU BUSINESS LINE

### **India pledges to ratify IMO's convention on recycling of ships**

India has drafted legislation to implement the 'Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships', which was adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2009.

[Full Report](#)