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MSP Guest Columnist

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Indonesia has recently moved to acquire its sixth submarine. The Directorate-General of Defence Potential of the Ministry of Defence has earmarked US\$1.9 million for a transfer-of-technology consultation with an undisclosed third party. With this underway, Indonesia has come closer to reaching its Minimum Essential Force (MEF) target of having eight submarines. This number was reduced from twelve to account for changing budgetary circumstances. Previously, in 2017, Indonesia received two of three *Chang Bogo*-class submarines, a variant of the German Type 209 diesel-electric attack submarine.

Back in the 1960s, the Indonesian Navy was one of the largest and most experienced in the region. It boasted a fleet of twelve submarines and even more principal surface combatants. Its operational experience came from the various rebellions and insurgencies the fledgling republic had to face during its tumultuous transition from a Dutch colony to a sovereign country.

How does Indonesia fare in comparison with its other neighbours? With the commissioning of two new submarines, Indonesia's submarine fleet now comprises of two operational submarines. The third submarine, currently under construction in Surabaya through a transfer-of-technology scheme, will likely be operational in early 2019.

At the regional level, Vietnam acquired six *Kilo*-class submarines from Russia. The Royal Thai Navy has begun acquiring three submarines from China (earliest expected delivery is in 2023) and has reportedly started developing "midget submarines". These dynamics are generally attributed to be a response of China's increasing assertive behaviour in the South China Sea.

The role of submarines in Indonesia's broader maritime strategy

Indonesia's submarine acquisition can be considered as a modest act of naval

modernisation that serves to slightly bolster its deterrence capabilities.

Along with other elements of the fleet, submarines could help Indonesia patrol its wide and porous maritime borders. This translates to an increased naval deterrence capability. But this raises the question: deterrence against whom?

So far, Indonesia does not have a putative adversary in the region. It seeks to be a regional balancer while at the same time practicing equidistance in great power relations. Indonesia's 2015 Defence White Paper does not perceive a conventional war as an immediate security threat; instead, it emphasizes non-traditional maritime security threats such as illegal fishing, piracy, and maritime terrorism. Surely submarines would be ill-fitted for these threats. Thus, it could be assumed that Indonesia's growing submarine fleet is to provide a general sense of security, especially in the face of uncertain regional dynamics.

On top of deterrence, the acquisition of new submarines serves to sustain the Navy's operational experience. There are only two Type-209 submarines left from the Cold War, and one has recently been decommissioned and the last one remaining can barely be considered operationally ready. With these conditions, the Navy would require new platforms so they can continue honing their submarine skills in both domestic and multilateral exercises.

Conclusion

The growth of Indonesia's submarine fleet is a result of both its long-term aspirations and changing regional dynamics. Achieving these aspirations necessitate a 'jack of all trades' navy capable of addressing a wide variety of maritime security threats in the region. This includes both traditional and non-traditional security threats.



SOUTH KOREA | 14 SEPTEMBER | YONHAP

(LEAD) South Korea launches 3,000-ton homegrown submarine

South Korea held a launching ceremony Friday for a 3,000-ton indigenous submarine, a new strategic weapons system designed to bolster underwater defense capabilities.

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN | 1 SEPTEMBER | TAIWAN NEWS

Taiwan to complete first domestic submarine in 2025

The construction of Taiwan's first-ever domestic submarine should be completed by 2025 following the spending of NT\$49.3 billion (US\$1.6 billion) beginning next year, reports said Saturday.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-UNITED KINGDOM | 6 SEPTEMBER | REUTERS

British Navy warship sails near South China Sea islands, angering Beijing

Beijing urged the UK to immediately halt 'provocative actions' when the HMS Albion sailed close to the disputed Paracel Islands, which the Chinese Foreign Ministry claimed as an infringement on Chinese sovereignty.

[Full Report](#)

SOUTH KOREA | 7 JULY | YONHAP

Logistical support ship Soyang to be delivered to Navy

A new 10,000-ton logistical support ship will be delivered to the Navy on Friday, the state defense procurement agency said, potentially raising the country's capability to conduct long-endurance maritime operations.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 9 SEPTEMBER | REUTERS

China engages in Australia's largest maritime drill for first time

China is participating for the first time in Australia's largest maritime exercise as more than 3,000 personnel from 27 countries engage in joint training off the strategic northern port of Darwin.

[Full Report](#)

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SOUTH KOREA | 12 SEPTEMBER | YONHAP

Marine Corps mulls new transport ship, UAVs to reinforce amphibious capabilities

The Marine Corps is considering introducing a large transport ship capable of carrying warplanes, and mobilizing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to enhance its amphibious operations and surveillance capabilities, its chief said Wednesday.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 13 SEPTEMBER | GLOBAL TIMES

Aircraft carrier-based fighter jet officially capable of night combat

The J-15 fighter jet is capable of night takeoff and landing on an aircraft carrier, the Chinese navy newspaper said Wednesday, leading a Chinese military expert to marvel at how fast the pilots mastered a difficult and dangerous technique.

[Full Report](#)



RUSSIA | 14 SEPTEMBER | TASS

Up to 20 warships conducted drills in Sea of Okhotsk as part of Vostok 2018 exercise

A strike group of the Pacific Fleet warships headed by the Varyag guided-missile cruiser has worked out cooperation with two units of small corvette anti-submarine warfare ships in the Sea of Okhotsk as part of the Vostok-2018 exercise, the Russian Defense Ministry told journalists on Friday.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN | 17 SEPTEMBER | THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

Japanese sub conducts drills in South China Sea for 1st time

Demonstrating freedom of navigation, a Japanese submarine for the first time conducted drills in the South China Sea where China is constructing military facilities, according to Japanese government sources.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 17 SEPTEMBER | USNI NEWS

China Sent Uninvited Spy Ship to Russian Vostok 2018 Exercise Alongside Troops, Tanks

Russia recently concluded the 2018 edition of the massive Vostok exercise series that included Chinese

forces for the first time. At Moscow's invitation, Beijing sent People's Liberation Army soldiers, helicopters, tanks – and one uninvited Chinese surveillance ship.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 18 SEPTEMBER | ANTARA NEWS

Indonesian Navy ready to commission PT PAL-assembled submarine

The Indonesian Navy stated that it would be ready to commission its new submarine manufactured by state-owned shipbuilder PT PAL Indonesia, after it is confirmed to be delivered in October.

[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES | 24 SEPTEMBER | USNI NEWS

Navy, Air Force Test Deploys 2,000-Pound Mine at Stand-off Range

A joint Navy and Air Force test successfully deployed a 2,000-pound shallow-water mine from altitude and at speed from outside a presumed enemy's anti-aircraft range – a first for the U.S. military – during the recently completed Valiant Shield 2018 exercise.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-UNITED STATES | 25 SEPTEMBER | SCMP

China denies request for Hong Kong port call by American warship

In the context of escalating trade tensions between the United States and China and US proposals to transfer arms to Taiwan, the Chinese government rejected a request for the USS Wasp to make a port call in Hong Kong next month.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN-UNITED KINGDOM | 27 SEPTEMBER | REUTERS

Japanese carrier drills with British warship heading to contested South China Sea

Japan's biggest warship, the Kaga helicopter carrier, joined naval drills with Britain's HMS Argyll in the Indian Ocean on Wednesday as the frigate headed toward the contested South China Sea and East Asia.

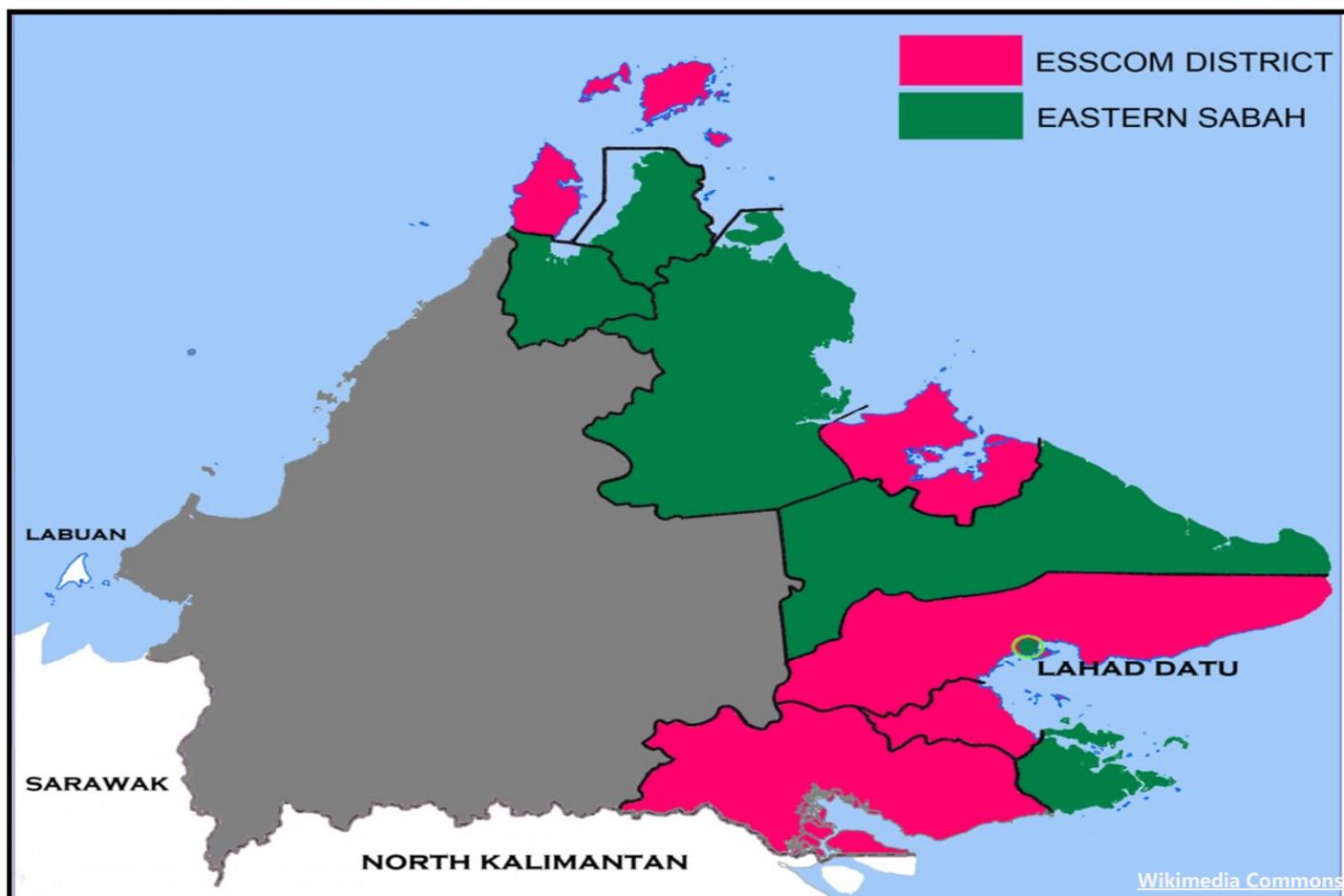
[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES | 30 SEPTEMBER | REUTERS

U.S. warship sails near disputed South China Sea islands: U.S. official

U.S. Navy destroyer sailed near islands claimed by China in the South China Sea on Sunday, a U.S. official told Reuters, potentially angering Beijing at a time of tense relations between the two countries.

[Full Report](#)



MALAYSIA | 11 SEPTEMBER | THE MALAY MAIL

Two Indonesian fishermen kidnapped off Semporna

Kidnappers here have struck again in Sabah's east coast, this time abducting two Indonesian fishermen in Semporna's Pulau Gaya early this morning.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 3 SEPTEMBER | RAPPLER

Masbate seaport grenade blast destroys 2 patrol boats

Two speed boats, one of the Philippine Army and another of the Philippine Coast Guard, were damaged when a grenade exploded in the Masbate seaport on Monday midnight, September 3.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 4 SEPTEMBER | INQUIRER.NET

Stranded PH Navy flagship pulled from shoal

The Philippine Navy's flagship BRP Gregorio del Pilar (FF-15) was successfully refloated shortly before midnight on Monday, six days after it ran aground in Hasa Hasa Shoal (Half-Moon Shoal) in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 4 SEPTEMBER | NEW STRAITS TIMES

RMN blocks 'rat routes' used by cross-border criminals at Sulu and Sulawesi seas

The Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) has identified 'rat routes' used by cross-border criminals at the Sulu and Sulawesi seas to enter Sabah illegally and undetected.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 5 SEPTEMBER | CHINA DAILY

Drill hones slick emergency response

China conducted an oil slick cleanup drill in the East China Sea on Tuesday to improve the country's emergency response ability.

[Full Report](#)

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INDONESIA | 6 SEPTEMBER | ANTARA NEWS

Collaboration needed to tackle various maritime issues: Minister

Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs Luhut B. Pandjaitan emphasized the urgent need for collaboration among archipelagic and island nations for tackling various maritime issues.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 6 SEPTEMBER | PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Rollout of new rules for fishing vessels eyed before yearend

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) is eyeing the implementation of exclusive rules and regulations for fishing vessels before the end of the year.

[Full Report](#)



SOUTH KOREA-VIETNAM | 11 SEPTEMBER | YONHAP

S. Korea passes on fishing control knowhow to Vietnam

South Korea has shared its fisheries management and inspection knowhow with Vietnam to help the country better deal with illegal fishing, the government said Tuesday.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 17 SEPTEMBER | RAPPLER

BFAR 'loses' 57 patrol boats acquired from grant, loans

The Commission on Audit said in its annual report that the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has all but neglected and left to waste two batches of patrol boats it acquired from a foreign grant and loans.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 20 SEPTEMBER | PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Drone captures fishing vessels dumping suspected used oil in Palawan

Drone photos captured by a foreign lawyer and videographer showing two large commercial fishing

vessels and three smaller boats dumping suspected used oil near a hot spring and a marine protected area (MPA) in Coron have gone viral.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 21 SEPTEMBER | FREE MALAYSIA TODAY

2 suspected kidnappers shot dead after Sabah high speed sea chase

Police in Sabah have shot dead two men believed to be involved in the abduction of two Indonesian fishermen after a high-speed chase at sea near Bohayan Island last night.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 23 SEPTEMBER | NEW STRAITS TIMES

Esscom to discuss with Chief Minister on colour-coding pump boats

Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom) will meet Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal to deliberate on the use of pump boats following recent kidnapping and shooting incidents in the east coast's waters.

[Full Report](#)

AUSTRALIA-MALAYSIA | 24 SEPTEMBER | THE SUN DAILY

No recent smuggling of migrants in Johor waters

The Johor Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and the Australia Border Force (ABF) have not detected any smuggling of West Asian migrants in the waters of Johor for the past several years due to their continuous integrated operations especially in Operation Redback since 2011.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 28 SEPTEMBER | THE JAKARTA POST

Susi calls for global action to ban transshipment on high seas

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti has said countries should start to consider redefining governance on the high seas and imposing a complete ban on transshipment to curb illegal fishing.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-JAPAN | 28 SEPTEMBER | KYODO NEWS

Japan, China to cooperate over N. Korea's ship-to-ship transfers

Japan and China agreed Thursday to cooperate in handling ship-to-ship goods transfers by North Korea in violation of U.N. sanctions, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono said.

[Full Report](#)



GLOABL | 30 SEPTEMBER | THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE

IACS Publishes Cyber Safety Recommendations

The International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) has published nine of its 12 recommendations on cyber safety for ships.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 5 SEPTEMBER | XINHUA

China Focus: China-made degradable plastics promise end to ocean pollution

Chinese scientists have developed a plastic that degrades in seawater and could help curb the increasingly serious plastic pollution in the oceans.

[Full Report](#)

GERMANY | 5 SEPTEMBER | HELLENIC SHIPPING NEWS

Maritime Future Summit: Evolution, not revolution

The topic is reiterated in every discussion revolving around the future of the sector: Unmanned shipping. But it will be a long way until truly autonomous ships become a reality.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 6 SEPTEMBER | PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Gov't sets more stringent tuna conservation measures

The government will implement more stringent conservation measures to ensure the proper management of the country's dwindling tuna resources.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 9 SEPTEMBER | MARPRO NEWS

Leading Maritime Nations of the World 2018

DNV GL and Menon Economics announced that China is the top international shipping nation according to their new report "The Leading Maritime Nations of the World", which was presented at the SMM trade fair in Hamburg today.

[Full Report](#)

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GLOBAL | 10 SEPTEMBER | THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE

UN Considers Globally-Managed Protected Areas on High Seas

On Monday, South Africa and other national participants in the UN high seas treaty talks raised the possibility of global enforcement mechanisms for marine protected areas (MPAs).

[Full Report](#)



PAKISTAN | 11 SEPTEMBER | THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

Pakistan wants to develop Gwadar as 'oil city' under CPEC

Pakistan wants to develop Gwadar not only as economic hub but also an oil city under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, Petroleum Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan said Monday.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 13 SEPTEMBER | MARINE LINK

Seven Major Ports Join Climate Action Program

Seven ports have now elevated the Paris Agreement Climate Goal to the top of their agendas to keep global warming well below 2°C.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN-SRI LANKA | 13 SEPTEMBER | COLOMBO GAZETTE

Hambantota Port signs first TSA deal with Japanese transportation giant

The Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG) has entered into their very first Terminal Service Agreement (TSA) with K-Line PTE Limited (KLPL), one of the world's largest Ro Ro operators and a member of the global giant in transportation, Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd of Japan.

[Full Report](#)

THAILAND | 24 SEPTEMBER | MARKET INSIDER

Significant Strides Made in Thailand's Battle against IUU Fishing

Ministry of Foreign Affairs unveils the Thai

government's efforts in fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the country, with the battle being waged on many fronts simultaneously. It is worth highlighting some of them.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 24 SEPTEMBER | JOC

India studying mid-sea site for transshipment operations

With India's economy growing at a robust pace – fiscal-quarter (April-June) GDP growth forecast to increase 8.2 percent – the emerging market nation is considering a more-strategic port locale along the Bay of Bengal coast for transshipment operations.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 26 SEPTEMBER | NEW STRAITS TIMES

Negri Sembilan considers developing maritime hub, improve MVV

The Negri Sembilan State Assembly was informed today that the state government is planning to develop a maritime hub in Tanjung Agas, Port Dickson.

[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES | 28 SEPTEMBER | SPLASH 24/7

Ports on alert as cyber attack proliferate

The cyber security attack that hit the Port of San Diego on Tuesday included ransomware and demand for Bitcoin, port officials said in a statement on Friday. The attack is the second at major global port this month with experts warning ports are coming under ever-greater attack from hackers.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 28 SEPTEMBER | SEATRADE MARITIME NEWS

Recent spike in bunker disputes - more to come with 2020 sulphur cap

The sharp rise in bunker problems seen in recent months is a precursor of what the market will see in the run up to 2020 and beyond as owners switch to hybrid, blended fuels to be compliant with the global 0.5% sulphur cap.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-PAKISTAN | 30 SEPTEMBER | REUTERS

Fearing debt trap, Pakistan rethinks China's Belt and Road projects

After lengthy delays, a US\$8.2 billion (S\$11.2 billion) revamp of a colonial-era rail line snaking from the Arabian Sea to the foothills of the Hindu Kush has become a test of Pakistan's ability to rethink signature Chinese "Silk Road" projects due to debt concerns.

[Full Report](#)