



MALAYSIA CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS MARITIME SECURITY IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

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Abstract

South China Sea (SCS) is located in the Southeast Asia. The maritime region hosts over 200 maritime resources that is complemented by geographical attribute of small to large islands. The SCS has a rich amount of resources such as oil, gas, and fisheries. However, nowadays there have a lot of threats that threatening the maritime security in this region. This article has two objectives, namely to 1) to identify the threats in the SCS and 2) to examine Malaysia contribution in SCS. By using qualitative approached, primary and secondary data were collected from 2000 to 2019. The finding of this study are 1) there were traditional and non- traditional threats in the SCS, 2) Malaysia in contributing towards the SCS Maritime security, had usage the internal security centric approach, maritime safety and security control approach and the Regional maritime cooperation approach in confront with the traditional, non-traditional threat and the maritime pollution threat within SCS.

Keywords: *Malaysia, Maritime Security, Non- traditional threats, Safety of navigation, South China Sea.*

Introduction

The South China Sea (SCS) is maritime region that expands to 1.7 million square km. This stretches from the region of East Malaysia with its furthest extent of that note being in the far east, marked by Taiwan PRC (China Institute of Navigation, 2018). The maritime region hosts over 200 maritime resources that is complemented by geographical attribute of small to large islands. Due to its characteristics, one of which being its depth, the area is not suitable for human settlement but it in turn hosts coral reefs. The SCS' resources include rich amount of resources for oil and gas, and fisheries. It is within the same maritime route that Malaysia is dependent on it for transportation of goods and hosting as one of the littoral states for the sea lanes. Due to its importance to not just the countries in the region but at international scale, SCS conflict had draws the international attention and media and had become among the global conflict issue.

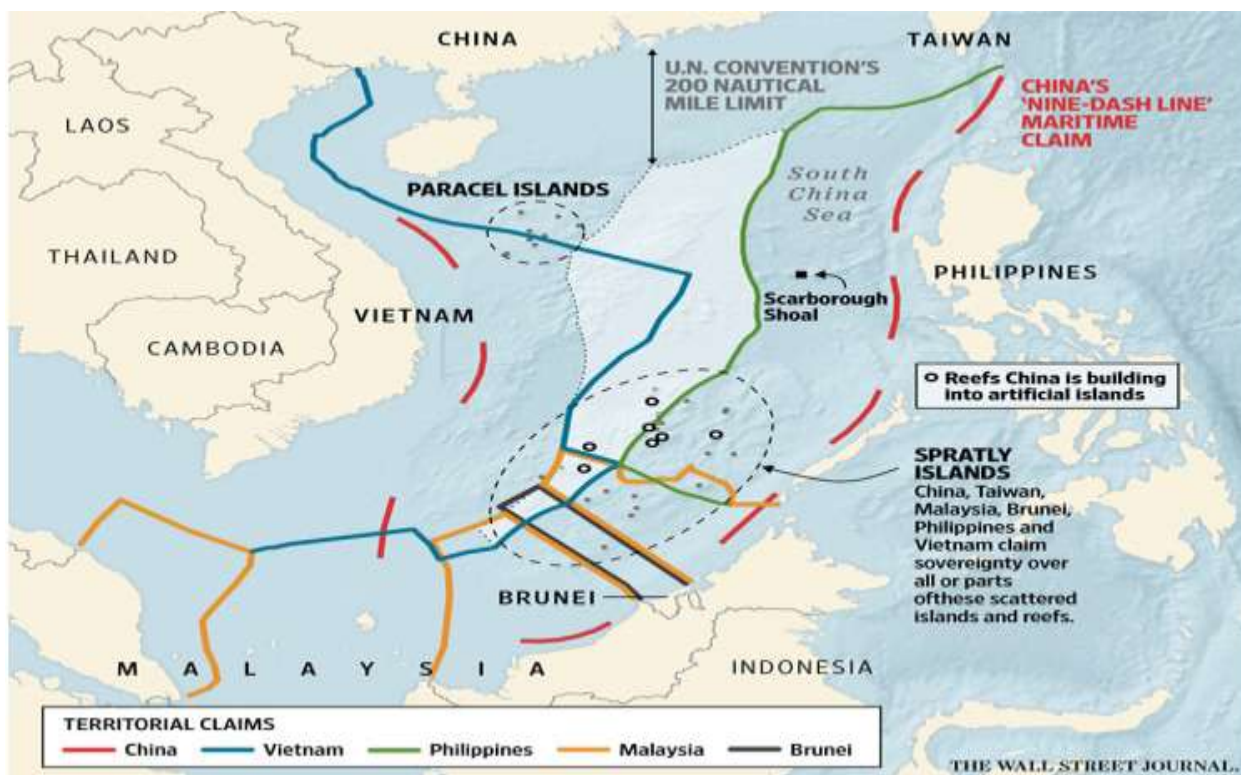
South China Sea Maritime Security Threats

The oceans that have this high geopolitical and geostrategic value had witnessed several incidents seen might triggered a military conflict in between the neighbouring littoral states. The territorial issues are the traditional threat conflict that would have very serious implications. Although the regional states had agreed to settling the issue in peacefully but there is no such guarantee. This issues seemed could threaten peace and stability of regional security which is an area of growing concern over other conflicting issues. The cases of sea robbery, piracy, transnational organised crimes, illegal smuggling, trafficking, trans-boundaries illegal migrations practices, and illegal fishing have affected the maritime safety standards in the region. Subsequently, issues of the safety navigation of the ship passage through the SCS SLOC are affected, hence the larger scale of stakeholders being involved.

a. Traditional threat issues

The claiming issues between the littoral states within SCS such as Malaysia, China, Philippine, Taiwan and Brunei Darul Salam among the global issues conflict. This claiming issues divided into two parts, which Parcel Island and Spratly Island. Parcel island involves of claiming between China and Taiwan whereby Spratly island involves of China with ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Philippine, Brunei Darul Salam and Vietnam. Map 1 shown the disputes in SCS. Initially analysis had found that this claiming issues are more towards the SCS contain of vast amount of oil and gas as well as for the beneficial of fishing industries that been required for those countries in order for their development of countries and the growth of economy.

Map1: South China Sea Disputes



Source: <https://sites.psu.edu/jlia/the-south-china-sea-disputes-a-clash-of-international-law-and-historical-claims/> (2018)

This serious issue had come out to the peak of conflict when there are several incident reported from 2011 – 2015 to show that the tensions among the littoral states within SCS. Although the example provided does not cover all the incidents happened, but it's enough to justified the incident that had occurred lately. According to reports, Philippines' fishermen received hostile fires from China's frigate Dongguan within the area of Jackson atoll in February 2011 (Tessa 2011). Later in May 2011, Vietnamese assets in shape of oil and gas survey vessels were facing disputes at sea with China's maritime patrol vessels just 120 km off the coast of Vietnam, and 600 km away from China's southern region known as Hainan Island (BBC News 2011). Further escalation occurred years after in 2014 when Philippine vessels again were ushered away by Chinese Coast Guard which were operating in the area of Spratly group of islands, specifically the Ayungin Shoal (Mangosing 2014). In Jun 2018, the area of Luconia Shoals saw the protest between Malaysian troops against China's Coast Guard. Further protests occurred in August 2015 between the two states, however, China had refused to move their vessel though, there were diplomatic notes exchanged (Ng & Moss 2015). China further claimed Beting Patinggi Ali islands in SCS despite being 400,000 kilometres away from the disputed location (The Rakyat Post 2015). The situation prolonged till November 2015, placing a dispute another state actor, Indonesia This led to the court inquest between China and Indonesia on the dispute over Natuna Islands (Daiss 2015). These incidents occurred in SCS and has raised certain level of uncertainty to the SLOC. Subsequently, this affected other countries' strategic interest in using the SLOC which is essential to their economic growth. This worrying situation in SCS, doubly will emerging the worst consequences in the future although there were a solution and settlement had been taken through the diplomacy way.

b. Non-traditional threat issues in SCS

Another crucial issues in the maritime threat environment is the Non -Traditional issues. As we known that Southeast Asia was the maritime piracy activities (Chalk 1998).SCS was a part of the concern area which this activity occurred other than Strait of Malacca. The economy factor was the crucial aspect that contribute towards this issue. Fishing industries among the nearest littoral sates people economy dependence such as Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia. The effect of the limited fishing ground or boundaries assess and the unpredicted disaster such as tsunami will affect the economy of the villages within the littoral states. In additional, the factor of good governance of the government in maintain the national economy and security also should be taken as consider. It is the possible reason for the villagers to conduct the terror and criminal activities if they are in struggle of living life.

In the other perspective, these villagers are as a tools for the other organized businessmen or criminal gangs. This organised crime had various intention in conducting their illegal maritime crime activities. Some of this activities conducted is more towards their self-interest and wealth as well as their way to survive. Another reason for conducting these illegal activities are for their funding to support their crime organisation in create chaos towards the certain government or terror action in gaining their organisation objective and intention. It is believing that this criminal organisation had their various network widely in perform their activities. Several attempts had been conducted to tackle this issues through the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA) in 1992 (Martin 2007).This agreement had been signed by 126 countries to deal with politically motivated violence at sea. However, it was not being accepted by some of the sates in Asia and they did not signatories. It cannot be denied this illegal organisation had move forward towards developments in globalization that might facilitate transnational collusion between different radical groups and separatist movements. Others concerns issues in SCS with maritime issue were armed robbery against operating vessels in the region and piracy. Due to the SCS being used by countries from outside of the region, this raised international interests for threats assessment to use SCS for seaborne trade and commuting practices. Findings through these assessments led to the speculation of the maritime stability in the region, citing potential sea robbery and piracy activities could lead to escalating terrorism activities.

A. Maritime crime

The illegal activities such as smuggling, trafficking, and seeking a new job away from their own country has looking increase in lately. The geographically nearby borders as a factor between states that shares similar culture such as West Malaysia, Indonesia through Sumatra side, East Malaysia, and the southern region of the Philippines has made it difficult to overcome trans-border issues such as trafficking, smuggling, and other illegal activities. Although there are several bilateral or trilateral cooperation in the area conducted but eventually it is looking un effective. There is not an easy way to avoid and to arresting the people which engaged in smuggling and illegal border crossings because of both citizens had well organise their cooperation in order to perform their illegal operation. Their modus operandi are always changing in regards with the environment. For example, the smuggling in the Sulu Sea area has been rapidly grown, especially from the Philippine side (John 2005). These illegal activities involve of illegal immigrant, sex trafficking, cigarettes, and other valuable commodities, including drugs. This case frequently happened within littoral state territorial water and conducting using them renovate fast boat which difficult to detected by the surveillance radar. In case of Malaysia and Indonesia, the illegal immigrant and illegal control item such as subsidized diesel and kerosene, other smuggled goods include alcohol. This activity had widespread although it was not in the large scale. There is much traditional movement of people by sea between southern Philippines and Sabah, as well as the movement of people between Sumatra, Malaysia, and southern Thailand. These movements are afraid to be exploited both by criminal and terrorist groups such as had occurred in Philippines. Overall, this maritime crime had occurred in SCS, but in the small numbers, it is because that SCS was the claiming territorial sea which had been safeguard by the involves littoral states especially China with their Coast Guard control over the sea.

i. Drugs and Arms Trafficking

Drugs and Arms Trafficking is another issue that need to be concern within the SCS. Despite, SCS case of incident is not too serious as South Malacca Strait. According to the World Drug Report 2010, more than 15 million people worldwide consume illicit morphine and heroin (Melly & Anthony 2013).Afghanistan is the largest producer of heroin at 380 metric tonnes(mt) in 2008. 15-20 mt is trafficked into China which has the

largest worlds of heroin users. With Myanmar follow as second world largest producer with 40mt in 2008. Thailand and Philippine was the biggest main market at the Southeast Asia. This environment is observing as serious and crucial towards the ASEAN region. The sea transportation among their main way to delivered that illegal items. SCS possibility had become the waterways for this organised group to enhance their market. However, there are no reported of any arrested due to this problem. For the trafficking in small arms, SCS also become the SLOC for this activities other than Malacca Strait and the Andaman Sea from southern Thailand into Aceh, Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka, and is also prevalent into and out of the Philippines (Taib 2004). The control of the trafficking in small arms was the most effective measure in preventing of violence used in acts of sea piracy and robbery. The pirate will utilise this opportunity and will making great use of them if this activity still occurred without any drastic enforcement by all the responsible states or organisations.

ii. Illegal Fishing

The illegal fishing tends to become a crucial issue within SCS. It is because of geographical location of littoral states in SCS with their nearest boundaries. The modernized of fishing industry in Malaysia had impact their exhaust of fish stocks. Due to this factor, it became a push factor tempting Malaysian fishermen to travel across to the Indonesian maritime region to bridge the gap of their rations coup. In regards with that situation, in 11 April 2014, the Republic of Indonesia President had announced that almost 317 fishing boat had been confiscated (Mark 2017). Due to this statement, this illegal fishing towards the Indonesia claimed water did not only involve by Malaysia, but according to the confiscated fishing vessel by Indonesia state that Vietnam was the higher fishing vessel incursion with 142, follow by Philippine 76, Malaysia 46 and China 1. In the other hand, the other isolated incident occurred due to this illegal fishing activity was involving Indonesia and Chinese which Chinese coast guard vessel had reported intervened Indonesia due to arrest their fishing vessels that clearly had violating Indonesia's laws. However, all the incident had been settle with the ASEAN way which prior to diplomacy.

iii. Sea Piracy and Robbery

The issues of Sea Piracy and robbery within SCS is not the common issues. There were several efforts to combating piracy in the region and some of the effort had achieve its objective and intent. For example, the joint maritime patrol by Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia in combating against piracy in Strait of Malacca (SOM) had successfully to reduce the Sea piracy and robbery within SOM and had become the turning point to cease the battleground for anti-piracy for moved to the SCS. In 21st century, the modus of operandi of sea piracy is sophisticated due to the inclusion of advanced navigational equipment and weapons at the perpetrators' disposal.

iv. Terrorist and Foreign Armed Ship activities.

SCS among the most dangerous water for pirate activities. Although the control measures had been taken by the cooperation of littoral states, the illegal activities still existence. The main area for this illegal activities are at the high sea nearest to the littoral states. Some of the place are at the water surrounded Hong Kong, Luzon Island and Hainan Island (Zewei 2012). The pirates around this area reported equip with modern navigational, equipment and weapons. Their aim more towards fishing boats from Hainan. Beside, this piracy issues, maritime terrorist activity is another increasingly crucial threat for the safety of navigation in the SCS. States as Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia have become the high risk areas of this illegal group attack. The terrorist organization identified within that states are, Free Aceh Movement (GAM), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Islamic States (IS), Jemaah Islamiah (JI) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). This environment had worrying the international society whereas the possible action taken by this group to cut off the maritime traffic in the region and making this terrorist activities become the biggest threat towards safety of navigation in the SCS. Other than this crucial threat, it was also involving the increasing of foreign armed ship in the SCS which reported that intervene the fishermen fishing activities. According to the IMO statistics from Bureau of Marine and Fishery of Lingao County, the direct loss by this reason had about 10 million (IMO 2019). This incidents happened is due to the dispute over SCS territorial. The common victim involves of the fishermen from Chinese by the neighboring littoral states. The statistics from 2003-2008 recorded, 75 times incident involving 75 boats and 738 fishermen with total loss more than 35 billion. This situation indirectly given the higher impact towards the maritime safety of SCS as a whole.

B. Maritime Safety

The safety and stability situation in the South China Sea are affected by other concerns such as the flow of foreign armed ships. This creates a form of disturbance to the economic security of the littoral states such as fishing activities. In June 2009, 8 fishing boats was lost in communication after it was found operating in the proximity of China's U-Shape Line. Inquest conducted found that 75 fishermen were held hostage by 3 armed Indonesian ships (Zewei 2012). In the other hand, there were another factor that should consider towards ensuring the maritime safety which involving measures to avoid marine pollution and harms to the marine environment, avoiding maritime accident as well as the facilities for navigate to assist merchant vessel sail in the SCS. As reported by IMO, maritime shipment is one of the preferred method of deliveries but it is also considered to be of high risk. Part of the effort to improve safety at sea is through the development of international regulations supported by the practicing nations. IMO's operation began in 1959 and had then developed the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). This is considered as one of the significant treaties related to maritime safety and practices (IMO 2019). Apart from this, there were treaties and regulations for global practices on search and rescue operations, load lines, facilitation of international maritime traffic, and the practices of handling sensitive goods. Therefore, all the countries which usage the SCS SLOC need to identified the hazard through them navigate towards SCS SLOC.

i. Marine Pollution threat towards SCS

The marine pollution threats another safety and security should be concern at the SCS. Suggested by the reports and interests of the stakeholders, SCS is considered as a significant source of diverse marine ecosystems at an international scale. The maritime region is responsible for hosting 76 percent of the world's coral species amongst uniquely to SCS reef-fish aquatic lifeforms (Abhit 2016). The SCS is also the habitat of over 8,000 species of aquatic life (Marie 2015). Despite this, there has been reports of degradation of the SCS' marine ecosystem, further affecting the unique lifeforms in the region. As reported by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre in Thailand, every decade, a record loss of 16 percent of mangroves and live corals are lost since (UN Environment Programme (2016). The root cause of this are human-induced activities. Pollution in shape of illegal discharge of wastes from both domestic and industrial practices, compounded by industry scale operations on unsustainable mining and aquaculture production further led to the dire situation of SCS. These actions led to the contaminant issues such as toxic particles being released in the maritime region of SCS. Furthermore, pathogenic bacteria and untreated wastes destroys the purity of the water, hence the deterioration of the aquatic environment of the region, affecting the creatures, and fishing activities which are relevant to the development of economy and food security of the population in the littoral states (United Nations Environment Programme 2007). The countries which have been reported to be involved in such activities are China, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

The other factor contribute towards the marine pollution in SCS was the activities of the vessel usage the SCS, the marine accident and normal ship operation which involves tank cleaning or pumping bilges. The worst case happened involve of the marine pollution was back in 2005 at the southern coast of Malaysia, when two tankers collided in the Singapore strait resulting the worst oil spill with 28,500 ton of heavy marine fuel oil in the waters and had immediate split away and had disruption in ship traffic along the strait (batemen, Joshua & Jane 2009). The SCS marine pollution environment should be protecting by all countries usage this important SLOC and the confidence building measures to be adhere by to avoid any maritime incidents. This measure is essential to educate them to avoid from conducting illegal dumping at the sea. The littoral states nearest SCS, also need to play their role to provide the awareness towards their shipping agency or tourism sector to avoid marine pollution by the human factor. The initially control measure should be taken before the worst situation taken place.

ii. Facilities to assists ship navigation.

It is required to have good facilities to ensure of safety environment during ship navigation within SCS. Traffic safety and security in the SCS involve disastrous weather, marine accidents, external security incidents, route and navigation safety and navigation guarantee conditions. There are some facilities provide within SCS which allow the traffic in SCS is safe. The light house and other public interest services facilities constructed on island and reefs effectively will safeguarding and serving the navigation in the SCS. For example, in the northern of SCS have the navigation chart and publications to show the navigation guarantee (China Institute of Navigation 2018). However, it was still not provided for the middle and southern waters same goes to the Vessel traffic management and services which consist of vessel Traffic system had only in

the Southern waters. For the marine aids to navigation there were five large scale multifunction light house on islands and Reef. This important of light house in SCS provide safety navigation, fishery and the prevention of marine disaster which responsible to China as an IMO member state. There were also Radio Navigational Warning provided to certain countries such as, Malaysia, Singapore, China and Vietnam. The Navigational Telex supports these Radio to communicate each other. China on the station was also provide their emergency rescue within SCS to assist marine incidents. Base on that fact, as summary the facilities for navigation in the SCS is in good condition. However, these facilities need to be enhance towards the middle and southern parts of SCS.

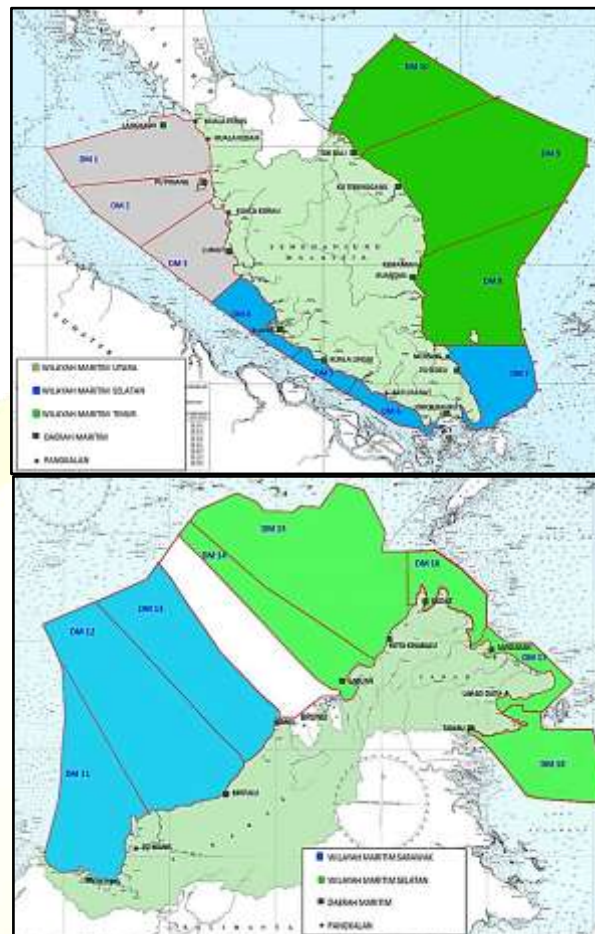
Although Malaysia was not the super power country in the region, its contribution towards the maritime security and safety in SCS should be looking as a good and beneficial effort in ensure SCS maritime safety and security. Despite limited capability of maritime technology assets, Malaysia still assist to contribute all the neighbouring littoral states in ensure SCS maritime security. Malaysian foreign policy, defence policy and security policy had influence the way of Malaysia act in ensure the safety and security of maritime in SCS. All these policies were the fundamental of Malaysian maritime strategy towards SCS. Some of the Malaysian response towards the maritime security by centred on improved patrols and surveillance and overall security in the Sulu Sea, Strait of Malacca, and extended to the SCS. To improve its asset capabilities, Malaysia has procured significant number of patrol and fast strike vessels which would be effective against sea robbers and piracy activities. Development of Royal Malaysian Navy and Strengthen interoperability among enforcement agency to support the MMEA as the leader to safeguard Malaysia territorial waters and EEZ among the crucial way to mitigate threat and to contribute in maritime security within region.

Malaysia as a Maritime-Dependent Nation Malaysia is truly a maritime nation. Malaysian waters comprise an Exclusive Economic Zone covering an area of 569,845 square km extending beyond 65,035 square km of Territorial Waters (RMN 2018). Its total coastline extends over 6,037 km and the sea area is more than twice the size of our landmass (Hanizah & Ruhanas 2014). According to the earlier history, during the Malacca Sultanate, which was merge an empire that covered much of maritime Southeast Asia, with Malacca itself being the most important regional port of the 15th century. With the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, Malaysia grew to include Sabah and Sarawak, the two states located along the northern shore of the island of Borneo. The South China Sea separates the two states from the peninsular at approximately 600 km at its closest point. The notion of a "Maritime Nation" was further enhanced when the government declared their objective of attaining a maritime nation status for Malaysia in the 4th Malaysia Plan (1982-1986) (Thillainathan & Kee-Cheok 2016). In regards of the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, Malaysia among the six nation claim over an area known as the Spratly Islands. The area with vast of natural resources will beneficial for the national economic growth. All these issues had created tensions for the security environment as it seem as the threaten towards the regional stability.

Internal Enforcement effort by Malaysia towards SCS Maritime security

Malaysia's Maritime Enforcement Agencies was the leading agency and responsible to enforce over 20 relevant maritime laws and acts in Malaysia's maritime areas support by the other agency such as, Royal Malaysian Navy, Royal Malaysian Air Force, Royal Malaysia Police (Marine and Air Wing), Fisheries Department, Marine Department, Royal Malaysian Customs, Department of the Environment and Immigration Department. Malaysia had taken several action plan to deal with the maritime security threats and challenges. Among the action plan taken by this joint agency such as, provided awareness on maritime domain, by organizing maritime seminars to enhance the level of awareness on relevant maritime laws or acts, taking the necessary steps to inculcate awareness on local maritime matters among the shipping community on the security and safety of the Malaysia Maritime Zone (MMZ), and discussion about the piracy as the main subject matter of concern during discussion, forums and maritime operations domestically and with counter parts from Indonesia and the Philippines. Other than that, ensure accurate and timely information dissemination, conduct surveillance, detection and monitoring using airborne assets (Police Air Wing and RMAF) for maritime surveillance patrols on regular schedule and optimizing the facilities provided by MSSS within the radar coverage and last but not least, sharing and enhancing effort towards timely intelligence and information between MEA and in bilateral forums. Those action plan taken as Malaysia control measures to ensure MMZ is cleared from any maritime threat such as maritime crime or Sea piracy.

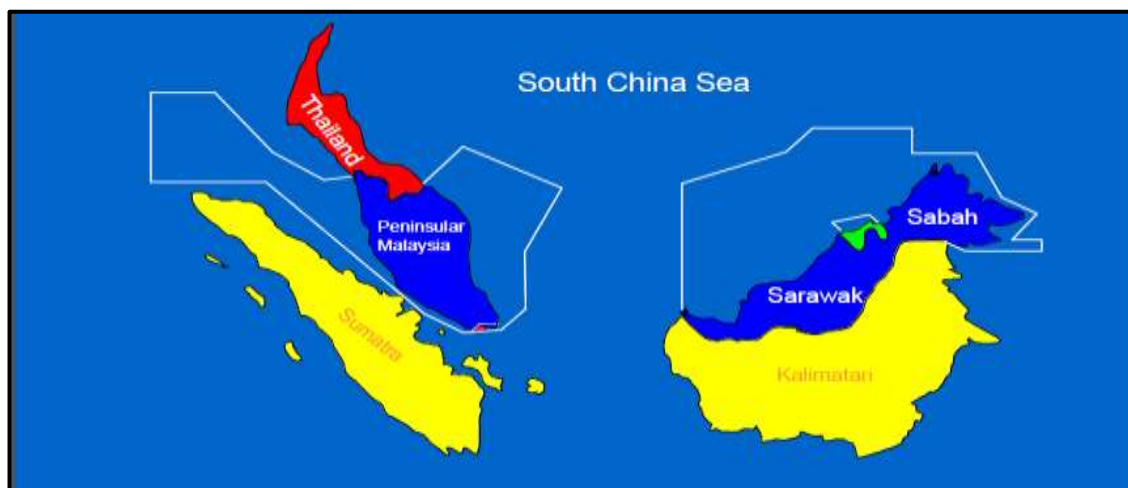
Map 3 (a) : Malaysia Peninsular Maritime Zone



Map Error! No text of specified style in document. (b): Malaysia Sea Surveillance System



Map 3 (c): Malaysia Maritime SAR Area of Responsibility



Source: <https://mmea.gov.my/index.php/en/>

Map 3 (a) and 3 (b) shown that MMZ covered by Malaysia Enforcement Agency (MEA). It covered from Malaysia base line, territorial sea (12 NM) sea until EEZ (200 NM). Covered whole of Malaysia from Sabah, Sarawak to Peninsular Malaysia. Map 3 (c) shown Malaysia Sea Surveillance System (MSSS) that covered Peninsula and Sabah and Sarawak. This shown that how serious Malaysia action towards protecting its sovereignty and Core area. The surveillance, detection and monitoring did not only limit using airborne assets (Police Air Wing and RMAF) but enhancing with the maritime surveillance patrols on regular schedule with optimizing the facilities provided by MSSS within the radar coverage as per shown in Map 3 (c). The safety navigation intelligence and information gaining by Malaysia will be sharing towards region and involve party to provide an early warning or safety navigation information. Besides that, Malaysia also provided assistant in SAR internal and within region. The Area of Responsibility covered whole EEZ Malaysia and nearest high seas. This action plan conducting by Malaysia indirectly contributes towards the maritime security and safety within region and nearest high seas which in line with its role to prepare for assists towards the regional maritime security.

Malaysia in context of security, refers toward its National Security Policy and Defence Policy, which the fundamental is to protect their national core area and national interest by all capability or means that they have. As per mentioned by Buzan in contribute of security which based of three level, including Individuals, States and International System (Buzan 1983). The individuals means the citizen of the states, should playing an important role to support the government in increasing the economy and maintaining the peace. States or the government should governance the states in the good manner and provide security towards the states and the people. States in International System must enhance their International relation for the benefit of economy and security interest. By all that means, will indirectly maintaining of nation internal and external security. Moreover, in enhance the security, Malaysia in overcome the threat, should planning for the uncertainty in security by looking the security in much widely and comprise of five sector of security which, including political, military, economy, societal and environmental. In this context, Malaysia contribution towards the SCS maritime security can be seen by his contribution towards his managing or governance of its national security. By ensure Its security, it will indirectly had contributed towards the SCS maritime security. For example, most of the piracy incident occurred within SCS caused by the failed of nearest littoral states in maintain their security and that problems indirectly spread to other and given a bad consequence. Failed in managing the state's economy also lure to this incident happened whereby the people take and easy way by create criminal in order to continuous of their life and survive.

On that note, Malaysia had taken serious measures in governance its economy as well as its national security. According to Malaysia Defence Ministry Budget for 2019, RM 15.3 billion and Malaysia Home Ministry Budget 2019, RM15.62 billion shown that Malaysia security concerns focus on both approach which consists of internal and the external threat (NST 2018). If looking to the Malaysia Home Ministry budget, about RM 469 million from RM 15.62 million will be spent for the MMEA in enhancing his capability by bought New Generation Patrol Coast (NGPC) boats and Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV). Other

than that, 74.5 million will spent for ESSCOM. This shown how serious Malaysia in protecting his security which its believe that can contribute towards region and SCS security.

As the external current environment concerned, Malaysia is now dealing with the increasing and more coordinated incursions by Chinese vessels into their claiming waters. China's Navy and coast guard still maintain an almost presence around SCS and was known that China effort to tests the limits of Malaysian in resolve the SCS issue. In response with that action, MMEA and RMN have increase 30 percent in their routine patrol and deployed more additional assets in the SCS (Elina 2017). In addition, RMAF also had deployed more aircraft, including fighters to the island of Labuan, fronting the SCS in East Malaysia to increase its situational readiness in any threat attempted within MMZ. In reflection with this matter, Malaysia defence planning as known had applied the Capability based planning (CBP) in its defence management in their effort towards the development of their Armed Forces. CPB can be defined as planning for the uncertainty to provide military capability within the national economic framework (Ananthan & Inderjit 2014). On that note, all the defence spending had been planning earlier in assessment of the future possibility threat. The traditional threat of Malaysia is more concerns towards the territorial disputes in the SCS. Therefore, since the early year, Malaysia had planning to increase its military capability as their effort to confront this uncertainty threat in the future. There is indication of the purchase of maritime patrol aircraft for RMAF, RMN Transformation Programme 15 to 5, and the new procurement of MMEA vessel NGPC and OPV. With all security measures taken by Malaysia in oppose the internal and external threat, defence planning of the development programme and new procurement new asset by MMEA and MAF shown that it is serious to protect its maritime sovereignty and contribute towards SCS maritime security.

Malaysia contribution towards Maritime security in SCS

The RMN is establish to ensure that national wealth, prosperity and peace of the nation's maritime domain are always in their protecting. This is accomplished by enforcement their control over the sea, denial any seaborne projection of force by a possible adversary and when necessary being able to project power into maritime related areas controlled by an enemy. The military role is performed through the accomplishment of specific military objectives, missions and tasks. Meanwhile, some of the secondary roles primarily those associated with maritime laws enforcement are handed over to the newly-established MMEA. With MMEA in existence, the RMN's secondary role now comprises all the supplementary and supporting roles which include the security surveillance within EEZ and supporting the other services of the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) and other civil agencies.

The RMN main tasks in the peace time are comprise of training for future conflicts, carrying out patrol activities and surveillance within Malaysia Territorial Water (MTW) and EEZ, intelligence gathering, safeguarding the SLOC in Malaysia's water, supporting other units of MAF, MMEA and other civil agencies in maintaining peace and order, carrying out anti-piracy and maritime terrorism, carrying out Maritime Law Enforcement against smuggling, illegal trafficking of person, illegal fishing, and other related activities which are against the Malaysian Law and maritime SAR. The RMN also responsible to provide protection to high-risk/high-valued vessels operating to commute from the Philippines' maritime region. Malaysia has deployed land assets in form of radar tracking stations to operate with the Straits of Malacca to monitor the traffic and conduct surveillance over the activities in the operating area. Further procurement on maritime assets were actioned by the RMN, and the Royal Malaysian Marine Police (RMMP) specifically to increase its readability rate, and capacity to conduct patrols (RMN 2018).

In the perspectives of effectiveness maritime operations, the RMN operational areas has developed which divided into regions namely Naval Region One which covers the area of western side of South China Sea, Naval Area Region Two which covers the areas of the Sulu-Celebes Sea, portion of the South China Sea and Naval Area Region Three which covers the area of Malacca straits. One of the RMN's most modern assets at hand currently are its two French-built Scorpene submarines, both commissioned in 2009. These submarines are classified as Perdana Menteri-class submarines, and were acquired to boost the conventional deterrence value of the RMN. As mentioned above, the decision to base these submarines near the South China Sea was strategic in choice. The submarines in question were custom made to operate in the warmer and more saline waters of Southeast Asia, and can be armed with 18 missiles, including the SM-39 Exocet anti-ship missile. Moreover, the new RMN development plan known as 15 to 5 Transformation Programme, focus an anticipative action designed to ensure the navy will be able to deliver better results at optimal cost while adapting to future challenges and needs. The programme has its roots in the Malaysian Armed Forces long term development plan and fully supports the aspirations of the National Defence Policy. It is a comprehensive and robust plan for the gradual and sustainable transformation of the navy.

This new modernization of RMN will indirectly increase its capability towards national defence deterrence strategy. Other than that for the new procurement asset is 12 UAV Scan Eagle in regards with the Maritime Security Initiative (MSI) sponsored by United States. This MSI programmed among the cooperation from the United States with Southeast Asia countries in order to enhance maritime domain awareness. This program includes the procurement UAV Scan Eagle and providing the training and cooperation. This Modernization and development was a part of national effort in maintain national sovereignty and national maritime interest other than provide assistant in maintain SCS maritime security. Since, the current maritime environment now had become very complexity, RMN clearly had prepared towards it role and task in confront any challengers threat such as the unsettlement issue of SCS disputes, maritime crime, Sea piracy, illegal smuggling and trafficking, and the maritime pollution issues. Other than that RMN is always ready to be deploy for any SAR operation within SCS in order to support Malaysia in contribute towards maritime security in SCS.

Although RMN is equip well for any maritime threat situation, however, RMN always bound to the National Strategy which known that prior to the diplomacy way as per mentioned by Malaysia Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in mid – 2018, mentioned for deploying small patrol boats to keep the peace in the South China Sea, and ensure that the entire area is free of warships (Rizal 2019). The reasoned to free of warships is more towards to avoid the war. Other than that, Tun Mahathir also mentioned the doctrine in oppose with the traditional issues which consist of four main principles such as, first, Malaysia remains neutral and non-aligned, second, Malaysian more towards seeks mutual respect for mutual gain in any cooperative endeavour, third, the importance of the “prosperity-neighbour” philosophy, fourth, a formula for reforming the Security Council. According to this statement, RMN considered as the second layer of defence next to the first layer of defence according to the Prime Minister statement was the diplomacy or the defence diplomacy.

Malaysia contribution towards Maritime safety in SCS

Malaysia Marine Department, Peninsular Malaysia (MarDep) is responsible for ensuring safety navigation and operating facilities that are associated with it (Rakesh 2008). The traditional aid to navigation infrastructure were established such as light house, light beacons, modern light buoys. Other than that in enhance the safety aset, by providing the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GDMSS), Automatic Identification System, Vessel Reporting system (StraitsRep) and the Vessel Traffic Monitoring system (VTS). However, in SCS, most this item and equipment had been prepared by China and assists by the neighbouring littoral states within SCS. Malaysia in assist towards the Maritime safety of SCS more to ensure the security and safety the ship that passage through the SCS high seas nearest to the Malaysia EEZ by providing the MMZ and EEZ free from piracy. Other than that, several safety precautions for vessel transiting Malaysian waters are to be considered. As example, ship plying the SOM and SCS are now able to plot their position 25% accurately with the global navigation satellite system (SISPELSAT) service provider by Malaysia Marine Department (Hanizah & Ruhanas 2004). This SISPELSAT ability increasing by an add on to the existing global positioning system (GPS) and can be detected by ships within 250km radius from reference station located in Lumut and Kuantan for SOM coverages, while it extends from Langkawi in the North to Tanjung Tuan in the South. For the SCS, the range stretches all the way from Kelantan to Tg Sedili. Malaysia as a littoral states country nearest to the SCS high sea also involving in providing the basic tool for the safety navigation such as, the safety port, light house, beacon, modern buoy and so on. Malaysia also will assist to providing the current maritime domain awareness by the communication of radio from the port or the MMEA and RMN for any emergency case including sea piracy and robbery. In addition, Malaysia by its maritime patrol and surveillance will assist in ensure merchant ships passage the SCS does not engage within the marine pollution. Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency and RMN also ready to deployed if there are any emergency case within SCS for SAR operations.

Discussion

The Malaysian Maritime Strategy can be defined as the overall approach to the oceans around it, with the aim of synergizing to protect national sovereignty and indirectly could not be denied which eventually contribute to comprehensive maritime security within region. Malaysia Foreign Policy, National Security Policy and Defence Policy among the fundamental of direction towards Malaysia in enhancing its internal security, assists, support and contribute to the regional and world security. Malaysia in contributing towards the SCS Maritime security, had usage the internal security centric approach, maritime safety and security control approach and the Regional maritime cooperation approach in confront with the traditional, non-traditional threat and the maritime pollution threat within SCS. In ensure the safety and security of the SCS, Malaysia had taken the internal centric approach. Whereas, internal security will be the first priority to be settle down.

It is being caused that Malaysia believe, all the non-traditional threat within the SCS are come from the neighbouring littoral states including Malaysia. Therefore, the contribution of Malaysia is more relies to their enforcement of their maritime control within their MMZ. The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) was the leading agency that responsible to enforce over all the maritime laws and acts in Malaysia's maritime areas and support by the other agency such as, Royal Malaysian Navy, Royal Malaysian Air Force, Royal Malaysia Police (Marine and Air Wing), Fisheries Department, Marine Department, Royal Malaysian Customs, Department of the Environment and Immigration Department.

This joint enforcement agency had working together in ensure MMZ security by conducting the combating of the illegal activities such as, Maritime crime, illegal fishing, drug and arms trafficking, and sea piracy and robbery. The effective of the deployment of this agency in performing their tasks had increase the Malaysia government trust and indirectly support to invest for procurement of the new asset and vessel in order to increase this join enforcement agency capability. By ensuring Malaysia MMZ secured, it has indirectly contributed towards the SCS maritime security. In the other hand, the Malaysia government also taken considered of their people in term of the economy environment in order to avoid their people involves with transnational border crime. By conducting this, there are a possibility of the non-traditional threat issue in MMZ and SCS will decreased. In addition, this join agency also playing the essential task in assist Malaysia contribution towards the SCS maritime safety by control and avoiding the maritime pollution and provided the maritime domain awareness for all the vessel passage the SCS. In conjunction with that, this agency also assists for the SAR and HADR operation. In terms of the safety navigation facilities, Malaysia had providing some facilities for the maritime domain awareness such as, the global navigation satellite system (SISPELSAT) in ensure the accuracy of navigation of the vessel to avoid any maritime accident, the safety port as well as the safety navigation facilities within their capability.

The RMN had played the main role in assist Malaysia in the territorial disputed issue. Although Malaysia first choices in confront with that crucial conflict is more towards usage the diplomacy way, however, RMN is always required for any unpredictable situation. As the most credibility force in the country, RMN also responsible to secured MMZ and to combating all the maritime crime and sea piracy within Malaysia maritime boundaries and always be prepared for the assistant task towards providing SCS maritime security. The RMN modernization and transformation is more towards increasing their capability in order to mitigate the uncertainty threat in the future.

Conclusion

The SCS have various strategic resources whereby indirectly attract the neighbouring littoral countries to claiming for their national interest. The strategic location of SCS cannot be denial as the busiest waterways in the world and including the most important port surround it. This environment had enhanced the trading sea line communication using the sea transportation. All of this factors were the reason for the SCS to become vulnerable for various of threat. As per mentioned earlier, the traditional threat among the main conflict towards the SCS. The disputes of territorial water in SCS, against China, Taiwan and other ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines, and Vietnam. This global conflict until now did not found the way out. Despite, the signing of Code of Conduct in SCS between China and ASEAN claiming members had been applied, but it is just only for the initially and will not last long. This issues also had contributed to the illegal fishing activities due to the unclear boundaries. The other crucial threat within SCS is the emerging of the non-traditional issues. There are transnational border crime issues such as, maritime crime, sea piracy and robbery, drug and arms trafficking and illegal fishing. All of this incident happened caused by the un stability political and economy within the nearest littoral states, and the weakness of the nearest littoral states in combating this issues internally. Most of the incident occurred at SCS high seas within, nearest littoral states EEZ. The most incident recorded was the Sea piracy and robbery. This illegal activity conducted by the nearest littoral states pirates, by attacking and robbery the merchant ship whether on board or during anchorage and berth. Some of this group reliable have the connecting with the famous terrorist group such as, MILF, Abu Sayyaf, Jemaah Islamiah, Al Qaeda and IS. Other than that, the SCS SLOC also had the potential of the drug and arms trafficking since China and Myanmar was among the producer and the importer of this illegal items. In addition, Thailand also known as among the biggest market in the Southeast Asia region. There is also some maritime safety threat within SCS such as, the threat of marine pollution that possibility occurred caused by the human-induced pollution by discharge of untreated domestic and industrial waste, port and harbour operations, agricultural and aquaculture production, and mining activity. These activities known that will effect towards the marine creature. Despite this activities, some of destructive fisheries practise such as positioning and explosives pose also will affect the coral reefs within SCS. Moreover, the disaster of maritime incident that will caused the oil spill also be taken as consider instead the normal ship

operations including tank cleaning that can contribute to the maritime pollution. Finally, SCS among the busiest SLOC, required the facility for the safety navigation from the littoral states in ensure the safety journey for their merchant ship. These basic facilities such as the safety port, light house, beacon, modern buoy and more others to provide them the maritime awareness to avoid any maritime incident and protected them from the Sea piracy activity. In addition, the reliable communication system also needed when come in to emergency situation. All of the content discuss above, shown that, the lists of maritime threat determined in SCS.

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