

**US PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPING COOPERATIVE STRATEGIES
FOR MARITIME SECURITY**

by **Radm Charles Williams**,
Commander Task Force 73 – US Navy

Introduction:

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. Allow me to begin by thanking **Vice Admiral RC Wijegunaratne** and all of our hosts from the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defense and Sri Lankan Navy for inviting all of us to Galle for the 6th consecutive convening of this dialogue.

On behalf of the United States Navy, it's an honor to be the first U.S. flag officer participating in the Galle Dialogue, which is the premier venue of its kind in South Asia.

I'd also like to express my respects to fellow senior leaders and attendees here today from Navies across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region and across the world. This is truly an insightful group here today, made up of uniformed military members and colleagues in civil-government agencies and combined with our friends in the academic corps.

It's great to be here in the city of Galle. The rich seafaring history of this city along with the magnificent views of the Indian Ocean serve as a humble reminder that the livelihoods and prosperity of our respective nations will continue to depend on a secure maritime environment.

Our shared bonds of the sea are what bring us together for this dialogue. I'm a firm believer that cooperative strategies for maritime security begin in conference halls like the one we're in today – and I look forward to the discussions that will no doubt occur in the sessions along the way.

I'm going to share with you some ideas and perspectives that we have in the U.S. Navy - ideas and perspectives that will continue to develop cooperative strategies for maritime security, as they have already done for many years. I'm also very keen to listen to the ideas from all of you, my colleagues here today, because we in the U.S. Navy understand that no one nation can achieve peace and stability in the maritime environment - it is and will be a truly cooperative effort.

One thing I know all of us agree on is that a strong maritime security architecture is an imperative for peace and prosperity in this region. The geo-political and economic realities of the Indo-Asia-Pacific - not just now, but throughout our history - clearly signal the region's importance for all our nations.

A short review: eight of the world's busiest container ports are in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region; more than 40 percent of global maritime trade. Roughly \$5.3 trillion yearly passes through this region; of that, \$1.2 trillion transits to ports in the United States. It's no

wonder that my country and many of yours are taking a closer look at how we execute our maritime security strategies.

As I'm sure most of you are aware, the United States Navy recently published an update to our national maritime strategy - a strategy which emphasizes America's forward naval presence and a commitment to working with our allies and partners to build a global network of navies to address the maritime security challenges of the 21st century.

A key pillar of our maritime strategy involves increasing opportunities to work together with allies and partners through both bilateral and multilateral exchanges, the tangible products of which are trust, understanding, and even capacity building.

Rules, Roles & Responsibility Introduction:

Today I will focus my remarks around three key concepts – Rules, Roles, and Responsibility – as a framework to enhance cooperative maritime strategies and strengthen global networks. I'll then provide a few examples how the U.S. Navy is working to further our progress in these respective areas.

We believe that Cooperative Maritime Strategies begin with a rules-based system of internationally recognized norms, standards, rules, and laws that are codified by agreements such as the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea. Principal to this notion of a rules based system is Freedom of Navigation and Overflight.

Our U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander, Admiral Scott Swift, recently characterized Freedom of Navigation and Overflight as the “golden rule of this rules-based system” during a maritime seapower conference in Australia. The U.S. Navy has operated in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region under this system for more than 70 years, alongside our allies and partners, and it's been a catalyst for increasing maritime security cooperation and enhancing a close network of navies.

A tangible display of the power of naval networks is the bi-annual Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise in Hawaii, which last year brought together 49 ships from 22 nations to operate together in a challenging and realistic environment.

RIMPAC compels navies to play by a common set of rules and protocol, so that we can harness our collective seapower and maritime security potential. In end, it's a great reminder that we all share common goals to keep our seas free and secure, and collaboration among navies is possible with both traditional and non-traditional maritime partners.

Beyond maritime partnerships, a rules-based system ensures we can operate safely and efficiently together in the maritime environment. This is why the U.S. Navy has continued

to partner with other nations to develop the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) protocol.

Our ships have practiced CUES on a daily basis with regional navies since the multinational protocol was signed last April. The interactions between these ships were safe and routine, and the professional exchanges were commendable. We look forward to extending CUES to more maritime practitioners in the region, such as coast guards.

This is a great example of how a common rules-based system and professional mariners enable us to co-exist in the busy waterways of our global commons. Moreover, a rules-based system that respects the principals of international law can be a natural progression for increased maritime cooperation between nations.

Roles: U.S. Navy role in enhancing Maritime Security in the Indo-Asia-Pacific

Now if I'd like to shift the discussion to talk a little about roles. I know this is an area of close reflection for us all as we work within our national structures to define our own cooperative maritime strategies. Again, I'll offer some insight on what we believe is our optimal role in contributing to regional maritime security, and then provide some tangible examples of how we execute this at the operational level.

The U.S. Navy's role in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region hasn't changed very much over the last 70 years. We've contributed to the stability, peace and rising prosperity of this region by maintaining persistent naval presence and sustaining credible alliances and partnerships.

This is a role we embrace today and intend to continue in the future. After all, the United States is inherently a Pacific nation with a growing share of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and global commerce linked to the waterways of the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Our national interest includes a secure maritime environment, natural end state of cooperative maritime security.

7th Fleet – Persistent Presence and Sustained Relationships:

One great example of our persistent presence in South and Southeast Asia is the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) series, which the United States conducts with 10 partner nations each year. Some of you in the audience today are very familiar with these exercises. We recently completed our 21st year of CARAT, and year 22 is already mapped out with all of the participants.

One of the very tangible benefits of CARAT (beyond interoperability) is the sustained relationships that are created and fostered through these engagements. I often say that relationships matter in maritime security cooperation, and sustained relationships matter even more.

Persistent Presence and Relationships through the Lens of CARAT:

CARAT enables generations of naval operators to grow together and exchange expertise in this region's vast operational environment, from the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea to the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand. Our planning engagements before and after these exercises facilitate personal and professional interaction and help refine our training objectives and goals throughout the year. Like the Galle Dialogue, CARAT provides a practical venue for many regional partners to address shared maritime security challenges.

Moreover, persistent presence and sustained relationships create a foundation of trust with our partners that enable us to consistently work toward a shared goal of increasing complexity in our training each year. Why is that important? Because complex training and interoperability build upon themselves, and translate into the non-exercise environment through actual capacity and capability.

Looking to the future of CARAT, we envision an increasingly cooperative maritime security architecture fostered through a range of bilateral and multilateral engagements. While CARAT has been traditionally bilateral in nature, there are plans underway to evolve segments of the exercise series into multilateral initiatives beginning in 2016.

While we're always mindful of the training objectives and the individual requirements of each CARAT partner nation, we believe increasing multilateral cooperation is good for the region and will strengthen our shared maritime security architecture – fostering greater interoperability and operational flexibility with our partner navies.

South Asia, Increasing Maritime Security Cooperation

Closer to home, here in South Asia, our maritime security cooperation is increasing thanks to our friends and partners in this region. Last month, we brought the Littoral Combat Ship USS Fort Worth to participate in CARAT Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal, marking the first time the LCS has participated in exercises with the Bangladesh Navy. The LCS is a great fit for the littorals of South Asia and she was very successful in integrating with our Bangladesh Navy partners. This is a trend we hope to continue with the LCS.

Right after CARAT Bangladesh, Fort Worth continued west to Chennai and participated in the harbor and sea-phases of Malabar alongside the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group and our partners from the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Indian Navy. The LCS participation in Malabar this year was another first for us, and demonstrated our Navy's commitment to maritime partnerships in South Asia.

Moreover, both of these exercises demonstrate the value of persistent U.S. Navy presence and bringing capable platforms to our exercises, which ultimately enables us to achieve our shared goals of increasing the realism and complexity of our training.

SEACAT, a foundation for Multilateral Cooperation

Enhancing multilateral cooperation is another important initiative for the U.S. Navy. This year we completed the 14th iteration of Exercise SEACAT, a multilateral engagement focused on maritime security and information sharing amongst seven participating navies.

The potential dividends from such an exercise were realized last year, months after the multinational Search and Rescue (SAR) operation for Malaysia Airlines flight MH 370, when SEACAT incorporated a synthetic SAR event for a lost U.S. aircraft. The experiences and lessons learned from SEACAT LNOs who participated in the MH 370 search were applied to the Command and Control (C2) developed for the fictional SAR event in SEACAT.

Just six months later, many of the same LNOs who participated in SEACAT were deployed to Pangkalanbun, Indonesia to support the multilateral search for Air Asia flight QZ8501 in the Java Sea. The Command and Control executed during that SAR operation was very similar to how we exercised during SEACAT 2014.

The U.S. Navy sent USS Sampson and USS Fort Worth to participate in this mission, both of which were operating in the South China Sea due to our persistent presence.

Many of our partners also assisted in this operation. The close collaboration and quick response by regional partners during the Air Asia search mission is just one example of how maritime security cooperation during calm benefits the region during crisis.

Responsible Partnerships, contributing to Cooperative Maritime Security

I'll now speak briefly about how responsible partnerships positively contribute to increased readiness for the challenges we face in the 21st century – especially in the maritime and littoral regions. Responsible partnerships are compelled by the notion that all nations must do their part to contribute to maritime security, both in peace and during crises.

I know that's not lost on any of you. Cooperation is increasing across many naval networks in this region. We remain encouraged by the increased openness of nations to cooperate on the critical aspects of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA-DR). I don't think there's disagreement among any of us that more can be done in this area – and that our navies will play a central role in this effort. To that end, responsible partnerships are a bellwether for increasing multilateral cooperation in HA-DR preparedness.

Pacific Partnership, an example of responsible and collaborative partnering

The notion of responsible partnerships is the essence of our Pacific Partnership mission. This year we completed the 10th iteration of Pacific Partnership, operating from two U.S. Military Sealift Command ships, the USNS Mercy, a hospital ship, and the Expeditionary Fast Transport Ship USNS Millinocket.

Working with a team of supporting partners from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Canada, Timor-Leste, Fiji, and France, the mission brought valuable public health services, civil engineering support, and disaster response training & education to 5 nations throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Missions like Pacific Partnership teach us a number of important lessons about the future of maritime security cooperation. While we often say that no one nation (or Navy) can do these tasks alone, it's also true that our navies must have strong partnerships with private organizations and other government agencies.

One of the enabling aspects of Pacific Partnership is the close cooperation between military, government agencies, and non-government organizations. Together, we leverage a wide-range of ideas and expertise and we learn to work through the civil-military cultural divide that sometimes limits our cooperation.

During my site visits this summer to Pacific Partnership stops in the Philippines and Vietnam, I was immediately struck by the array of military uniforms representing men and women of our partner nations, teaming up with civilian engineers, doctors, dentists, and veterinarians to solve complex problems and increase our readiness to respond during crises.

Bridging through organizational and cultural barriers is important and must be routinely practiced. It's become increasingly clear that maritime security cooperation in the 21st century will require a vast network of navies who can collaborate with government agencies and private organizations to achieve stronger and more agile maritime security partnerships.

Increasing Maritime Cooperation, the Future is Now

Moving forward, I believe the future is now for increasing cooperative strategies for maritime security. The exercises and engagements I just highlighted are examples of a solid foundation for expanded cooperation with our allies and partners in the region. I know many of your nations have done similar cooperative engagements as well.

While operational demands often present constraints on resources and time, we believe that multilateral engagement with nations with similar security concerns and objectives can help bridge these gaps, not only for our partners, but for our Navy as well.

Toward that end, we have a shared responsibility to ensure we make the most of training opportunities - so that when that non-training event does occur, we are applying our combined capacity rather than struggling to figure out how to work together. Increased multilateral engagement offers tangible solutions to achieving greater maritime security cooperation and operational readiness in these constrained resource environments in which we all operate.

As I close today, I want to convey that the U.S. Navy remains committed to addressing these complex maritime security challenges we face in the 21st century. We will continue to maintain persistence presence across the region and we'll be a ready partner to help maintain the stability and peace this region has enjoyed for more than 70 years.

To that end, persistent engagement and strong relationships will remain at the center our maritime cooperation efforts. That's precisely why I look forward to listening to the comments and remarks by many of you in the audience today, and most of all, I look forward to engaging with you during the two days of this dialogue.

I want to thank you for your kind attention, and I'll open the floor to any questions you may have for me.

Thank you.