

***Maritime Security in Southeast Asia.* Edited by Kwa Chong Guan and John K. Skogan. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Hardcover: 224 pp.**

Historically, Southeast Asian waters have been a strategic space of maritime enterprise. The Straits of Malacca and other Southeast Asian choke points were critical trading routes that facilitated Arab, Chinese and Indian mercantile trading systems. Even during those times, the regions' trading routes were prone to piracy, and regional kingdoms, particularly Srivijaya, developed security systems to safeguard trade against piracy. In contemporary times, Southeast Asian sea-lanes continue to serve as the umbilical cord of the economies of the Asia-Pacific region. For many countries in the region, their economic prosperity is dependent on relatively long and often vulnerable sea lines of communication (SLOCs). Southeast Asian waterways have strategic significance for both merchant and naval shipping that transit these waters from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and vice versa. Thus the security of the Asia-Pacific region is dependent on good order at sea.

To that extent, this volume, edited by Kwa Chong Guan and John K. Skogan, is an admirable endeavour to highlight contemporary maritime security challenges in Southeast Asia focused on piracy, terrorism, sea-lane security, boundary disputes and responses thereof.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I, comprising two chapters, serves as an introduction, and highlights the relevance and importance of Southeast Asian sea-lanes to the global economy. Anders C. Sjaastad (Chapter I) points out that Southeast Asian countries face multifaceted threats that arise from complex territorial disputes resulting in overlapping claims with a potential for conflict and those that arise from activities of asymmetric actors. In addition, the author argues that regional security is threatened by the presence of extra-regional powers, a presence which infringes upon their sovereignty and which they perceive as interferences. Barry Desker (Chapter II) notes that there is a close inter-relationship between maritime safety and security, and in this age of asymmetric conflict, both merit equal attention. The author stresses that littoral states and user states are important stakeholders in the safety and security of the straits and must contribute to its upkeep.

Part II, comprises five chapters, and focuses on three distinct issues: transnational crime, Southeast Asian naval developments, and maritime disputes in the South China Sea. Chapters III, VI and VII examine the challenges posed by violent non-state actors who have

developed capacities and capabilities to disrupt maritime trade. Joshua Ho (Chapter III) reiterates the critical role of Southeast Asian sea-lanes to Asian economies and lists a range of measures undertaken at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels to counter threats posed by piracy and terrorism. Catherine Zara Raymond (Chapter VI) offers a primer on regional sea piracy and focuses on regional trends including causes, impact and responses, and includes a few recommendations, while Arabinda Acharaya (Chapter VII) explores the possibility of maritime terrorist-related attacks in the region. The chapter is flavoured with several examples of past incidents and the author argues that in Southeast Asia, piracy can very well be a precursor to a terrorist attack. W. Lawrence S. Prabhakar (Chapter IV) highlights the causal factors of regional boundary disputes. He argues that an arms build up is underway in the region and states are purchasing offensive maritime platforms to safeguard their respective maritime interests. The author also makes the point that the ripple effects of naval modernization in China and India and the forward presence of US naval forces in support of the “global war on terror” are also contributing to regional naval acquisition trends. Ralph Emmers (Chapter V) takes the scene of action to the disputed South China Sea and highlights that the claimants have so far done well by adhering to the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC) and that a conflict is unlikely in the short-to medium-term since China intends to exhibit its peaceful intent in resolving the dispute, and also because the smaller claimants do not have the naval capability to engage the growing power of the Chinese navy. That said, however, miscalculations or accidents among the claimants have the potential to disrupt the peace.

Part III titled “Responses” also comprises five chapters, and offers an assortment of issues ranging from good order at sea, archipelagic sea-lane passage, the U.S. Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI), technology solutions to maritime security and the contentious issue of flags of convenience. Sam Bateman (Chapter VIII) argues that adherence to international maritime regimes fosters regional cooperation and several benefits accrue to states by participating in them. However, the promise of these regimes has not been fully realized in Southeast Asia, and the region requires strong political will to promote regime participation. Another related issue on archipelagic sea-lane security is also discussed in Chapter IX. Robert Beckman notes that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) establishes a clear framework for the rights and interests of archipelagic and user states, and disputes arising from political and security environment

can be managed under the Convention. Christian-Marius Stryken (Chapter X) highlights the Southeast Asian response to the RMSI, first proposed by the United States in 2004 but subsequently dropped in response to adverse reaction from Indonesia and Malaysia. The author notes that regional states would welcome any multilateral security initiative so long as it does not impinge on their sovereignty. Jan Georg Christophersen (Chapter XI) illustrates international initiatives such as the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code and satellite based systems that act as force multipliers in the fight against global maritime crime. The LRIT (Long Range Identification and Tracking), AIS (Automatic Identification System) and the SSAS (Ship Security Alert System) are of international standards and have contributed immensely to countering crime in the maritime domain. Gunnar Stolsvik (Chapter XII) takes the view that transparency is critical in combating crime. Flags of Convenience shipping is inherently vulnerable to misuse by terrorists, thus there is a need to establish a link between the ship and the state.

Part IV of the book comprises concluding remarks. John K. Skogan (Chapter XIII) argues that three tools exist to combat terrorism: “preventive measures” that limit opportunities for terrorists to achieve their goals, “deterrence measures” that reflect the high costs of engaging in acts of terrorism, and “moral denunciation”, which, though a soft instrument, is critically important and should be used to condemn acts of terrorism. Kwa Chong Guan (Chapter XIV) examines the ASEAN response to changes in the maritime security environment. He argues for good order at sea, respect for maritime regimes, confidence building measures and a cooperative mechanism to enhance regional security. Part V titled “Afterward” notes that maritime shipping is at the core of global trade, and facilitates prosperity. By way of an example, Tay Lim Heng, highlights the contribution made by the shipping industry to Singapore’s economic development.

The authors of this edited volume have contributed significantly to the literature on Southeast Asian maritime security. A synthesis of the articles shows that there is a desire among the regional countries to cooperate and adopt a collective approach to regional security through multilateral forums. The volume is a must-read for Southeast Asian policy-makers, maritime security analysts, shipping agencies and those interested in Southeast Asian affairs.

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