

## **Non-traditional Maritime Security Threats in Northeast Asia: Implications for Regional Cooperation**

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*At the present, Northeast Asia, which is geopolitically surrounded by four great powers, the U.S., Russia, China, and Japan, has become a contested stage for enlarging the influences of these countries in the region. Naturally, this region has become the area where nations compete not only to rise to hegemonic status but also to achieve economic development, obtain energy resources, and maintain stability of SLOC. Even to this day, maritime environment has been a contested zone for numerous nations that are in rival relationships with each other. Powerful nations have explored the seas to pursue national interests as well as to seize key roles in the international society. However, the seas of the 21st century are no longer a stage for nations to compete or to engage in rivalry with each other. Certainly there is room for cooperation among countries in Northeast Asia. Cooperation among regional countries will be the key to open this window of opportunity to open this space of cooperation. With such constraining circumstances, this paper tries to find the way ahead to deal with the issue in terms of non-traditional maritime security threats in Northeast Asia.*

**Keywords:** *Northeast Asia, Non-traditional Threat, Maritime Security, Cooperation*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the 'Sea' has directly affected the welfare of humanity. Indeed, its influence to us is valuable. It provides a stock of invaluable resources like oil, gas, and fish. It also provides the cheapest and safest means of transporting goods and people around the world. Geoffrey Till argues that the contemporary international economy basically stems from sea-based trading system (Till, 2015). At the same time, it also serves as a stage where nations gather to exercise its political strategies. Accordingly, 'seapower' has historically been one of the most important material elements in the rise and fall of great nations.

To this day, the maritime environment has been a contested zone for numerous nations to engage in rivalry with each other. Powerful nations have explored the seas to pursue national interests as well as to seize key roles in the international society. However, the seas of the 21st century are no longer a stage for nations to compete or rival each other. The significance of today's maritime environment goes beyond a territorial space of each nation's operations. It is a symbolic space. Independent actions and characteristics of various activities carried out in such space have also been subject to great change.

On the other hand, an individual actor who disturbs maritime activities and poses threats to maritime security is no longer limited to a specific nation. Non-traditional forces threatening maritime security through acts of piracy, maritime terrorism, maritime smuggling, disaster and calamity, or maritime pollution are now non-government groups clearly defined as small scale pirates, radical religious groups, or multinational criminal organizations. And they are growing in size. Current world events reflect that threats to maritime security have consistently become much more organized and systematic. Such evidence attests the need to stress the importance of countermeasures to non-traditional maritime threats.

In relation to non-traditional maritime threats, much attention is required to the maritime environment of Northeast Asia. Recent disclosure of the United States's pivot to Asia strategy (or rebalancing strategy), has intensified the security competition between the U.S. and China in the maritime region of Northeast Asia (Lim, 2012). Accordingly, the same area has been subject to intense competition between China and Japan as well.

Much importance is laid on the maritime area of Northeast Asia because of the coexistence of various non-traditional security issues that need to be solved head-on by powerful nations around the world. The potential of Northeast Asia's maritime region to be an area of cooperation through mutual efforts to counter non-traditional threats to maritime security as opposed to being a battlefield for competing nations must be carefully considered.

With the understanding of aforementioned situation, this paper aims to achieve the following. First, reveal the gravity of maritime security through investigation of changing elements of threats to maritime security. Various forms of threat to maritime security will be identified and the cause of such threats will be investigated to promote attention to maritime security. Second, examine how issues on international countermeasures against threats to maritime security cooperation are being discussed and forecast on future discussions. Trends of development of maritime security discussions at the international level will be reviewed and constructive methods to further develop cooperation in maritime security will be proposed. The ultimate purpose of this article will be to find answers to questions that arise from these issues.

## 2. DILEMMA BETWEEN COMPETITION AND COOPERATION IN NORTHEAST ASIA

In general, maritime security can be categorized into two fields: traditional maritime security and non-traditional maritime security in which maritime strategy, maritime dispute, maritime environmental security and others are dealt with (Kim, 2015; Bueger, 2015; Germand, 2015). The former is mostly used to describe hegemonic competition between strong powers, and the latter is defined as a cooperative activity to prevent maritime contingencies. In numerous instances, the optimal choice for a country leads one towards a dilemma. Despite the attention given to non-traditional security issues and the scope they provide for cooperation, traditional concerns, particularly the protection and assertion of sovereignty, are the principal cause of instability in the region (Bateman, 2015).

Above all, Northeast Asia is a very geographical terminology for geographers. It can include China, Russia, Japan, and two Koreas. However, Northeast Asia as a place has specific meaning for scholars of international relations. For them, the definition of Northeast Asian countries might somewhat differ from those of geographical calculations. Northeast Asia has emerged as the hub of global geo-political, geo-economic and geo-strategic significance in Asia these days. Above all, Northeast Asian maritime issues are timely and very important because in recent years the relationship between China, Japan and Korea has been a critical agenda not only in Asia but also over the world.

Northeast Asia is well known for its instability in terms of security issues (Ross, 1999; Christensen, 1999; Friedberg, 1993/1994). Firstly, Northeast Asia is the only region where the two super powers, so called Group of Two (G-2), the U.S. and China, confront each other in security issues. This naturally leads to the resulting phenomenon that the region will become the center of focus (Lim, 2014). This is because the ultimate outcome of this

bilateral conflict, whether they become substantial armed conflicts such as maritime skirmishes or become peaceful through cooperative means, will affect the international security environment. The U.S. and Chinese maritime security competition in Northeast Asia is directly connected to the entire regional security environment.

Moreover, during the Cold War, the Japanese Navy faithfully fulfilled the mission of deterring the Soviet Navy. But now it is doing the same task against China. Russia has been emphasizing a need to build a strong Russia since 2000, and has been putting further efforts to reinforce current naval capabilities of the Pacific Fleet. The first priority of the world's navies, of course, is to defend the country's interests and to deter war by showing potential adversaries that they can fight them.

In addition to that, North Korea launched its first Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM). Because it has a nuclear program, underwater missile firing capability means that North Korea can fire its missile covertly, anywhere, wherever it desires which gives no room for prediction. All these maritime issues are deeply related to the traditional threats in Northeast Asia. It is the reason why maritime security issues are becoming more important factors to explain and prospect the relations between countries in the region (Park *et al.*, 2015; Feng and He, 2014; Graham, 2014; Kumara, 2015; Lee and Lim, 2015). From the realist pessimists' perspectives, one's military rise enhances the potential power competition between neighboring countries in the region.

On the other hand, cooperation is required in the seas of the region both to ensure the effective of the seas and activities within them, and to establish arrangements that will prevent tensions in these seas from escalating into conflict in the future (Bateman, 2015). Non-traditional maritime security issue is a newly developing concern within the international politics. There are many cooperation mechanisms do exist to support the development of countries' relationship. In many cases, Northeast Asia appeared directly associated with the non-traditional maritime security issues. The next chapter will be supporting the idea in detail.

### 3. NON-TRADITIONAL MARITIME THREATS IN THE NORTHEAST ASIAN SEAS

Recently, the so-called transnational organized crime which encompasses virtually all profit-motivated criminal activities has become one of the most significant threats. Specifically, the major forms of transnational organized crime are related to trafficking smuggling of migrants, cocaine, heroin, and maritime piracy, etc. These can be categorized into non-traditional maritime threats. More specifically, non-traditional maritime threats in the Northeast Asian seas can be largely classified into three subjects: threats to the stability of the sea lanes of communication (SLOC) through piracy and maritime terrorism, maritime criminal activities such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and maritime incidents such as pollution in the maritime environment and natural disasters such as Tsunami.

#### 3.1 Threats to International SLOCs

A term most often used in international discussion on the importance of maritime security is SLOC, or sea lanes of communication, which are transit routes most frequently used by maritime traffic. Today, the term SLOC not only signifies the route itself, but also is used as

a symbol for the importance of maritime security. Although all illegal activities at sea are a threat to SLOC, piracy and maritime terrorism are regarded to be more imminent due to their use of direct violent force.

Maritime piracy and terrorism goes beyond simply taking a ship and its crew for ransom and uses heavy weapons to directly attack ships when necessary, potentially causing a large scale disaster at sea. Further, such violent activities come across as being more severe due to its relative frequency compared to disputes on territorial seas that may manifest through war, localized warfare, or other large scale disputes.

According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) yearly report, 298 cases of piracy, including armed robbery against ships, occurred in the year 2013 alone. This is a decrease in 43 cases (-12.6%) compared to the year 2012, which recorded 341 cases of maritime piracy. In the east African region including the Gulf of Aden, cases of piracy showed a 30.4% decrease from 2011 to 2012, recording 286 cases in 2011 and 199 cases in 2012. Only 20 ships were hijacked in the area in 2013, reflecting a great decrease in pirate threat. However, the situation is the opposite in the South China Sea, West Africa, and the Indian Ocean. For example, in 2013 alone, 143 ships were hijacked in South China Sea, which is an increase in 160% compared to 86 ships hijacked in 2012.<sup>1</sup>

The frequency of maritime terrorism is relatively lower than maritime piracy. Maritime terrorism can be largely classified into attacks against naval ships or public vessels under a political agenda and attacks against merchant vessels, oil-tankers or passenger ships under economic or religious agenda. Some maritime terrorism is carried out under complex and various purposes. Terrorist attacks on the French oil-tanker *Limberg* and Philippine ferry *SuperFerry* respectively in 2002 and 2004 shows how political, economic, and religious agenda can coexist in a terrorist attack. The fact that ferries and cruise ships are also targets

**Figure 1.** Maritime Terrorism



<sup>1</sup> International Maritime Organization, "Reports on Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships," Annual Report 2013.

of maritime piracy and terrorism brings about a great ripple effect because of their potential to dampen general maritime activities. The suicide bombing attack on the *USS Cole* in the port of Aden that used a small boat is a good example of how a terrorist group attacks under a political agenda.

Another area of concern is that organizations capable of maritime piracy have the potential to crossover into maritime terrorism, which will continue to be a threat to worldwide SLOC. Direct threat to the SLOC still continues since potential pirate attacks to maritime trade and energy transportation occur in coastal areas as opposed to out in the wide ocean. A large scale attack by a terrorist group linked to pirates in the Middle East or South China Sea (The Malacca Strait), would cause a worldwide economy and security crisis. This shows how maritime piracy and terrorist groups pose a great threat not only to Korea but the whole world. Considering that 50% of the world's port traffic passes through Northeast Asia (South China Sea),<sup>2</sup> potential damages of an attack would be overwhelming.

### 3.2 Maritime Crimes of WMD Proliferation

As much as the variety of crimes has increased, the location of crimes has also been diversified. Maritime crimes are crimes that are committed in ships of foreign flag that are outside the jurisdiction of a nation, with the exclusion of piracy and terrorism. In a broader sense, maritime crime includes WMD transportation, maritime smuggling, illegal trade, illegal crossing of borders, and maritime pollution, etc.

WMD proliferation is one of the most dangerous threats that the international community in the 21st century faces both at the domestic levels and international level. In general, WMD proliferation usually occurs around specific nations and involves weapons, and therefore is one of the traditional threats to maritime security. At the same time, WMD transportation may not be classified as a direct threat to maritime security, but proliferation of illegal weapons such as nuclear warheads and missiles causes direct threats to the international society as well as to individual nations, therefore causing a severe erosion of maritime security.

Nations such as North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, and Israel that develops and unofficially possesses nuclear weapons may transport WMD such as nuclear weapons as well as biological weapons and the weapons production materials may become involved in illegal transportation of such materials through sea. Further, failed states and international terrorist groups may attempt to purchase WMD through maritime trade. They may aim to use WMD in order to maximize their illegal goals. Efforts to execute a more catastrophic terrorist attack after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 still continue. Immediate measures are hard to implement at sea and international cooperation to eradicate terrorism is also difficult. Therefore, attempts to proliferate WMD through maritime transportation will continue to be a threat to maritime security for the time being.

The last problem that needs to be addressed with a short-term perspective is the possibility of linkage between maritime terrorism and WMD proliferation (Calhoun, 2006). Many potential terrorist groups have the kind of programs to develop WMD. And there is growing evidence that terrorists are seeking the ability to use WMD, such as nuclear weapons and biological and chemical weapons (BCW). Ironically, the cheapest and safest way of transporting system helps WMD proliferation more easily throughout the world. The

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<sup>2</sup> The South China Sea Virtual Library Website, [www.community.middlebury.edu/~scs/intro.html](http://www.community.middlebury.edu/~scs/intro.html).

WMD threat is real and the linkage between terrorism and WMD is also a more visible threat these days.

### 3.3 Natural Disasters and Maritime Pollution

Another important cause of threat to maritime security is natural disasters<sup>3</sup> and pollution. Natural disasters cause severe casualties as well as damages to properties, and therefore is a mutual threat to all mankind. Especially, the outcomes and severity of natural disasters that occur in the ocean or at least start in the ocean is hard to estimate and causes extensive damages. An example would be the Tsunami in December 2004 that started off the coast of Indonesia that left 230,000 people dead or missing and a million people homeless.

Examples of other direct threats would be hurricane Katrina in the U.S. in 2005, cyclone disaster in Myanmar in 2008, the earthquake in eastern Japan in 2011, and flooding in Southeast Asia. Most of these natural disasters are caused by climate change. Natural disasters caused by global warming are growing in scale while the damages they cause also are growing in severity; continuous efforts to prepare and prevent such threats to maritime security is imperative.

Also, maritime debris found in the ocean is a direct threat to the livelihood of mankind. The garbage patch six times bigger than Korea that exists between Hawaii and the continental U.S. is a threat to maritime ecosystem. It may cause accidents among navigating ships, and is a potential threat to maritime tourist resources and so on. Appropriate attention must be given to secondary damages that may be caused by natural disasters.

The incalculable amount of garbage that washed out of Japan every day during the great earthquake has brought attention to maritime debris. The potential types of damages caused by maritime garbage would be a loss of fishery and biological resources, damages to natural habitats and the ecosystem, hindrance to maritime safety, pollution of maritime environment and sceneries, and influx of foreign species that may cause economical and ecological damages. Maritime debris may cause threat to sustainable development, in both quality and quantity.

## 4. COOPERATION IN MARITIME SECURITY

Although there were many attempts to enhance global maritime cooperation, some problems still remain. First, some countries still consider the maritime environment as a stage for competition over resources inducing the national frictions. Second, there exist continuous territorial disputes on the islands. Third, the existing efforts of maritime security are overly concentrated in certain region such as the Northeast Asia. Because of this situation, there are many neglected areas that suffer from maritime crime. Considering the points mentioned above, this section discusses maritime cooperation in the Northeast Asia, which is relatively less noticed among global issues in terms of non-traditional maritime security threats.

Maritime security threats have never in history been spreading as fast as it is doing today.

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<sup>3</sup> Natural disasters are fall into three broad groups. Those caused by movements of the Earth; Weather related disasters; Flood, mudslides, landslide and famine. Michael Evans, "Natural Disasters," *Earth Times*, May 14, 2011.

As the importance of the ocean is increasing as the source of livelihood, threats to the ocean have, paradoxically, also been increasing. Luckily, one point for relief is that there is a consensus on the importance of SLOC. Therefore, active maritime security cooperation is in place in order to protect SLOC against threats of maritime piracy. Although there are some disagreements on the issue of WMD non-proliferation and maritime resource development, general awareness of the importance of maritime security is in place. Positive evaluation on the necessity and effectiveness of trans-border cooperation is agreed upon.

As discussed above, one can see that there are various elements that threaten maritime security. The cause of maritime security has become an element that surpasses a national level that goes beyond national borders. With the exception of maritime territorial disputes, most other threats to maritime security have trans-border characteristics. In order to deal with a trans-border issue, a trans-border countermeasure is needed. Therefore, an international level of maritime security cooperation is in critical demand. Recent efforts of security cooperation between nations have recognized this characteristic and have assembled around the United Nations in order to foster cooperation between nations as well as experts and non-government organizations.

First, security cooperation in the area of counter-piracy is the most ideal cooperation that takes place. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has led the effort to gather support and cooperation of the international community in order to fight against maritime piracy. On World Maritime Day which was held on March 2011, the Secretary General stressed that maritime piracy activities in Somalia were “completely unacceptable” and asked for the immediate cooperative response of the international community.

Fortunately, pirate activities off the coast of Somalia had decreased by 22.6% in 2009, compared to 2010. However, maritime piracy activities in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea are continuously increasing. There were early speculation in 2009 that maritime piracy activities in the seas other than the region in the vicinity of Somalia would increase (Hanson, 2009). The words of the United Nations Secretary General reflect that efforts of counter-piracy must continue, and strong cooperative naval activities must be developed in various regions of the world.

International cooperation to suppress maritime piracy can be divided into military intervention and methods that urge international collaboration. First, military intervention can be observed in the coast of Somalia and in Southeast Asian waters. A Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) was established in January 2009 and operates off the coast of Somalia. The components of CTF-151 are flexible and varies on the number and types of ships and aircraft that are deployed by the member states. Another characteristic of CTF-151 is its collaboration with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union Naval Force Somalia (EU NAVFOR) to conduct anti-piracy operations. In Southeast Asia, MALSINDO, comprised of military forces of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia engage in counter-piracy operations mostly in the Malacca Strait.

In addition to anti-piracy operations, international efforts to discuss cooperation in suppressing maritime piracy are being put into practice. The Global G-20 summit, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and ASEAN+3 (+3 are Japan, Korea and China), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), and East Asia Forum are some of the forums where discussions that are taking place in order to directly and indirectly collaborate on economic development of the international society as well as dealing with maritime security threats such as maritime piracy. The basis of this cooperation is the belief that

economic issues and international security issues are not mutually exclusive.

Another active area of collaboration is WMD non-proliferation through maritime efforts. On December 9th, 2002, the *Soson*, a North Korean ship, was transporting parts and components for 23 scud-type missiles from North Korea to Yemen. With the information provided by the United States government, Spanish forces conducted ship search (visit, board, search, and seizure, VBSS) but was unable to find grounds to stop weapons trade between North Korea and Yemen. Shortly after, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) was put in place. With U.S. President George W. Bush leading the initiative, the non-proliferation security initiative focused on the non-proliferation of WMD.

Various forms of export control systems exist internationally in order to promote non-proliferation of WMD. However, most of these systems were established before the 1990s which was at the time of the Cold War and therefore does not sufficiently reflect the changed international security environment after the Cold War.<sup>4</sup> The newly implemented Proliferation Security Initiative is an organization that aims to actively find methods to stop proliferation of WMD through enforcing ship stop orders and conducting VBSS. An example of these efforts would be the United States Navy destroyer's tracking of the North Korean ship *Kangnam* in 2009 under suspicion that the ship is carrying WMD components.

The U.S.-led PSI is seen to have resulted a visible effect, but it also shows the limitations of international collaboration. Hesitation on maritime transportation of WMD has been recently observed. Nations that are suspected to transport WMD materials are limited to nations such as North Korea and Iran, which are nations that already attract much attention from the international society. Diverse efforts to acquire information and conduct surveillance of these nations aside from the Proliferation Security Initiative are already in place.

Therefore, there is now a higher possibility of detection of WMD materials even before they are embarked on a ship. In effect, since tracking starts before a ship sets sail with WMD materials, the number of ships with WMD has decreased significantly. Meanwhile, China, Russia and some nations hesitate from joining the PSI, reasons being that the PSI impedes freedom of navigation and goes against UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Other factors that hinder the activation of PSI is doubts about its effectiveness and the belief that the PSI does not directly benefit the interest of each nation. Other reasons may include dissatisfaction in the U.S.-led maritime security cooperation system.

Of all areas of maritime security cooperation, cooperative activities of maritime disaster relief have many times been verified. During the Tsunami disaster in Indonesia in 2004, worldwide disaster relief activities were conducted by various nations including the U.S. and China.<sup>5</sup> The importance of humanitarian aid came before each nation's national interest and large-scale relief operations were swiftly carried out. Various political and economical security systems mentioned above are also continuously considered as relief and aid for maritime disasters. Common ground has been formed in the area of forecasting natural disasters, sharing information, and post-disaster relief activities. In response to the

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<sup>4</sup> Examples of export control include: Zangger Committee (founded 1974), Nuclear Supplier Group (founded 1978), The Australia Group (founded 1985), Missile Technology Control Regime (founded 1987) and Wassenaar Arrangement (founded 1996).

<sup>5</sup> See Naval War College, *Waves of Hope: The U.S. Navy's Response to the Tsunami in Northern Indonesia* (Newport: Naval War College, 2007) for details on humanitarian assistance utilizing naval forces during the Tsunami in Indonesia.

**Table 1.** Levels of Naval Cooperation and Its Applications

Levels of Naval Cooperation	Application of Naval Cooperation
High-level (Alliance level)	Combined Combat Operations/Exercises - Anti Submarine Warfare Exercise - Missile Defense - Mine Counter Measure Exercise
Mid-level (Coalition level)	Naval Peacekeeping and Peacemaking Anti-Piracy and Maritime Boundary Patrols Surveillance and Intelligence Sharing
Low-level (Maritime Security level)	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Search and Rescue Non-combatant Evacuation Operation Marine Science Research

Source: Soonkun Oh, "The Development of US-Korea-Japan's Trilateral Naval Cooperation in Northeast Asia," *The 8th KIMS-CNA Conference on Maritime Security*, Nov. 4, 2015, p. 97.

earthquake in Japan in 2011, the U.S. deployed its aircraft carrier to provide aid. Many nations in the region also send military personnel and relief deployments; this can be understood to be in the same context.

Specifically, it is very important to understand that there are different levels and applications of cooperation nations' military assets. Naval cooperation can be broadly defined as any collaborative military activities at sea. In fact, the naval diplomacy should play a vital role in establishing the potential for facing the non-traditional security threats in Northeast Asia. Table 1 shows the levels of naval cooperation in terms of application of naval cooperation. From a low-level to a high-level, naval cooperation deals with maritime security issues among countries, according to the degree of their relationships.

This idea is based on the belief that selective engagement strategy of countries can prevent WMD from threatening. David Yost, Professor of the Naval Postgraduate School, argued that the U.S. military overseas deployments "can provide early warning of aggressive actions and allow for prompt responses to such attacks; allow for more effective post-conflict occupation and peacekeeping operations (PKO); fulfill obligations made in peace treaties or defense alliances to protect friendly countries from aggression; and support the non-proliferation cause by reassuring nations that might otherwise develop nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction for their own defense" (Yost, 1995).

## 5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

Northeast Asia, being geopolitically surrounded by four great powers, the U.S., Russia, China, and Japan, has become a contested stage for enlarging the influences of these countries in the region. It has become the area where nations compete not only to rise to hegemonic status but also to obtain economic development, energy resources, and the stability of SLOC. Even to this day, maritime environment has been a contested zone for numerous nations to compete in rivalry with each other. Powerful nations have explored the

seas to pursue national interests as well as to seize key roles in the international society. However, the seas of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are no longer a stage for nations to compete against each other. Certainly there is room for cooperation among countries in Northeast Asia.

Piracy and maritime terrorism have become the new threats to maritime security in Northeast Asia. This region requires more cooperation rather than resource competition and territorial dispute. In many countries in this region such as China and other Northeast Asian countries, the new trends of global cooperative efforts are required. However, cooperation in this region is still in the early stages of establishing the relationships of mutual confidence. There remain the barriers interrupting the deeper cooperation with friction. The factors that disturb cooperation include distrust among countries and increasing national tension. The issue that matters most is sovereignty. These problems are triggered by competition over resources, such as fishing, oil, and gas.

Although close cooperation in against maritime security threats are taking place, some tasks still remain. First, some nations still see the maritime environment to be a stage for competition. Competition between the U.S. and China on maritime security is an important issue that must be deal with in a peaceful manner. As more and more importance is emphasized on the maritime environment, another important problem that arises is the continuous territorial disputes on the islands in the South China Sea amongst the nations that surround them. Most islands in the South China Sea are subject to territorial disputes, including the *Spratly Islands* (Taiwan, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei), the *Paracel Archipelago* (China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Philippines, Brunei), and most recently the *Scarborough Shoal* (China, Philippines). The possibility inciting a neighboring nation by developing military power in order to safeguard national security as well as SLOC could be a factor that impedes full-scale maritime security cooperation. Especially in Northeast Asia, tension arising from territorial disputes is the reason behind limitations in active collaboration against maritime security threats.

Having full control over territorial seas is important because it is related to economic interests, because these territorial seas provide marine and fishery resources. Therefore, the inability of nations to easily give up such interests will continue to impede the cooperative methods between nations. And furthermore, regional maritime security cooperative system still has room to improve even in peaceful time like today. Regional cooperation in humanitarian aid activities, maritime search and rescue, and maritime pollution prevention is of utmost importance. A problem that needs to be solved is the fact that organizations that can take charge of these missions are insufficient. Humanitarian aid activities, maritime search and rescue, and maritime pollution prevention are key non-traditional threats against maritime security.

When such threat arises, most nations actively come in aid to provide national cooperation. However, there are limitations to sharing information and preparing for swift response before these incidents happen. Especially, the issue of maritime debris and pollution is a problem that needs early attention and response efforts since if it is left unattended, it may one day lead to a irreversible disaster. However, most nations are passive and evasive in sharing awareness and providing a solution for the current situation and leading with a responsible role. At this time, efforts to stop the aggravation between nations in Northeast Asia are necessary. Such efforts must be realized by frequent and continuous actions to hold conversations aimed to establish understanding and agreements between nations.

Another problem in maritime security cooperation is that efforts of maritime security are

overly concentrated in the Somalian seas. Anti-piracy operations are unique in the sense that every party deals with a mutual enemy. No interests are violated and efforts are put into methods that mutually benefit each party. Because of the focus in the Somalian seas, anti-piracy operations in other areas of the world may be neglected. Additional cooperation is needed in strengthening the operational capability in other seas where piracy operations are active. Much more active international cooperation can be promoted if the concept of a mutual enemy, as shared by nations against maritime piracy, is applied to the problem of WMD proliferation instead of the current political and ideological approach of WMD proliferation.

In order to solve the problems mentioned above, more efforts must be made to establish a new maritime order through formulation of a plan to further peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia. Maritime disputes in Northeast Asia have continuously evolved in areas of international politics, economics, and law. The issues at hand are multi-layered in nature, with disputes in territories, resource development, boundary demarcation, environmental pollution at its center. As part of an effort to work on ideas in promoting peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia and to find a concept of sustainable maritime order, separate approaches to solving disputes in boundary disputes of exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and continental shelves, resource development, and maritime environment protection must be taken with goals to achieve multi-party consensus on general maritime issues.

In this era of new dynamics and challenges, Northeast Asia's peaceful cooperation will play its role as a mechanism that provides stability amongst nations such as the United States, China, and Japan, and as well as to nations in Southeast Asia. Peaceful cooperation in Northeast Asia will be a first step to promote security cooperation and ultimately to rid of all security dilemma between nations. We must remember that the sea is at least as important to our future as it has been to our past.

**Article Received: 12-12-2015 Revised: 12-27-2015 Accepted: 12-31-2015**

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