

The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
International Maritime Security Symposium
12-14 September 2006

An Overview

BACKGROUND

Initiatives: A significant amount of thought, effort and resources has been invested over the past few years in a concerted effort to improve the security of the maritime transportation system. Both ends of the commercial supply chain have been examined, and programs such as the Container Security Initiative, the U.S. Coast Guard's Port Operations Information for Security and Efficiency (POISE) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, have hardened vulnerable port and harbor facilities. The U.S. Navy has presented an idea – the “thousand ship navy” – that would encourage increased cooperation at sea through a loosely aligned, self-generating and sustaining maritime network.

Problems: However, there seems to be little coordination between these diverse efforts. While regional progress is being made, government security initiatives seem to focus on military means and only tangentially involve the commercial sector. Efforts are not coordinated or connected between regions, leaving gaps and seams in the spectrum of security. In order to have an effective global maritime network, all whose interests involve the seas should be included in this network to the level and degree that it benefits them as a region, country or industry. With respect to global maritime security awareness, the world's merchant ships, fishermen and others who rely on the sea for their livelihood represent a large number of heretofore untapped and disconnected nodes in a potential network.

Challenges: Given the different nature of security challenges faced in various regions of the world, a new effort is required to coalesce the myriad initiatives in planning or currently underway. Discussions have been held in various forums and venues highlighting the mutual benefit of increased international cooperation at sea – not just for those who choose to participate in a global maritime partnership focused on security, but for all who use and rely on the seas for their livelihood.

SYMPOSIUM OBJECTIVE

The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory International Maritime Security Symposium is designed to encourage and foster that cooperation. The symposium will develop a better understanding of current (and perhaps future) challenges to maritime security – both from the regional perspective and the global view. By better understanding the challenge, symposium participants will develop effective solutions to scenario-based security issues that can be exported across regional boundaries and used to provide local or national benefit. By crossing these borders, the symposium will begin to build international support for increased cooperation at sea, and build consensus regarding the “structure” of such a beneficial partnership.

Participants in the “by invitation-only” symposium will blend the expertise of a broadly international collection of maritime security professionals. Academics, civil government representatives and members of various navies and coast guards will partner with law enforcement officials and representatives of the commercial shipping industry to describe a path toward increased, mutually beneficial cooperation at sea. Opportunities for cooperation, as well as potential barriers to that cooperation will be discussed in order to enable the maritime community to build an effective partnership and overcome limitations and barriers.

The output of the symposium will be a set of recommended actions that, if taken, might help to accelerate this mutually beneficial alignment of partners within the maritime community. This action list will be provided to the 2007 International Seapower Symposium for their consideration as a possible course toward increased cooperation at sea.

CONTACT

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