

HMSA 2007 - Summary of Conference

Date: 21st March 2007

Venue: Shangri La Hotel, Singapore

The Homeland and Maritime Security Asia 2007 (HMSA 2007) International Conference, the fifth in its series organized by Defence Technology Conferences, was held on 21 March 2007 at the Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore, in conjunction with Defence Technology Asia (DTA) 2007.

This year, the focus of HMSA International Conference was on developments in the threat from maritime terrorism and the technology to counter such threats.



The developments in the threat from maritime terrorism were presented by eminent researchers in this field. Dr Rohan Gunaratna, Head International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies and Mr Michael Richardson, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, presented papers which provided details about maritime terrorism, including leadership, organization, tactics and technology used.

Dr Rohan Gunaratna's paper focused on al-Qaeda and Tamil Tigers, while Mr Michael Richardson's paper focused on the growing threat from Hezbollah. Both indicated the links between these major terrorist organizations and regional terrorist organizations like the Abu Sayaff Group and Jemaah Islamiyah.



Dr Sam Bateman, Senior Fellow and Advisor to the Maritime Security Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, presented a paper on 'Shipping Patterns in the Malacca and Singapore Straits: Implications for Risk

Assessments', which analysed the threat from maritime terrorism and piracy to the various categories of vessels that ply these waters.

The latest developments in defence technology that would enable military and security organizations to counter the maritime terrorist threat were presented by various representatives from research organizations and defence industries.

Dr Francois Regis Martin-Lauzer, Director NATO Undersea Research Centre, NATO, and Dr Frank L. Herr, Head Ocean Battlespace Sensing Department, Office of Naval Research, United States Navy, presented papers which explained how their organizations are using technology to counter the asymmetrical threat from maritime terrorism in littoral waters, and harbours and ports, respectively.



Dr Vijay Sakhuja, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, presented a paper on 'Transformation in Maritime Air Surveillance and Reconnaissance' which indicated a shift from manned platforms to UAVs and Aerostats, as a more cost-effective solution for wide area patrols and coastal surveillance.

Defence industries were represented by: ECA, France; Eurocopter, France; Galileo Avionica, Italy; and Eurotorp, Italy. Each of these leading defence companies presented papers on the systems and equipment that would enable various threats to be detected, localized and countered in a maritime environment.



While all these papers addressed the analysis and technology to counter the conventional threats, MAJ Teong How Hwa, Deputy Director, Operations Department, Singapore Civil Defence Force, presented a paper, titled 'Consequence Management Response to a CBR Incident', which explained the organization, equipment and procedures required to manage the aftermath of a Chemical, Biological and Radiological incident.

Overall, HMSA 2007 provided participants with an insight into the latest analysis of the regional maritime terrorist threat, and the latest research and the technological systems and concepts, from around the globe that can be used to counter such a threat.

Participants were able to discuss and exchange ideas in informal and relaxed settings at coffee breaks and lunch, organized at the DTA 2007 Exhibition. This enabled participants to also view the various equipment and systems on display.



A very successful reception, for guests and participants from DTA 2007 and HMSA 2007, was organized on the evening of 21st March 2007. This social event, held in the lush tropical setting of the Waterfall Terrace at the Shangri-La Hotel, facilitated interaction and networking between guests and participants.