

**ASEAN Regional Forum  
5<sup>th</sup> Inter-Sessional Meeting on  
Maritime Security  
Seoul, South Korea 18 – 19 April 2013**

**U.S. Statement**

Co-Chairs, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United States would like to thank the Government of South Korea for hosting and the Government of Indonesia for co-chairing this Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security. The United States values the ASEAN Regional Forum, and we are proud to co-chair this milestone 5<sup>th</sup> ISM on Maritime Security with our Indonesian and South Korean partners. We also recognize the strong foundation built by Indonesia, Japan and New Zealand in the first three ISMs on Maritime Security.

The United States would also like to congratulate Malaysia, Brunei Darussalem, and New Zealand on a successful Ship Profiling Workshop, held earlier this week in Kuala Lumpur. The presentations and valuable exchange of views contributed to the building of confidence among the members of ARF.

***Building ARF's Capacity to Respond to Maritime Security Challenges***

On the occasion of ARF's 20<sup>th</sup> year and the 5<sup>th</sup> ISM on Maritime Security, we commemorate significant milestones in regional cooperation on security issues, like maritime security, but we are also reminded of our obligation to assess ARF's progression toward an action-based, solutions-oriented regional security body. Along with confidence building, it is critical that we develop ARF's capacity to

respond to regional security challenges and potential crises through preventive diplomacy and resolution of conflicts. The urgency of this task cannot be overstated; we see the need for this capability today, in areas like the South China Sea, where competing national interests and heightened tensions, increase the potential for conflict.

### ***U.S. Maritime Security Efforts outside ARF***

The United States values regional efforts to enhance cooperation on maritime security issues. As announced by the U.S. President during his trip to the region last year: the U.S. is working toward acceding to ReCAAP; and we are also working with the Philippines to launch an Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum initiative to enhance seafarer training in the region by focusing on seafarer safety and wellbeing vis-à-vis piracy, an area seldom tackled in maritime curricula. The U.S. hopes that our cooperation in efforts like these contributes positively and encourages others to support increasing maritime security in the region.

### ***Environmental Security Proposal: Expanding Areas of Cooperation under the Maritime Security Pillar***

Over the past 5 years, the ARF Maritime Security ISM has provided our governments the opportunity to work together in order to build confidence on maritime security issues through people-to-people exchanges and transparent discussions. We have called upon “an all of Government approach” to our ISMs, fostering candid and comprehensive discussions on important maritime security issues. However, we must continue to deepen our relationships and increase information-sharing among our agencies to build confidence while promoting stability and interoperability.

In order to keep the maritime security pillar of ARF current and relevant to rapidly changing times, we should also think creatively and search for new topics to address. For instance, the protection of the marine environment is undeniably a maritime security issue in this region, as damage to the marine environment can have profound effects on national economies, quality of life, rapidly declining fish stocks, and public health. Furthermore, given that over forty percent of the world's seaborne trade flows through Asia, and Asia hosts thirteen of the world's largest ports as well as three of the largest shipbuilding nations, the preservation of the marine environment in this region is of global interest. Given the region's high level of economic and geo-political interdependence, a large scale environmental disaster would likely impact most of the nations represented in this room. That is why ARF should explore multilateral interagency approaches to prevention, preservation, protection, response, mitigation, and restoration of the marine environment— whether related to pollution, illegal removal of environmental resources, damage, misuse, or overuse.

Consistent with this idea, the U.S. is seeking support and cooperation in developing a Maritime Security Workshop focusing on regional cooperation in preparedness and response to maritime environmental disasters involving Hazardous and Noxious Substances in Marine Environments. The goal of this workshop will be to share best practices and lessons learned in responding to major hazardous substance incidents requiring a coordinated international response. We are seeking your support in moving forward with this initiative, which was tabled at last year's ISM on Maritime Security.

Numerous areas for multilateral cooperation and promotion of regional norms can be derived from the marine environmental issue alone. Let us not stop here; let's

keep ARF a thoughtful and innovative organization by exploring new issues and also leveraging the expertise of our Track 2 partners in the Experts and Eminent Persons' Group.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we should take this opportunity to congratulate one another for our achievements in the Maritime Security ISM. However, there is more that can and should be pursued in this critical pillar of ARF. The United States looks forward eagerly to cooperating with its ARF partners to keep maritime security discussions relevant to the existing realities of a dynamic security environment and to develop ARF into an action-based, solutions-oriented regional security body.