

Report on ARF Ship Profiling Workshop: for delivery at the ARF ISM on maritime Security

- The ARF Workshop on Ship Profiling, co-chaired by Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and New Zealand, was held in Kuala Lumpur on 15-16 April 2013.
- 82 participants registered for the workshop. The following ARF participants were represented: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, China, EU, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, United States and Viet Nam. Representatives of the IMO and the Tokyo MOU Port State Control and the ASEAN Secretariat were also present.
- One of the main objectives of the workshop was to enhance awareness of the regional approaches and tools that countries employ towards ship profiling. This objective was definitely met.
- The workshop also succeeded in providing an important contact-building and networking opportunity for maritime security officials and ship profiling experts from the region. It provided a useful platform on which to promote greater cooperation and build confidence between countries in the region on ship profiling issues, and helped increase awareness of maritime security frameworks generally.
- The workshop addressed a number of areas, including:
 - Defining ship profiling and its purposes;
 - Building awareness of the international regulatory and compliance regime relevant to ship profiling, in particular the ISPS Code;
 - Information sharing and international cooperation, including through the Asia Pacific Computer Inspection System (APCIS)
 - The role of intelligence in the implementation of ship profiling;
 - The role of ship profiling in the process of building greater maritime domain awareness;
 - Case studies of approaches towards ship profiling provided by Australia, China, EU, Malaysia, Singapore, and the US;
 - Best practices around ship profiling; and
 - Future challenges.
- There was a very productive and often robust exchange of views around many of these topics. Many challenges were identified, including:
 - Information sharing: Participants recognised the vital role of information sharing to the effective assessment of security and safety risk posed by a vessel. This information sharing needed to take place at various levels and between various stakeholders. Many acknowledged that enhancing information exchange remained an on-going challenge, even at the inter-agency and national level.
 - Impact on Industry: Acknowledging the facilitation of commerce as one of the main purposes of ship profiling, a number of participants stressed the importance of ensuring that ship profiling processes did not impose an unreasonable burden on the shipping industry. The desirability of developing a partnership with industry was noted. Participants recognised that there was a need to balance security on the one hand with minimising disruption to legitimate maritime activity and trade on the other.

- Safety vs. Security: Another challenge was how authorities could reconcile ship safety with ship security when seeking to assess compliance. Ship profiling can have a role in identifying both safety and security concerns.
- National characteristics: The point was made that there was no one-size-fits-all approach towards ship profiling. While there were a number of common elements between countries' practice of ship profiling, approaches that were adopted were likely to be influenced by countries' individual circumstances.

Next steps

- Participants all acknowledged the important role of international cooperation on maritime security issues, and on improving the practice of ship profiling in particular. The workshop was seen by many as a step in the right direction, but it should be seen as a first step to fostering better regional networks and information and experience sharing, with a view towards ultimately establishing some best practices on ship profiling. There was also a suggestion to include the shipping industry and other stakeholders in future events on this topic.
- There was a suggestion that perhaps some ARF participants might wish to put forward a submission to the IMO proposing that a set of best practices on ship profiling be developed. This might be a longer term objective for the ARF to consider. It was also suggested that the set of best practices, if developed, could be included in the IMO's Maritime Security Manual.
- The possibility of the IMO's Maritime Security Committee including "Ship Profiling" as an agenda item for its discussion was also raised. Noting that IMO has yet to develop any guidance on ship profiling, the IMO Committee could, at the proposal of IMO member states, explore the development of such guidance.
- The meeting also received an offer from New Zealand to share its methodology and processes on ship profiling with any countries, in the interests in contributing to capacity building.
- The co-chairs of the workshop – Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and New Zealand – will continue to think about how we can take this workshop forward and consider whether any follow-up activity on the issue of ship profiling can be implemented in the ARF. We would welcome the views and ideas that other ARF participants may have on next steps.
- New Zealand wishes to express its appreciation to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia for their willingness to partner with us on this project, and would like to thank Malaysia in particular for its excellent arrangements and warm hospitality.