

CONCEPT PAPER

ASEAN Regional Forum

Environmental Security

Preparedness, Response, and Cooperation to Pollution Incidents

Involving Hazardous and Noxious Substances

In Maritime Environments

Proposal

The United States proposes, with another co-chair and an ASEAN partner, to conduct a workshop, or series of workshops, focusing on preparedness and response to maritime environmental disasters involving hazardous and noxious substances (HNS). The goal of this proposal is to share best practices and lessons learned in responding to major HNS incidents that require coordinated international response. Experts from relevant government agencies and the private sector will lead a two-day workshop.

Background

The demands of modern commerce require transport by sea of large amounts of oil, gas, chemicals, and other potentially dangerous products. When oil, gas, or HNS escape due to accidental or man-made incidents, the impact is devastating to people, marine life, and the environment. Large incidents also negatively impact the local and regional economy including loss of tourism, trade, and investment, in addition to higher costs for commodities when supply is reduced.

The United States experienced a major environmental disaster in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon incident in the Gulf of Mexico. The lessons learned in that incident as well as procedures and technologies developed by ARF participants, could be used to build regional capacity to respond to large environmental disasters. Due to the close proximity of countries in the region and the influence of winds and currents, an international response may be the best way to deal with a major incident involving HNS.

According to the 2010 Hanoi Plan of Action (POA), the ARF should develop regional maritime security capacity-building, and the objectives of this workshop are in keeping with the Hanoi Plan of Action.

Objectives

Objectives for the workshop could include:

- a) Develop guidelines for criteria to determine when international assistance is necessary
- b) Identify gaps in domestic response technology
- c) Prioritize required capabilities that could be provided by international partners
- d) Configure organizational structure to accommodate an international response
- e) Develop standard operating procedures for tactical-level coordination of international assets

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