



SPEECH

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Opening Remarks by RADM Ronnie Tay, Chief of Navy at the Launch of Project SURPIC

27 May 2005

Good morning, ADM Slamet Soebijanto, Chief of Staff, TNI-AL, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Today marks yet another important milestone in the excellent ties of friendship and co-operation between the Indonesian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy. In a few minutes, DAN GUSKAMLABAR and Commander COSCOM will sign the Project SURPIC Co-operation Agreement, after which we shall witness the official launch of Project SURPIC.

Indeed, Project SURPIC is a significant step forward in the co-operative efforts between the two navies to combat sea robberies in the Singapore Strait area under the ambit of the Indon-Sin Co-ordinated Patrol. Since its inception in 1992, the ISCP has been very effective, and we have seen the number of sea-robberies in the area drastically decrease over the years to near zero for the past few years.

By operating closely together for so many years, our two navies have learnt a lot from each other and we have become very inter-operable. In the process, we have greatly deepened our understanding and trust of each other. Truly, it is this friendship, respect and bond we have both built together that has enabled us to make Project SURPIC a reality, thereby allowing us to take another stride forward in our fight against maritime security threats together.

The Singapore Strait is a strategic waterway. Together with the Malacca Strait, it links countries in Asia to markets around the world and also brings to countries in Asia the energy resources and other goods that are important for their economic growth. It is estimated that the straits carry as much as a quarter of the world's commerce and half of the world's oil.

At the same time, the global economic system is now drawing countries within and beyond our region even more closely together through the densely integrated supply chains that

stretch across regions. The straits are the arteries of this integrated system. The ships that ply these routes fly the flags of many states, are manned by multi-national crews and carry cargoes bound for destinations around the world.

The straits are therefore attractive targets for terrorists groups that seek to make grand political statements and also for sea-robbers who seek to make a quick buck. Ensuring the maritime security of the straits against these threats, which are not only trans-national in nature but also global in their impact, is therefore of strategic importance to all of us.

In this context, Project SURPIC will be able to make a real contribution as it will enable the two navies to share a common and real time sea situation picture of the strait. With this, the two navies will be better able to monitor the sea situation as well as to exchange information on a real time basis more efficiently and effectively. This will in turn enable the two navies to deploy their assets more optimally, and to respond more decisively should any incident in the strait develop.

To conclude, I would like to express my appreciation to the staff from Guskamlabar and Coscom and the headquarters of our two navies for working hard to realise Project SURPIC and to ADM Soebijanto for his support. Project SURPIC is yet another co-operative initiative of the TNI-AL and RSN, and is tangible evidence of the strong ties of co-operation between our two navies. The RSN looks forward to working even more closely with the TNI-AL in the future. Thank you.

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