



# SPEECH

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## **Opening Address for Ex Carat 2005 by Fleet Commander, COL Chew Men Leong at Ex Carat 05 Opening Ceremony**

31 May 2005

Good morning, Commander Logistics Group Western Pacific Rear-Admiral Kevin Quinn, Commander Destroyer Squadron One Commodore Lothrop Little, Colonel Ng Chee Peng, Commander First Flotilla, Commanding Officers, distinguished guests, and all participants of CARAT 2005.

Believe it or not, we have already passed one decade of excellent co-operation between the Singapore and US Armed Forces within the established framework of CARAT. CARAT remains a highpoint of bilateral defence co-operation between the two countries, which grows from strength to strength with every passing year. Today, we mark the beginning of the 11th Exercise in the Co-operation Afloat and Readiness Training series. On behalf of the Republic of Singapore Navy, let me extend a warm welcome to our friends from the United States.

If there is to be one hallmark of the CARAT series, it has been the commitment of the US Armed Forces working closely with Singapore to continuously further the boundaries of complexity and inter-operability. For example, in the formative years of CARAT, US-Singapore exercises existed in separate components. These included component like MERCUB, MIATA, MERLYNX and VALIANT MARK. They all existed under different command and control umbrellas.

Four years later in 99, we made the move to combine the various components under one single exercise command and control structure. This facilitated interaction between component groups and enabled exercise complexity to grow. Inter-operability was heightened. To cope with expanding exercise scope, we also established the combined CARAT Planning HQ. This has since become indispensable in co-ordinating the various component exercises and ensuring safety. A quantum jump in inter-operability was achieved when we introduced the Barak missile and Mistral SAM firings on drone targets. Since then, anti-air missile firings have become a mainstay of the CARAT Singapore. Last year for the first time, we

even successfully fired the Barak missile against a surface target, a first in the world.

In 2001, we established an exercise planning and co-ordination team or EPCT onboard an USN warship. This facilitated quicker response, enhanced Rules of Engagement play and umpiring during tactical phase. Last year, the combined team was established onboard a RSN LST, RSS RESOLUTION, for the first time.

Leveraging on past successes, this year, we will be taking yet another step towards “Widening the Scope and Increasing the Complexity” of CARAT. CARAT 2005 will comprise a more complex exercise set-up for the planning and execution of the tactical freeplay. This will incorporate a simulated national tasking for the combined task group.

The combined CARAT HQ ashore will also provide the scenario and directions, whilst the combined Task Group staff afloat will co-plan and execute the mission on a real-time basis at sea.

For the combined HQ to do this, there is a need to facilitate information-sharing between Task Group and HQ ashore. We are therefore appreciative that the USN continues to deploy the CENTRIX system – both onboard RSS ENDEAVOUR, the Joint Command Platform afloat, and also within the shore HQ. CENTRIX allows the Task Group at sea to share the sea situation picture with CARAT HQ ashore on a real time basis. CENTRIX is a key command and control system of the USN. It has already made a significant impact in enabling the RSN's task group onboard RSS Resolution which recently operated in the gulf in support of the reconstruction of Iraq to integrate effectively with Coalition forces. In CARAT, its continued deployment will help us to stage a realistic and demanding exercise, and strengthen inter-operability.

To reinforce CENTRIX, CARAT 2005 will also see the RSN introducing a new system called project ACCESS. This is a simple stand-alone and user-friendly command and control system that comes in a small box that can be easily placed on any ship. It uses satellite communications to allow units at sea to share essential information such as own force position and targets of interest.

The intended deployment of ACCESS on participating ships will enable a common picture to be shared amongst ships within the task group. Combined with CENTRIX, the extent of networking between ships within the task group and that between the task group and the ashore HQ will be pushed up another level. Hopefully, the eventual impact will be greater interoperability.

Of course, one of key highlights of CARAT 2005 will be the conduct of the combined MISSILEX. The MISSILEX will comprise of two components. The first component is the Barak-missile firing. For the first time in CARAT, the RSN will be firing the Barak missile against the drone flying the profile of an incoming enemy aircraft at a higher altitude. Previously, Barak firings in CARAT were on drones simulating inbound anti-ship missiles

and also against a surface target. This time round, we will be firing the Barak at a greater range and height than any other exercise. The second component will see our LST, RSS ENDEAVOUR, firing the Mistral SAM against the drone target. This year's combined MISSILEX adds to the series of MISSILEXs that we have conducted in the past, and aims to push the limits of our anti-air warfare capability and prove our readiness.

Over the years, USN has provided the drones in support of the RSN's missile exercise. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the USN for her staunch support in this, especially when almost all of these drones has only taken a one way trip from the US to Singapore. The RSN hopes that the drone support will continue in the years to come.

Post-September 11, the growing concern of trans-national terrorists targeting maritime traffic is undeniable. The incidents of MV LIMBURG and USS COLE remind us that maritime terrorism remains a clear and present danger. The concern is even greater when we consider that a third of the world's trade and half of the world's oil flow through waters in this region. There is a vital need for both sides to co-operate and continue to build capacity to deal with common maritime security threats. This year, CARAT 05 will feature Maritime Security elements such as anti-terrorism serials with small boat threats as well as Vessel Boarding Search and Seizure serials. In addition, a "Boarding Tactics" symposium, focusing on the boarding techniques to be used during In-port and At-sea Boarding exercises, will be conducted.

We are also of course pleased to have the four members of the United States Coast Guard Training Division here for a five-day affiliation programme with the Singapore Police Coast Guard as part of CARAT 2005. Topics on "Intermediate Boarding Team Tactics" will be discussed, and Pier-side boarding will be conducted in Police Coast Guard Brani Base.

CARAT 05, as with previous years, remains a multi-faceted exercise. Beyond the Missile exercise, tactical play at sea and maritime security exercises, we will also include combined exercises in diving operations, salvage operations, base defence and ship-to-shore exercises. The coverage of such a broad spectrum will go a long way in strengthening inter-operability between the two sides.

Over the years, CARAT has not only grown in scale and stature but also in terms of its importance to Armed Forces on both sides. It remains a vital component of the growing range of RSN-USN interactions. The inter-operability built through CARAT exercise series have already yielded dividends in enabling both sides to work and integrate well together when faced with common security challenges and in times of need. The excellent integration of our Task Group in the Gulf with CENTCOM forces and our co-operation in the tsunami disaster relief operations in Aceh alongside the Indonesian Navy are good examples. The strong inter-operability we have built, and which we continue to build will put us in good stead as we face common security challenges and in times of need.

Beyond the larger strategic intentions, let us not forget real inter-operability starts from the

ground. There is nothing more important than for each participant of CARAT 05 to maximise all interaction opportunities to get to know your counter-part, forge new bonds of friendship and reinvigorate existing ones. My hope is that each officer, man and woman will find a counterpart he or she can relate to and work with comfortably during CARAT 05. When aggregated, this will help strengthen the relationships between the two forces, and go a long way in enhancing inter-operability.

On this note, I will like to wish all of you a safe, successful and enriching CARAT 05 ahead.

Thank you.

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