



NEWS RELEASE

Visit <http://www.mindef.gov.sg> for more news and information about MINDEF and the SAF

Fact Sheet: Republic of Singapore Navy – Securing the Sea, Securing Singapore, Securing the Singaporean Way of Life

12 Nov 2019

The mission of the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) is to ensure the seaward defence of Singapore and protect its vital sea lines of communication. In today's world, it means defending Singapore and Singapore's interests against threats both near and afar. Close to Singapore, the RSN defends against maritime security threats, while further afield, the RSN ensures our critical access to sea lines of communication.

Singapore – A Maritime Nation

Singapore is a maritime nation. We are reliant on the sea for our survival and prosperity. Without the sea, our way of life will be disrupted. The sea plays a part in our day-to-day life, every day – from the strength of our economy to the food we consume.

- a. The maritime industry contributes about 7% to Singapore's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employs more than 170,000 personnel, and there are more than 5,000 maritime establishments in Singapore. Worldwide, Singapore also has the highest trade to GDP ratios, at more than 300%. Singapore is also one of the world's busiest trans-shipment hubs, with an average of 140,000 vessels calling into Singapore annually.
- b. The sea is the most cost-effective means to move large quantities of goods and raw materials around the world. The cargo capacity of a container ship is equivalent to the capacity of 800 Boeing 747 planes. Today, more than 90% of the world's trade is transported via the sea.

- c. Singapore imports over 90% of the food consumed in the country. In 2018, Singapore imported about 5.6 million tonnes of food from more than 180 countries worldwide. The top three countries that Singapore imported food from via sea-freight were Australia, Thailand and China. 99% of rice imports and 84% of fish imports were via sea-freight.

The Sea – A Global Commons

One of the elements for global trade to thrive is free and open access to the sea. However, consensus on a set of rules that everyone abides by is essential to keep the seas open. *Mare Liberum*, or "freedom of the seas" is underpinned by the 1982 United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Continued stability and prosperity depends on working with like-minded nations to preserve this shared space through agreed rules such as UNCLOS. Without rules and norms, shared spaces such as the maritime space will break down.

RSN – Defending Our Every Day

The RSN works with national agencies and international partners to ensure that all users can continue to access the sea unimpeded. At home, we deter and neutralise security threats, including maritime terrorism, together with other national agencies as part of the whole-of-government National Maritime Security System. We also contribute to regional and international maritime security efforts through initiatives such as the Malacca Straits Patrol and the Information Fusion Centre, and exercises such as the ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise, the ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise and Western Pacific Naval Symposium Multilateral Sea Exercise. In addition, the RSN commits to international security efforts and deploys to waters further afield to keep sea lines of communication open, such as through multinational counter-piracy operations under Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 in the Gulf of Aden. It is only when sea lanes remain open across the world that Singapore can continue to thrive as a maritime nation.

Fact Sheet:

- Infographic: Republic of Singapore Navy – Securing the Sea, Securing Singapore, Securing the Singaporean Way of Life (MINDEF_20191112002_1.pdf)