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Regional cooperation in space: policies, governance and legal tools (1)

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REGIONAL COOPERATION IN SPACE FOR SUPPORT OF MARITIME SECURITY: SOUTHEAST
ASIA'S TRI-BORDER AREA AND UNITED STATES POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Abstract

The tri-border area (TBA) of Southeast Asia is comprised of three states – the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia – and two main bodies of water – the Sulu Sea and the Celebes Sea. As a major route for commerce, navigation and settlement, the region is also highly contributory to transnational dissident, terrorist and criminal activity, and is of interest to the United States in securing regional maritime security and governance. Specifically, the TBA remains the United States Pacific Command's (USPACOM) primary area of interest for counterterrorism in the Pacific, and its primary focus of bilateral military engagement within Southeast Asia. As effective maritime security, safety and governance require that there must be no location too remote to be seen, space technologies present such a method for achieving comprehensive maritime domain awareness (MDA). With their increased global coverage and reduced costs, civilian and commercial space technologies continue to be of growing interest to the world's naval forces, port authorities, and numerous stakeholders – including academia and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – for increasing MDA. The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) To review key policy and legal issues facing regional cooperation in space for support of maritime governance in the TBA, 2) To identify the efforts of regional academia and NGOs in utilizing civil and commercial space technologies to support defense cooperation, and 3) To consider U.S. policy alternatives for engaging with the aforementioned academic and NGO communities in order to advance regional cooperation in space for support of maritime security. This study presents recent developments following field research conducted at the University of the Philippines, Diliman in the summer of 2013.