Public-Private Partnership for the Safety of Navigation and Pollution Prevention in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore

Senia Febrica, American Studies Center, Universitas Indonesia

The Straits of Malacca and Singapore is the shortest sea route between the Middle East and Asia. Currently, around 80 percent of Japan’s and China’s imported oil originating from the Persian Gulf transits through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.\(^1\) With busy shipping flows reaching 400-600 ships every day, the problems of collisions and near misses in the Straits are at the heart of public and private actors’ concerns.\(^2\)

Public-private partnership is central to improve navigational safety and protect the marine environment in the Straits. The Straits harbours rich marine life including mangroves and coral reefs.\(^3\) A number of shipping incidents have taken place in the straits involving major releases of oil and hazardous and noxious substances into the waters, causing destruction to the marine environment.\(^4\)

Concrete public-private collaborations in the Straits have been carried out through the existing Cooperative Mechanism, a cooperation initiative which emerged as a result of the IMO’s sponsored meetings (2005-2007) on the Straits. Under the Cooperative Mechanism at the 2006 Kuala Lumpur meeting straits states identified six cooperative programs that need to be implemented and cost over US$ 42.8 million.\(^5\) These include removal of identified wrecks in the straits, capacity building on Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) preparedness and response, the installation of class B Automatic Identification System on small ships, the development of setting up tide, current and wind measurement systems in 12 locations, and the replacement of aids of navigation including 7 of those that were damaged by the 2004 tsunami.\(^6\)

---


\(^3\) Anugerah Nontji, “Managing the Marine Environment of the Straits of Malacca”, in Mohd Nizam Basiron & Amir Dastan, Building A Comprehensive Security Environment (Kuala Lumpur: Maritime Institute of Malaysia, 2006), at 145

\(^4\) Ibid.


\(^6\) Ibid.
As part of the public-private partnership, the Aids to Navigation Fund (ANF) has been set up for the long term maintenance of 22 aids to navigation in the Straits’ Traffic Separation Scheme. The Nippon Foundation of Japan announced its commitment to provide one-third of the five year costs of the ANF that totals US$ 9 million. The Cooperative Mechanism is a useful cooperation scheme to further attract user states and businesses to sponsor projects identified by strait states at the 2006 Kuala Lumpur meeting and future projects to improve navigational safety and marine protection in the Straits.

---

8 Ibid, at 2.