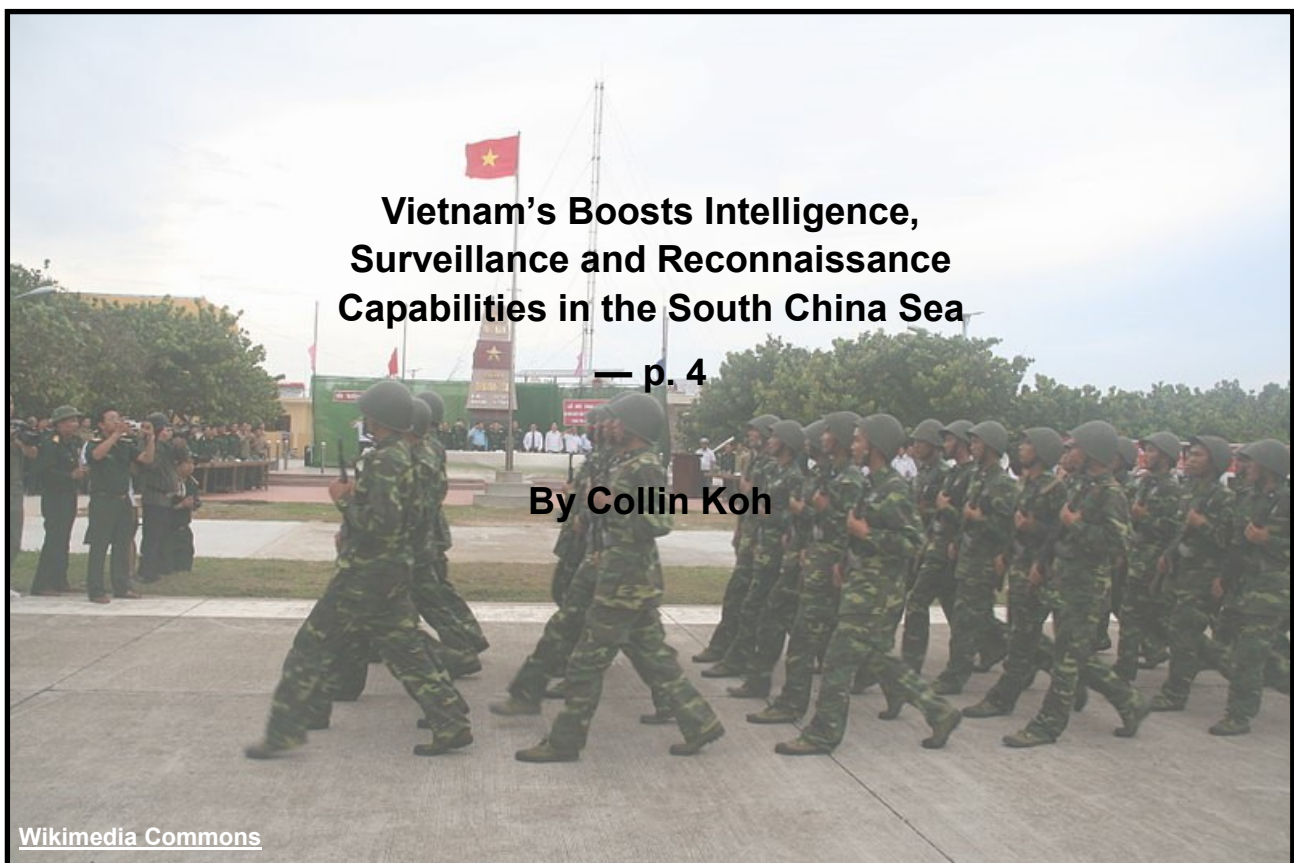


Featured *MSP Perspective*:



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Vietnam's Boosts Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Capabilities in the South China Sea
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For many years, Vietnam has steadily accumulated new military capabilities to reinvigorate its antiquated Cold War arsenal. But it should have long recognized that military effectiveness does not depend on just kinetic capabilities; the means of detecting, tracking and guiding weapons against the intended targets constitute an essential element. Therefore, Hanoi has in recent years undertaken nascent but nonetheless crucial steps in establishing a comprehensive intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) suite.

Vietnam's unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and remote-sensing earth observation satellite programmes were more officially publicized for their utility in agriculture, disaster management and fishery management. At first glance though, these initiatives correspond with general patterns observed in Southeast Asia. But such capabilities clearly have military applications, since they generate data that could be utilized by the end-user for various purposes. Even though civilian satellites for instance may not possess the sort of capabilities possessed by their military counterparts, they may still fulfill less demanding military peacetime and wartime requirements.

In recent years, there are signs of Vietnam implementing a strategy of establishing what can be deemed "maritime domain awareness" in the SCS. Notably, in February 2013, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) [said](#) that it will gradually modernize existing "marine environment and hydrometeorology observation stations" as well as build new ones in key maritime zones as part of a [master plan](#) to establish a marine resources and environment observation network of 35 such stations in total by 2020. This integrated network, which is a crucial part of a [three-phase project](#) developed by Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands (VASI), will help improve national management of the seas and islands under Vietnam's sovereignty and jurisdiction.

Amongst various purposes, this network is designed with national defense in mind, thus giving an obvious strategic context to Vietnam's ISR drive. One therefore cannot

overlook that Vietnam's ISR advances are at least partly in response to developments to date in the SCS, which has seen recurring tensions. In any case, with a long 3,444-kilometers coastline (not counting islands) and vast maritime zone including claims in the disputed SCS waters, Vietnam clearly needs a comprehensive ISR strategy for the purpose of enhancing maritime domain awareness and targeting in times of peace and war.

But not all Vietnam's ISR projects have been smooth-going. For example, in view of the limitations of the existing remote-sensing satellite – VNREDSat-1 – and the capacity shortfall before better satellites are sent aloft by 2020, as mandated by the country's space development strategy, Hanoi may have to depend on alternative approaches, for example the recent tie-up with India to [build a satellite station in Ho Chi Minh City](#).

By comparison, UAVs constitute a field where Vietnam arguably achieved more success, in no small part attributable to the relative ease of access to dual-use technologies commonly found in such platforms. Hanoi appears to have adopted a double-pronged strategy of acquiring foreign systems while developing them through technology transfers. This strategy has since borne fruit; Vietnam is poised to test-fly a [new UAV](#) over the SCS.

However, there remains a persistent capability shortfall in manned aerial ISR platforms, in particular airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) and maritime patrol aircraft. Ultimately, the eventual realization of a comprehensive ISR capability suite would serve as a valuable force multiplier that allows Vietnam to realize its own version of anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) strategy in the SCS.

This article is an abridged version of a commentary published with *The Diplomat* (click [here](#))



UNITED STATES | 30 JANUARY | THE WASHINGTON POST

U.S. missile destroyer sailed close to island claimed by China

A U.S. missile destroyer passed close to a tiny disputed island in the South China Sea late on Friday in the Pentagon's latest assertion of U.S. naval freedom despite growing territorial feuds there.

[Full Report](#)

UNITED STATES | 5 JANUARY | REUTERS

U.S. naval chief eyes new approaches for quickly changing threats

The U.S. Navy needs to strengthen its naval power, learn faster, and expand partnerships with industry, allies and other government agencies to stay ahead of potential rivals such as China and Russia, its top admiral said Tuesday.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA-VIETNAM | 5 JANUARY | THANH NIEN

India sets up space facility in Vietnam to monitor East Sea: report

India has set up a satellite monitoring station in Ho Chi Minh City which is expected to be its strategic base in the East Sea region, according to media reports.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 6 JANUARY | CHINA DAILY

New airfield to boost public service in South China Sea: Chinese official

A newly-built airfield on a reef in the South China Sea will help ensure flight and navigation safety for airplanes and ships in the area and greatly improve the ability of marine salvagers, a Chinese official said Monday.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 7 JANUARY | ANTARA NEWS

Indonesian military to strengthen its presence on outlying islands

The Indonesian military (TNI) will strengthen its presence in the country's outlying and foremost islands particularly in the eastern part which still lacks personnel and weapons, TNI Chief General Gatot Nurmantyo said.

[Full Report](#)

Continue on page 6

NORTH KOREA | 10 JANUARY | THE KOREA HERALD

'N.K. to deploy SLBM in 3-4 years'

North Korea would be able to deploy a submarine-launched ballistic missile within three to four years -- one year earlier than previously expected -- as it has repeatedly conducted tests on the underwater weapons system, Seoul's military authorities said Saturday.

[Full Report](#)



JAPAN | 13 JANUARY | THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

Defense minister: MSDF will deal with foreign ships in territorial waters around Senkaku Islands

Maritime Self-Defense Force ships will ask Chinese vessels to leave Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands, Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said Jan. 12, while acknowledging that SDF activities in Africa have expanded.

[Full Report](#)

PHILIPPINES-UNITED STATES | 14 JANUARY | REUTERS

Philippines urges patrols with U.S. amid sea dispute with China

The Philippines has asked the United States to hold joint naval patrols, a defense ministry spokesman said on Thursday, amid a territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 14 JANUARY | REUTERS

Chinese marines' desert operations point to long-range ambitions

Days after China passed a new law that for the first time permits its military to venture overseas on counter-terror operations, its marines began exercises in the western deserts of Xinjiang, more than 2,000 kilometers from the nearest ocean.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 18 JANUARY | THE JAKARTA POST

Indonesia exports first ever warship

State-owned shipbuilder PT PAL Indonesia launched two warships on Monday, one of which will be the first naval vessel exported by the domestic ship-building industry.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 19 JANUARY | TIMES OF INDIA

To fight China's Andaman and Nicobar forays, India deploys submarine hunters

With Chinese nuclear and conventional submarines regularly popping up in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), India has now begun to deploy its latest long-range maritime patrol aircraft as well as spy drones at its forward military base in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 22 JANUARY | CHINA DAILY

'Island defenses depend on threat': PLAN chief

The number of military facilities China builds on its South China Sea islands will depend upon the level of threat it faces, People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) chief told his US counterpart on Wednesday in a video teleconference.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 22 JANUARY | MANILA BULLETIN

'BRP Tarlac' joins PH naval force in May

The "BRP Tarlac (LD601)," the Philippine Navy's first Strategic Sealift Vessel (SSV), is expected to arrive in the Philippines in May, after completing its sea trials.

[Full Report](#)

SOUTH KOREA | 26 JANUARY | YONHAP

S. Korea to deploy 5,000-ton vessel to leodo

South Korea said Tuesday that it will deploy a 5,000-ton patrol vessel to the Seoul-controlled rock outcropping of leodo, which has been the subject of a territorial dispute with China.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN | 30 JANUARY | JAPAN TIMES

Japanese Aegis ship leaves on likely mission to monitor possible North Korean missile launch

The Maritime Self-Defense Force's Aegis-class destroyer Kirishima has set sail from its base in Yokosuka, apparently in preparation for a possible missile launch by North Korea.

[Full Report](#)



CHINA-UNITED STATES | 20 JANUARY | REUTERS

U.S., Chinese officers encouraged by use of rules for ship meetings

The top officers in the U.S. and Chinese navies on Tuesday lauded progress in U.S.-China naval ties and said they were encouraged by the increased use of protocols for unplanned ship encounters at sea, a U.S. Navy official said.

[Full Report](#)

PHILIPPINES-TAIWAN | 1 JANUARY | TAIWAN NEWS

Court rules on compensation for death of Taiwanese fisherman

A district court in Pingtung has ruled that eight Philippine Coast Guard personnel must pay over NT\$3 million (US\$90,909) in compensation for the death of a Taiwanese fisherman they shot in 2013.

[Full Report](#)

PHILIPPINES-TAIWAN | 2 JANUARY | THE CHINA POST

Philippines rejects compensation ruling over death

A Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) spokesman has rejected the latest ruling by a Taiwan court over compensation in the shooting death of a Taiwanese fishing boat captain by eight PCG personnel more than two years ago, according to the Central News Agency.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 2 JANUARY | THE JAKARTA POST

Navy sinks 10 more ships as 2015 draws to a close

The Navy sunk 10 more illegal fishing boats on New Year's Eve, a move aimed at further proving that the country is serious about promoting its territorial integrity.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 4 JANUARY | THE JAKARTA POST

Govt to merge antipoaching taskforce, combat unit

The Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry has started to wind down the operation of its illegal fishing prevention task force, incorporating it into a newer combat task force to ensure the continuity of government efforts against rampant poaching in Indonesian waters.

[Full Report](#)

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JAPAN | 4 JANUARY | JAPAN TIMES

Icebreaker Shirase reaches Japan's base in Antarctica with new research team

The Maritime Self-Defense Force icebreaker Shirase reached Showa Station, Japan's Antarctic research facility, on Monday.

[Full Report](#)

PAKISTAN | 5 JANUARY | DAWN

CPEC: Pakistan Navy ramps up security at Gwadar

Pakistan Navy has increased all-round security and surveillance at Gwadar Port with the commencement of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, reported Radio Pakistan.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 7 JANUARY | MALAY MAIL

Marine Operations Force to step up monitoring of Malaysian waters to prevent external threat

The Marine Operations Force (MOF) will step up control and monitoring of Malaysian waters to prevent external threats, especially from militant groups.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 12 JANUARY | CHINA DAILY

New surveillance vessel poised for Coast Guard duties

China has built a second large maritime surveillance ship, which has featured in photographs published by Chinese military enthusiasts.

[Full Report](#)

JAPAN-SOUTH KOREA | 13 JANUARY | JAPAN TIMES

Japan-South Korea anti-piracy drill went ahead unannounced before 'comfort women' talks

Japan did not announce an anti-piracy drill it conducted with South Korea in the Gulf of Aden off Somalia in late

December due to concerns that doing so could impede bilateral negotiations to resolve the so-called "comfort women" issue, a senior Japanese government official said Wednesday.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA-JAPAN | 15 JANUARY | THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Joint exercise conducted by Coast Guards of India, Japan

The Coast Guards of India and Japan today conducted a joint exercise in the Bay of Bengal to "gauge interoperability" where a series of activities, including scenarios of hijacking and rescue were performed.

[Full Report](#)

MALAYSIA | 20 JANUARY | BERNAMA

All Asean Maritime Security Agencies Should Ensure Region Is Safe

All Asean maritime security agencies are duty-bound to look after security not only of their nations' territorial waters but also the whole region.

[Full Report](#)

TAIWAN-VIETNAM | 24 JANUARY | TUOI TRE

Taiwanese patrol boats attack Vietnamese fishing ship in Vietnam's waters

Two Taiwanese vessels rammed and fired their water cannons at a Vietnamese fishing boat near Vietnam's Truong Sa (Spratly) archipelago in early January, the local boat's captain confirmed on Saturday.

[Full Report](#)

THE PHILIPPINES | 28 JANUARY | BUSINESS MIRROR

Government builds 2 ships to fight illegal fishing

The country's efforts to fight illegal fishing will soon get a boost as the government begins the construction of two units of steel hulled offshore vessels costing P360 million.

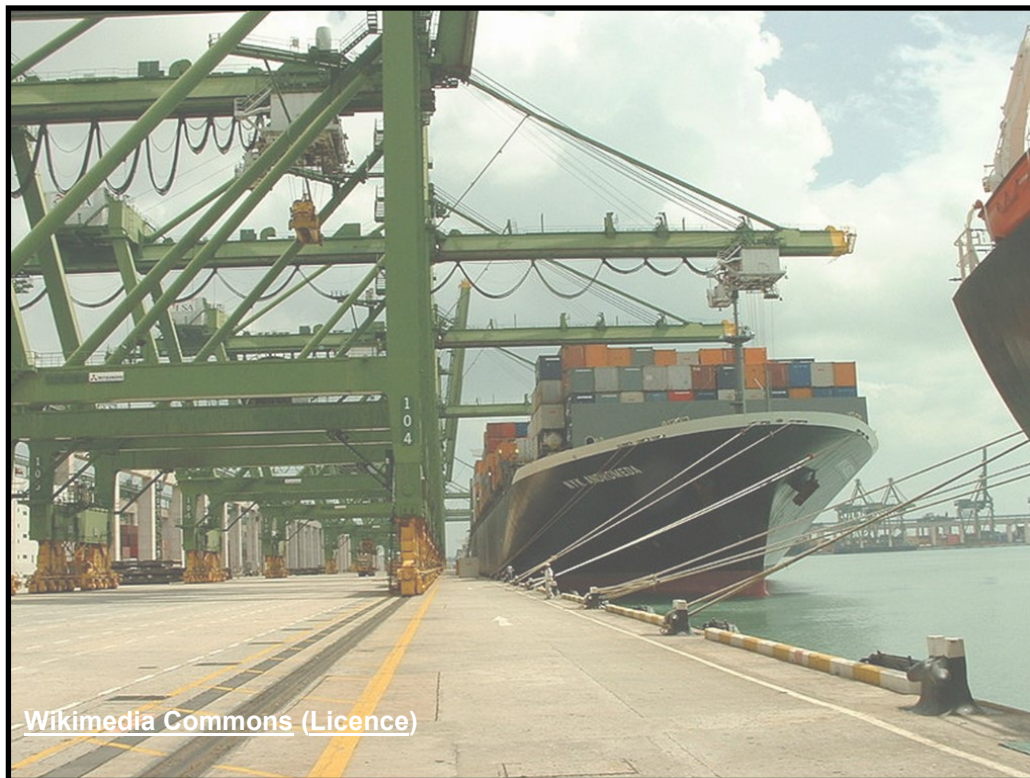
[Full Report](#)

CHINA | 29 JANUARY | BUSINESS INSIDER

Chinese ship with advanced sonar to search for Flight 370

A Chinese ship equipped with advanced sonar equipment will soon join the search for the Malaysian airliner believed to have crashed in the southern Indian Ocean almost two years ago, an official said on Friday.

[Full Report](#)



SINGAPORE | 13 JANUARY | CHANNEL NEWS ASIA

Extra 10% concession on port dues for container vessels in Singapore

China released its annual ocean development index (ODI) report on Friday at an international forum held in the east port city of Qingdao, Shandong Province. An additional 10 per cent concession on port dues will be granted to container vessels calling at the Port of Singapore, starting from Friday (Jan 15).

[Full Report](#)

SOUTH KOREA | 4 JANUARY | BAIRD MARITIME

South Korea to create US\$1.2 billion fund for shipping industry

The South Korean Government will create a US\$1.2 billion ship investment fund to aid the shipping industry, which has been struggling due to decreasing levels of world trade, according to Yonhap news agency.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 6 JANUARY | MARITIME EXECUTIVE

India pushes port privatization plans

State-run ports need to be overhauled and moved towards privatization, said India's Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, in the run-up to the government's latest budget likely to be presented on February 29.

[Full Report](#)

RUSSIA-INDONESIA | 8 JANUARY | SPUTNIK NEWS

Russia and Indonesia are in talks over building a shipyard in Indonesia

Russia's United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC) is holding talks with Indonesian companies over building a shipyard in Indonesia, the Russian Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov said Friday.

[Full Report](#)

BANGLADESH | 9 JANUARY | THE DAILY STAR

Bangladesh lacks skills to utilise sea resources: Muhith

Bangladesh does not have a skilled workforce to extract resources from the sea, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday.

[Full Report](#)

Continue on page 10

Continued from page 9

THE PHILIPPINES | 12 JANUARY | FISH INFO & SERVICES

BFAR imposes sardine fishing ban in Sulu, Basilan

The fishery ministry of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) started implementing a three-month closed season for sardine fishing in Sulu Sea and Basilan Strait, to allow sardines to spawn freely, according to officials.

[Full Report](#)

THAILAND | 13 JANUARY | BANGKOK POST

Prayut gives thumbs down to Kra canal

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha yesterday rejected a proposal to dust off the Kra Isthmus canal project in the South.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 15 JANUARY | INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

Criteria for entry into force of BWM Convention not yet reached- further ratifications needed

Following the spate of ratifications in November 2015 of the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention, IMO and partner IHS Maritime & Trade have been engaged in a process to verify tonnage figures to ascertain whether or not the convention's final entry-into-force requirement has been met.

[Full Report](#)

UAE-SEYCHELLES | 19 JANUARY | GULF NEWS

Blue Economy Summit held at Sustainability Week

The UAE and the Republic of Seychelles co-hosted the Second Blue Economy Summit in partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations, to promote sustainable ocean development at Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW).

[Full Report](#)



CHINA-GREECE | 20 JANUARY | DAILY MAIL

China's Cosco makes improved \$400 mln bid for Greece's largest port

Greece received an improved bid for its largest port on Wednesday, with the 368.5 million euros (\$402 million) offered by Cosco Group pushing the Chinese company closer to a deal that would step up the privatisation programme agreed with Greece's international lenders.

[Full Report](#)

GLOBAL | 22 JANUARY | MARITIME EXECUTIVE

Industry confused about postponed MEPC.227 (64) entry

Confusion surrounding the entry into force date of MEPC 227(64), the amended regulation governing ship wastewater discharge overboard requirements, could see some shipowners falling foul of the new rules.

[Full Report](#)

KOREA | 25 JANUARY | BUSINESS KOREA

Hyundai Merchant Marine, Hanjin Shipping face cash crunch

As South Korea's two biggest shipping companies, which were plagued by rumours about merger last year, are likely to face a cash crunch again, with the year having just begun, there is an increased sense of tumult.

[Full Report](#)

CHINA-ASEAN | 29 JANUARY | HELLENIC SHIPPING NEWS

Yangtze opens 1st direct container shipping route to SE Asia

The first direct container shipping line linking China's Yangtze River basin and Southeast Asia opened Thursday.

[Full Report](#)

INDIA | 31 JANUARY | THE INDIAN EXPRESS

Insurers plan P&I Club for shipping companies

Public sector general insurers, including official reinsurer GIC Re and shipping companies, are planning to set up an exclusive entity known as P&I Club to provide cover to shipping companies.

[Full Report](#)

INDONESIA | 31 JANUARY | ANTARA NEWS

Sea toll road project expected to ease price disparity

Indonesia has been developing a sea toll road project aimed at improving the country's economy and connectivity particularly between eastern and western Indonesian regions.

[Full Report](#)