

INTELLIGENCE CONTRIBUTION TO ASIA PACIFIC'S MARITIME SECURITY (MALACCA STRAIT PATROL FRAMEWORK)

by

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Abstract

Indonesia believes that the issue of the Straits of Malacca's maritime security should be managed by the littoral states along the waters. Other states, in this case user states, could also contribute to the littorals' effort by providing technical assistance in improving their capabilities in facing possible terrorist attacks in the maritime domain. Military cooperation in the field of intelligence is compulsory. Information sharing would provide positive contribution to regional security if the cards are well played. In the context of Southeast Asia's maritime security, ASEAN maritime security forces could conduct naval and police intelligence cooperation with its dialogue partners in Asia Pacific in order to face the threats of the fifth generation warfare. In order to respond to complex future challenges and threats, Indonesia believes ASEAN needs to expand its internal cooperation as well as its cooperation with Asia Pacific countries.

1. Introduction

Our global strategic environment provides strong indications that the globalization era has created interdependence among all states in the world, not only in economy but in the field of security. Instability of a country or region would eventually implicate other countries and regions in the world. Security and stability issues have long become common concerns of international community.

From the world's nine strategic choke points, four of them are located in Indonesia's territorial waters; the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, Lombok, and Ombai. The Straits of Malacca is the busiest strait among the four since it is the fastest route for merchant vessels to reach the South China Sea or the Pacific Ocean from the Indian Ocean and vice versa. According to the Directorate General of Sea Transportation, Ministry of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia, around 1200 vessels passed through the Straits of Malacca everyday in 2008.¹

As we enter the 21st century, the most talked about political security issues in the Malacca Strait are piracy and armed robbery against ships. These issues came about along with the threats of international terrorism post 11 September 2001. Many have the concern that Southeast Asia's terrorist network might engage in a maritime terrorist attack along the busy strait where merchant and naval vessels pass. This deep concern then became the backbone of a number of initiatives, including the Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) proposed by U.S. PACOM in 2004 and Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) proposed by Japan in 2005.

As a response to this situation and these initiatives, Indonesia believes that the issue of the Straits of Malacca's maritime security should be managed by the littoral states along the

waters. Other states, in this case user states, could also contribute to the littorals' effort by providing technical assistance in improving their capabilities in facing possible terrorist attacks in the maritime domain. This understanding became the foundation of the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP) proposed by Indonesia together with Malaysia and Singapore on 20 July 2004, which was then followed by the participation of Thailand a few years later. MSP has showed significant reduction on the incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Straits of Malacca after its first operation.

According to a ReCAAP report, piracy incidents along the Strait dropped significantly from 35 incidents in 2005 to zero in 2011.² This data is strong evidence to the effectiveness of the cooperation among the four states in managing piracy and armed robbery against ships. Even Lloyd's Market Association's Joint War Committee (JWC) omitted the Straits of Malacca from its War Risk Zone category since 2006.³

These incredible statistics, nevertheless, did not decrease the vigilance of the littorals. The next operation was the launch of Eyes in the Sky (EiS) to provide maritime air surveillance patrol along the Straits of Malacca as well as improving their intelligence exchange to respond to future maritime security challenges.

In order to improve readiness, the Navies of the four state conducted two joint exercises participated by their Command and Control Centers under the framework of ASEAN cooperation, taking place in the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) located in Changi Command and Control Centre, Singapore. The exercise itself was a breakthrough in regional maritime security cooperation since a joint exercise among countries' Command and Control Center is still a new exercise concept.

The key to the success of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand in overcoming piracy and armed robbery against ships threats in the Straits of Malacca is cooperation. It is also the key for other countries in the Asia Pacific region in the face of various common maritime security challenges and threats in the future. Today, countries in the region face issues of transnational crime, energy security, food security, threats of natural disasters, and other threats that are non-traditional by nature.

Transnational crime is a real threat to regional maritime security as it is a result of the networking among criminal groups from different countries in the region. Therefore ASEAN, as one of the region's organization, has formulated a number of maritime security agendas in the ASEAN Plan of Action. It is important to note that some extra-regional states still prefer military approach in managing Southeast Asia's maritime security issue. It is a common understanding in the international community that transnational crime requires transnational solutions, and it could only be managed effectively through international cooperation.

Energy security issue is not confined only on the world's oil and gas fields, but also the safety of energy distribution from producers to consumers. It is a critical issue since terrorist groups, pirates and armed robbers at sea perceive sea routes as the perfect target. The attack on the French MV Limburg tanker on 6 October 2002 in the Gulf of Aden, Yemen, and the hijacking of MV Sirius Star super tanker in November 2008 off the coast of Kenya by Somali pirates⁴ and numerous vessels hijacked until today are only some of the examples of the danger we are facing now in terms of energy security.

Food security is interconnected with maritime security in a world where dependence is real. As mankind continues the search for new food resources in the midst of an increasing world population, the seas and oceans have now become one of the world's main food resources. People are becoming more aware of food safety standards, requiring fishing industries to fulfill international food safety standards for the good of mankind and health. Not only that, they are also required to fulfill international law on marine environment to prevent

pollution at sea that could threaten the longevity of marine ecology as one of the world's food resources.

2. The Malacca Strait Patrol

The Malacca Strait Patrol (MSP), started in 2004, was a response from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore to the increasing maritime security threats in the Straits of Malacca. The Chiefs of Defense Forces and the Chiefs of Navy of the three countries, with the political support of their governments, agreed to conduct coordinated patrol along the Straits of Malacca on 20 July 2004. Although some doubted the effectiveness of coordinated patrol cooperation, which in general limit the right to conduct hot pursuit, the commitment of the three littorals to the cooperation proved effective in reducing piracy and armed robbery against ships incidents in the Straits of Malacca. A few years later Thailand joined the cooperation and its engagement has strengthened the importance and significance of the coordinated patrol.

There are three main elements supporting one another in the MSP. The first is the Malacca Straits Sea Patrol (MSSP) by elements of navies from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. MSSP naval vessels conduct patrols along the sector of their respective territorial waters. During the patrol, the four navies conduct regular information sharing on their ship's positions. Therefore when a threat arises, each navy could take anticipatory steps when the threat moves from one territorial waters to another.

Second, the Eyes in the Sky (EiS). It is a maritime patrol activity conducted by the Naval Aviation and the Air Forces of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand in the Straits of Malacca. Commenced in 2005, it supports the MSSP naval vessels in patrolling the strait with the goal to increase the response from possible maritime security threats. With its high mobility, maritime patrol aircraft could easily cover a wider patrol sector in a shorter time compared to patrolling vessels. This air patrol provides ways to enhance intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities of the littorals as part of maritime domain awareness (MDA).

Third is the Intelligence Exchange Group (IEG). This group is a forum for navies of the four littoral states to conduct intelligence sharing to ensure the security of the Straits of Malacca. Its existence is very crucial to the cooperation of the littoral states since the willingness of states to conduct intelligence sharing is one of the parameters to measure the level of cooperation among states. It is too often that sharing of intelligence becomes a sensitive issue for maritime security cooperation. The ability of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand to manage IEG provides an illustration on the political commitment of the littoral states in their cooperation to face the common challenges and threats in the region.

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) reported how piracy incidents in the Straits of Malacca have fell from 34 in 2004 to zero in 2011.⁵ ReCAAP reported 35 incidents in 2005 and it was reduced to zero in 2011.⁶ These reports are proof to Indonesia's claim on the effectiveness of the patrol along the Straits of Malacca and this claim has also received recognition from the international community.

The success of the MSSP has provided benefits not only for the littoral states and Thailand but also for the international community. To the world, the success of the MSSP means profit for shipping companies since the Straits of Malacca is safe and secure would mean normal insurance fee for their ships and cargo; very much different when the strait was declared as a war risk zone in the past. It has also omitted the Malacca Strait from the list of the world's most unstable areas.

For the littoral states, this success provides them with a precedent for regional maritime cooperation; a necessity for Southeast Asia. The cooperation was possible due to the shared

interests of the littoral states of the Straits of Malacca. It also provides a model for Southeast Asia's maritime security management in general.

Nevertheless this success does not indicate that Indonesia is content. Based on lesson learned from the MSSP, Indonesia believes there is still an urgent need to develop further capabilities to quickly respond to intelligence information and to capture terrorist suspects and armed robbers against ships in the Straits of Malacca. Therefore Indonesia has established its 10th Marine Battalion in Setoko Island, Batam, where this battalion will strengthen the response capabilities against pirates and other criminal activity at sea along the Malacca Strait.

3. Intelligence Perspective and Military Cooperation Paradigm

Today military cooperation is a necessity since each state faces more complex and varied challenges and threats. We have witnessed that most challenges and threats to international security in this Post-Cold War era derive more from non-state actors. By utilizing the implications of globalization, non-state actors are able to extend the scope of their threats beyond the traditional borders of states. This condition requires committed and strong military cooperation among countries in the world.

The scope of any military cooperation is quite vast, from cooperation on exercises, operation, intelligence, and logistics. It is a common form of cooperation among states in the world, and the only difference would be how far a state's national policy supports such cooperation. Some countries conduct military cooperation in all areas, while other would focus on one or two only.

Intelligence is one of the oldest areas of military cooperation. The Cold War era witnessed how intelligence cooperation was focused on how to deal with certain states that are perceived as common threats. Today, it has been broaden to not only state actors but also non-state actors. This cooperation allows engaged parties to have the abilities of early detection of threats in order to take immediate preventive steps before the threat actually happens.

Admiral William F. Raborn once said that *intelligence is refers to information which has been carefully evaluated as to its accuracy and significance.*⁷ The difference between "intelligence" and "information" lies on the evaluation process to understand its accuracy and assessing its significance to national security.⁸ It is a common knowledge how intelligence play a key role in decision making since it would influence heavily the nuance of the decision made.

Intelligence is tied closely to secrecy, including its source of information. But according to Admiral Ellies M. Zacharias, *95 percent of peacetime intelligence came from open source, 4 percent from semi-open sources, and only 1 percent, sometimes less, from secret agents.*⁹ Lieutenant General Samuel Wilson said that *ninety percent of intelligence come from open sources. The other ten percent, the clandestine work, is just the more dramatic.*¹⁰

The use of open-source intelligence is a common practice among the intelligence community, including the military. In the context of maritime security there is a number of open-source intelligence companies that provide services related to ISR. The same also goes to MDA. For example is a company that provides services to monitor the movement of merchant ships around the world with satellite-based near-real time service, or imagery intelligence (IMINT) service for shipping companies. These services allow the military intelligence community to save its spending on early information gathering, and the numerous sources of information allow the community to analyze and evaluate the information to become worthy intelligence information.

Military cooperation in the field of intelligence is compulsory. Information sharing would provide positive contribution to regional security if the cards are well played. As threats become even more elusive in their characteristics, no state would have the capability nor strength to defend itself without intelligence cooperation with other states. In fact information sharing is

also a critical point for any intelligence cooperation due to its relation to the trust level among two states.

James Igoe Walsh provided a very good description on the trust in regards to information sharing. Walsh saw intelligence as a commodity where *states share out of mutual interest or to extract things like foreign aid and security assurances*.¹¹ He then argued that *the secret nature of intelligence gives rise to two key problems. The “sellers” of intelligence can’t be sure that “buyers” will adequately protect what they receive, and “buyers” cannot be sure of the veracity of the intelligence they get from “sellers”*.¹²

Marta Sparago said that *“In order for intelligence cooperation to work, there must be an established trust between the governments and intelligence services”*.¹³ Sparago then added that there are costs that must be paid by all engaged parties of the intelligence cooperation. One of them is *“in order for intelligence cooperation to be mutually beneficial to all involved, there must be equal levels of sharing”*.¹⁴

The issue of sharing is a challenge in any intelligence cooperation because such activity necessitates the establishment of trust among related parties or states; it is a classical issue. This issue would arise not only among states which have no specific security cooperation in a certain period of time. Even states with defense pacts continue to face this issue. Eventually, the states in Southeast Asia are facing the same situation.

Legal basis is paramount in any intelligence cooperation. There is a common notion that the two fields – intelligence and law – are quite contradictive to one another. In practice intelligence cooperation among two states relies more on bilateral agreement compared to international law. This tendency is quite dominant in practice since this cooperation is a very specific one, although the principals of international law would still be its guide.

4. Malacca Strait Cooperation as ASEAN’s Cooperation Model

It is a common understanding that the development of maritime security cooperation among Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand along the Straits of Malacca has its own unique challenges since it is closely related to sensitive issues, such as sovereignty and the role of extra-regional powers in the region. Nevertheless these four countries have demonstrated strong and ongoing commitment to secure the strategic waters and eventually able to manage these sensitive issues well and ensure no one is left behind. Hence the maritime security cooperation on the Straits of Malacca could be ASEAN’s model of cooperation for a wider Asia-Pacific maritime security cooperation.

The 9th ASEAN Summit in Bali in September 2004 agreed upon the establishment of the ASEAN Community through the Declaration of Bali Concord II with its three pillars of ASEAN Politico-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Next the Vientiane Action Program 2004-2010 declared in the 10th ASEAN Summit in Laos, 2005, included the ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action. One of the form of cooperation is on maritime security.

The ASEAN Maritime Security Plan of Action established the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and also the ASEAN Joint Maritime Safety and Surveillance Mechanism. The first AMF meeting was held on 28-29 July in Surabaya and the last was in Manila on 3-4 October 2012. This forum is considered to be a very important forum for maritime security cooperation since non-ASEAN states requested their participation in AMF. These proposals were answered through the establishment of the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) with its first meeting in Manila on 5 October 2012.

Southeast Asia is a region dominated by the maritime domain. Therefore ASEAN’s common challenges and threats mostly come from the medium of seas and straits. ASEAN

maritime cooperation, including maritime security cooperation, is one of the keys for the region to manage its challenges and threats.

The experiences of the littoral states in securing the Straits of Malacca could provide a proposal to ASEAN to adopt the cooperation as a model for Southeast Asia's maritime security cooperation in the form of the ASEAN Maritime Patrol (AMP). The existence of continuous maritime territorial disputes among ASEAN member states could not be used as justified reasons to not realize this proposal. The four states of the coordinated patrol in the Malacca Strait all have their own maritime territorial disputes with one another. However this reality did not hinder the cooperation among these countries to ensure security stability of the strategic strait.

In general the operations of AMP would have three important components:

First is the ASEAN maritime operations. In the waters of Southeast Asia, each state has its sovereign rights in their respective territorial waters; no ASEAN member states cannot conduct maritime security operations in the territorial waters of other state. As for international waters such as the South China Sea, ASEAN member states could conduct coordinated or joint patrol for maritime security for the interest of all members in a voluntary manner.

Second, ASEAN air operations. This operation could involve the operations of Naval Aviation as well as Air Force of ASEAN member states with operation sector decided through mutual agreement. Similar to ASEAN maritime operations, it will also acknowledge and respect the maritime delimitations of all ASEAN member states during their air patrol by operating in their respective territorial waters. Nevertheless the aircraft of both Naval Aviation and Air Force of ASEAN member states could conduct ISR operations along the international waters in accordance to their national interests.

Third, ASEAN intelligence operations. The success of both operations would not be possible without the support of the intelligence community. Therefore it is important for ASEAN to strengthen its intelligence cooperation by moving from information sharing to the level of information exchange. Such change would require standardization on equipments, personnel competence, mechanisms and procedures. If each ASEAN member state could establish its own National Maritime Command and Control Center as its Information Sharing Center, it would enable it to integrate their network and connection with other ASEAN member states' Information Sharing Center; therefore foster and strengthen intelligence cooperation.

5. The Asia Pacific Intelligence Chiefs Conference

The Asia Pacific Intelligence Chiefs Conference (APICC) is an annual forum for the intelligence community of around 30 countries in the Asia Pacific region to discuss various regional issue of common concern. Through APICC the Chiefs of military intelligence could develop together programs to enhance the capacity and skills of the military intelligence as one of the means to respond to common challenges and threats in the region. The topic of each APICC would change in accordance to the dynamics of the region's strategic environment and in this year's 13th APICC hosted in Jakarta - cooperation between the Indonesian National Defense Forces or TNI and U.S. PACOM – has chosen the topic on maritime security. Last year at the 12th APICC in Thailand, we focused on counter-terrorism.

On 19 February-8 March 2013 U.S. PACOM and the National Intelligence University (NIU) organized the International Intelligence Fellows Program (IIFP) with the topic of the support of the intelligence in Asia Pacific's maritime security. The course took place in the Headquarters of U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in Washington DC and Headquarters of U.S. Pacom in Hawaii, with the goal to discuss the topic from national and strategic perspectives (Washington DC) and combatant command perspective (Hawaii). Around 18 countries from the Asia Pacific

region participated in the course, including Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Philippine, and the United States.

The participants of the IIFP agreed upon a number of proposed initial actions to improve maritime security cooperation, as follow:

- Expanding the scope of Singapore's Changi C2 Centre, both in capacity for information sharing and participants;
- Holding a Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) level tabletop exercise at the 2013 APICC which aims to identify roadblocks to information sharing, followed by an O-6/O-6 level tabletop to brainstorm solutions to the roadblocks identified by the DMIs;
- Creating a shared, interoperable database at the Indo-Asia Pacific regional level, to bring various information sharing tools together under one domain;
- Standardizing international training and education at a central location which would also offer web-based courses.

Based on these proposed initial actions by IIFP, Indonesia believes a number of actions should be taken. Indonesia understands how this forum has provided a breakthrough to enhance military intelligence cooperation in the region in order to respond to common challenges. Through APICC participants could explore endless possibilities of intelligence cooperation not only in the bilateral level but also multilateral.

It is a necessity to develop multilateral intelligence cooperation as we look at the ongoing list of our developing challenges and threats where bilateral cooperation could respond to. Hence, Indonesia urges APICC to formulate a plan to strengthen the fundamentals of multilateral cooperation, including in the issue of maritime security since it is a common interest among countries in the region.

In the beginning the multilateral intelligence cooperation could focus more on information exchange, and one of its scopes is maritime security. Each state participants of APICC could establish its National Fusion Center as a hub for the Multinational Intelligence Sharing Center. Through the National Fusion Center, states could receive intelligence sharing from the Multinational Intelligence Sharing Center. It also can function as provider of intelligence information for the Multinational Intelligence Center.

This kind of cooperation, we believe, will require the fostering of trust, which could be done through intelligence engagement during Subject Matters Expert Exchange (SMEE), joint exercises to familiarize intelligence special equipments used to gather data, cycles intelligence, and the practiced process of decision making. All engaged parties would enjoy benefits from intelligence cooperation when each exchanges the same level of intelligence with one another.

This pattern has been practices effectively by Indonesia, especially between the Indonesian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) through Information Sharing and Intelligence Exchange (ISIE) in the *PANDU* Exercise. Another example is between the Indonesian Navy and the US Navy through the Field Training Support Tools (FIST) conducted during CARAT Exercise. In the future Indonesia hopes to see the development of a more expanded cooperation in such manner among countries of the Asia Pacific region.

6. ASEAN Intelligence Cooperation with Asia Pacific Countries

ASEAN maritime security cooperation under the framework of AMP is not exclusive only to members of ASEAN. Southeast Asia's maritime security necessitates cooperation with other countries in Asia Pacific. Thus it is worth considering establishing intelligence cooperation between ASEAN and extra-regional states in Asia Pacific.

We are aware with the vast scope of our challenges and threats, and it could be proposed to focus on four important issues.

First is illegal migrants. In the last decade we have seen how Southeast Asia has become a region for the transit of illegal migrants from the Middle East, South Asia, and from within the region itself, searching for safety and a better life in Australia. Managing the never ending flow of illegal immigrants would require sufficient intelligence cooperation among maritime security apparatus in Asia Pacific. The reason for such importance is these migrants are often detected only after receiving distress call from their boats or ships or stranded in one of the islands of ASEAN's littoral states. Most illegal immigrants use the seas as their medium for transportation.

Unlike their partners in Asia Pacific, most ASEAN countries have yet to have the latest and complete equipments to support maritime security operations, such as surveillance and ISR equipments and facilities. This opens the opportunity for Asia Pacific countries with better and more complete equipments to provide assistance to ASEAN through the intelligence cooperation. This would allow ASEAN maritime security apparatus to improve their capabilities in facing illegal migrants.

Second, drug smuggling. It is one of the most real threats toward the future of Asia Pacific countries. Drug smugglers are using more sophisticated methods to avoid the detection of law enforcement agencies. As Southeast Asia airports tighten their security against drug smuggling activities, the seas and straits then became the preferred medium to illegally transport these dangerous substances.

Southeast Asia's geographical condition – its vast seas and coastal out of the monitoring of law enforcement agencies – contributed in the choice made by smugglers. Eradicating drug smuggling would require stronger military intelligence between ASEAN and Asia Pacific's maritime security enforcement agencies. The cooperation is imperative by nature because it could rely only on the police force; it requires the role of the Navy. Data and reports have showed that most of these illegal drugs came from outside of Southeast Asia.

Third, fifth generation warfare. This next generation of warfare will focus much on information warfare, allowing those in control of information the winner; information management is fundamental. It would allow non-state actors to easily exploit the sophisticated advancement of information technology to shape opinions in adherence to their political stance. The cases of Afghanistan and Iraq are the best examples on this issue since non-state actors easily exploited information technology to their advantage to fight against stronger military might of the state actors.

In the context of Southeast Asia's maritime security, ASEAN maritime security forces could conduct naval and police intelligence cooperation with its dialogue partners in Asia Pacific in order to face the threats of the fifth generation warfare. The cooperation would not only include intelligence sharing but also capacity building. With their extensive experiences, the intelligence community of Asia Pacific could assist ASEAN maritime security forces to improve their capacity in the information warfare.

Fourth, the existence of private armed security. We have seen how the increasing maritime security threats in a number of waters around the world have provided the opportunity for the booming of private armed security business. There is no common political reaction towards these private armed security companies among states in the world since some tolerate the deployment of armed men in merchant vessels while others refuse. The international shipping community has taken a more pragmatic approach towards the issue as none would want the experiences along the Somali waters to happen again in the future.

These political differences, nevertheless, should not be a reason to hinder intelligence cooperation on this issue, especially in Asia Pacific. Countries could cooperate through intelligence exchange on merchant vessels with private armed security personnel onboard the

decks to be able to prevent any issues with national and international law when passing through the waters of Southeast Asia. The recent case in India¹⁵ should provide us with a good example of what might happen. Not all Asia Pacific states would receive this suggestion with open arms, but Indonesia is committed to prevent such incident to happen in its waters.

7. Conclusion

Southeast Asia region is a vibrant and dynamic region where the same also goes to its challenges and threats on maritime security. Responding to such conditions, ASEAN member states should develop a comprehensive concept of maritime security cooperation, which includes also cooperation on intelligence. Since nine years ago Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore have developed the concept of the Malacca Straits Patrol, one that could become a model of cooperation development of future ASEAN maritime security cooperation in the framework of ASEAN Politico-Security Community. With Thailand, these four countries are able to develop an effective maritime security cooperation concept to face developing threats, although each has its own sensitive issues with the other.

In order to respond to complex future challenges and threats, such as illegal migrant, drug smuggling, fifth generation warfare, and existence of private armed security personnel onboard merchant vessels, Indonesia believes ASEAN needs to expand its internal cooperation as well as its cooperation with Asia Pacific countries. One of the focuses in cooperation on intelligence in the understanding that preventive measures are cheaper compared to coercive actions. Trust among cooperating states in paramount to strengthen confidence building measure. It is the main key of every cooperation, including on intelligence.

The establishment of a Multinational Intelligence Sharing Center by Asia Pacific countries would eventually accelerate the realization of the cooperation. This Center could become the place to collect and fuse intelligence data that would be distributed to participating countries. The Intelligence Sharing Center is a breakthrough in our efforts to strengthen intelligence cooperation among countries in the region.

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