

DEVELOPING PIC MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS

THE PIC USER PERSPECTIVE

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Security threats in the PIC maritime domain

- MDA challenges in the context of the PBP Maritime Security workshop program refers to non-fisheries' maritime activities and incidents encompassing TNC, national policing, Customs, Immigration, etc
- Threats from the maritime area have long been appreciated but most PIC law enforcement surveillance, monitoring and enforcement has focused on related activities on land and in ports
- Transnational crime in the maritime sector includes illegal drug and precursor transportation, smuggling of goods and avoidance of excise and import tariffs, and avoidance of border control controls on movement of persons and goods of interest. Other security threats include disruption of undersea telecommunications cables, illegal waste dumping, protection of the sovereign interests of PICs in their marine and seabed resources, inadequate compliance with international law by flag vessels and DSM contractors, and a variety of natural disasters affecting the domain.
- Movement through the region very frequently has associated negative impacts on local communities and territory, such as increased corruption and undermining of local authority, local usage of illegal substances, availability of guns and threats to local resource conservation
- The nature of criminal and other regional security threats from and in the PIC maritime domain can be generally identified and inferred but the low degree of monitoring and enforcement to date makes it difficult to have a reasonable assessment of the scale of the security threats along this vector.

Current state of MDA in the PIC region

- The PIC region has a world class tuna fisheries VMS and MCS system involving national and regional tuna fisheries and national maritime police and navy stakeholders.
- While inter-sectoral information sharing is being expanded and facilitated (eg the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement and Law Enforcement Cooperation MOU), it will take time to fully resolve.
- Meantime, the other regional security sectors and maritime domain stakeholders increasingly desire to utilize the new technology and systems to address their current operational needs.
- Only a few countries (Fiji and PNG, any others?) have multi-sectoral MDA centers although most have at least one nominally multi sectoral Transnational Crime Unit)
- There is also a significant increase in external interest and offers of assistance of individual technology elements and systems to different PICs, sectors and individual agencies.

The risk of uncontrolled MDA development in the region

- There is a risk of disparate MDA and information sharing systems being adopted across the region that are not inter-operable. It would be disadvantageous for PICs if these platforms and systems are not inter-connected and inter-operable at the level of secrecy, security and control (PIC national or regional)
- There is also an identified strategic desire not to let uncoordinated and unfettered external engagement undermine regionally controlled networks and principles of cooperation.
- That requires deliberate and systematic organization and development of operational level MDA sooner rather than later.
- Noting the potential value of MDA monitoring and analysis in the immediate operational context it is desirable to provide PICs with MDA capability that they may need now, while working toward national systems and agreed regional collaboration to reduce the perceived need to forge ahead in a disparate manner

A systematized and contextualized approach to MDA development

- Effective MDA monitoring also needs to be supported by appropriate laws and regulations and systems and infrastructure for detection, apprehension, prosecution and deterrence of these maritime threats, including cross-border cooperation
- Definition of MDA in the region – will require contextualization and securitization taking account of regional (Boe), subregional, cluster and national contexts and perceived security threats
- Any development of MDA and information sharing must take account of the existing regional security sector networks, processes and principles

Overall MDA context

- Global attention to MarSec increasing – criminal/terrorism, safety, economic (resources and trade), and environmental conservation
- Increased use of technology, especially Satellite Observation, remote sensing, AI processing, and data mining and information sharing
- Increased availability and commercialization of technology outside military (commercial pushes)
- Increased geo-political competition and dynamics (military/diplomatic pushes)
- Blue Pacific 2050 Strategy – zone of peace, stability and openness
- For non-tuna fisheries MDA stakeholders, detection of small boats, dark targets, coastal surveillance, and environmental, meteorological and resource parameters will be important.

How can PICs utilize the offers of technology and information from these external partners to enhance PIC interests and security needs?

- Consistent with regional principles of sovereignty and PIS contextualization and control, including as encapsulated in the Blue Pacific 2050 Strategy, the first step is for PICs to define what our interests, priorities and principles are in MDA and then engage with each other and with external partners to implement those.
- Existing communication and information sharing pathways should not be ignored but may be refined to enhance efficiency and scale and sovereign sharing of information utilizing emerging technology such as Share.It that will permit increased secure and controlled sharing between technically different systems.
- Monitoring surveillance systems are perhaps the easiest part of the MDA problem solution, but the challenge has been of sharing information between the different national authorities, especially from different sectors, to assess the risks in those movements. This primarily requires building trust, backed by agreed SOPs that govern the sharing rules and ensure uniform application.

An exigent response to Operational security developments in MDA capacity building and cooperation - Forming the MDA Talanoa group

- In November, 2022, a Talanoa of heads and representatives of regional sectoral security secretariats (PICP, PTCN/PTCCC, OCO, PIDC, PIFS and PFC) and technical stakeholders (SPC and USP) was held in Nadi. FFA was unable to be present but is a member of the on-going Talanoa.
- The MDA Talanoa recognized that MDA in the region must be based on the principle of national sovereignty and that there is a need for an agreed regional policy framework as well as underlying national capacity building and agency if there is to be a unified regional approach. Those will be essential in the long-term, although it may take.
- The Talanoa therefore agreed to propose a three part and iterative approach.

Going forward

- Three streams of activity required:
 1. Operational cooperation enhancement to address current operational exigencies and opportunities
 2. Regional policy framework and possible treaty
 3. Building national capacity
- Governance process:
 1. Operational Governance: MDA Talanoa of regional security secretariat heads (organic evolution, could be formalized), that reports to their respective regional sector governing bodies and coordinates within FSRS
 2. Policy Governance: PIFS led, FSRS technical coordination, FOC to FFM and Leaders policy development and approval.
- Sustained support:
 - Plan on a 10 to 15 year development process backed by firm commitments for all streams.
 - Building trust, relationships, transparency and accountability takes time and expense

OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

- General principle – adopt a systematized approach
- Governance – clarify/formalize the role of the Talanoa group and FSRS
- Immediately initiate MDA operational capacity building and availability to PIC authorities through the regional secretariats, pending (1) a regionally agreed legal and management framework and (2) national capacity building

STRATEGIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIP PATHWAY

- PIFS to lead a detailed review of all issues and options for a unified regional MDA framework and to initiate discussions and negotiations within the PIF process
- Requires policy maker sensitization and trust

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

- Per each national context and consistent with agreed national commitments to regional systems, legal frameworks, SOPs and MTCs

Proposed Pilot training/capacity development

- ANALYSIS - MDA Analysis principles, practices and resources – Various partners offering support
- Trialing and developing MONITORING TOOL CAPABILITY – training on various AIS based platforms, EXAMPLE perhaps IHS Mark-It and Sea Vision since both available now.
- Trialing and developing a shared REGIONAL INFORMATION SHARING platform taking account of existing regional sectoral information sharing platforms and networks– Facilitating the secure exchange of user-controlled information. An existing platform on offer is IORIS from the EU CRIMARIO project but others could also be considered.
- Trialing and development of INTER-SYSTEM & INTER-REGIONAL INFORMATION SHARING platforms, such as Share.It. Others may also be considered.

Partnership pathway - what serious partners interested in long term relationship with PICs in MDA and information sharing might do

- Seriously consider the model of Australia's commitment to the Pacific Patrol Boat Program/Pacific Maritime Security Program
- Understand the political importance that the PICs place on regional unity as the fundamental basis to deal with the multilateral system
- Understand the technical and capacitation services of regional bodies toward national development
- Understand the mixed principles of national sovereignty, custodianship, inclusivity, consensual decision-making, constructive ambiguity and exigent pragmatism that characterize much of regional policy making and PIC actions

Expected principles of regional MDA

- National sovereignty (over decisions, information, resources and territory) is considered paramount. It is not just an attribute; it is also a leverageable value
- Notwithstanding, regional “unity”, of frameworks and support is an absolute priority for PICs, albeit not Integration
- Partners and other parties should engage with the region through the identified regional conduits in the MDA operational and policy SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT & STRENGTHENING process
- Infrastructure and process must be appropriate for available national resources (Human, Bandwidth, Cost, Maintenance) but also ambitious
- Systems and technology should be forward looking and creative – tackle tomorrow’s problems with tomorrow’s technology not yesterday’s retreads
- Understand the PICs strong desire for a region of peace and stability; preference to be Open to all partners, but info-sharing and external assistance based on PIC user sovereign control
- Manage expectations appropriately, not over-promise or hype