



THAILAND SHOWCASES INDIGENOUS DEFENCE MIGHT

Defence & Security 2022 opened to sizeable crowds that were witness to the dramatic growth of Thailand's domestic defence industry. The Thai Ministry of Defence pavilion showcased a wide range of unmanned aerial systems, many of them nearing service entry or already in service. Indigenous efforts reducing the import dependency for small arms systems and their ammunition were also displayed.

BANGKOK DOCKS EXPLORES THAI OPV UPGRADE

The Bangkok Dock Company which built two Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) for the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) is exploring future upgrade options which could result in an enhanced class of OPVs...

SEE P/10

SHOW DEBUT FOR CHAISERI FIRST WIN ARV

Thailand based armoured vehicles manufacturer; Chaiseri Defence Vehicles is making the show debut of its First Win armoured reconnaissance vehicle (ARV). "We are bringing this new ARV for the first time to the Defence & Security exhibition..."

SEE P/4



SE ASIA DEFENCE MARKET OF PRIME IMPORTANCE FOR BARZAN HOLDINGS

INTERVIEW: Abdullah Hassan Al-Khater
Vice President & Chief Strategic Procurement Officer
at Barzan Holdings

SEE P/3



PARA-
MOUNT
GROUP
MBOMBE 4
MAKES SE
ASIA DEBUT

SEE P/4



THAI
DRONE
AMBITIONS
ON
DISPLAY

SEE P/6



DailyNews

**GBP AEROSPACE & DEFENCE
BILINGUAL SHOW DAILY AT
SOFEX JORDAN**



GBP Aerospace & Defence is proud to be the publisher of the Bilingual Official Print Show Daily (English/Arabic) at Special Operations Forces Exhibition and Conference (SOFEX).

SOFEX is held biennially in Jordan under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II and the full support of the Jordan Armed Forces – Arab Army, the King Abdullah II Special Forces Group, as well as the Jordanian Security Agencies. SOFEX Jordan, in its thirteenth edition, will be held between October 31 until November 03, 2022, in Aqaba, the sea front of Jordan.

The high-quality print editions of the bilingual Show Daily will be made available on all three days of SOFEX 2022 on-site. Attendees will also be able to access the publication by using QR code. The e-edition of the Show Daily will be sent via email to military and industry decision-makers worldwide each morning of the show.

GBP Aerospace & Defence Show Daily will bring to readers carefully curated news and articles pertaining to the region, from our global team of reporters and will be distributed on-site.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1,000 printed copies of the GBP Aerospace & Defence Show Daily will distributed onsite to conferences attendees, visitors and exhibitor stalls.
- GBP Show Daily is popular at defence shows and trade exhibitions worldwide, due to its handy size and quality editorial content.
- The e-edition of the Show Daily will be emailed each morning of the exhibition for unprecedented local and international exposure.
- More than 8,000 digital copies will be sent by email to military, defence and industry professionals worldwide, with a special focus on the Middle East and Asia.

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SE ASIA DEFENCE MARKET OF PRIME IMPORTANCE FOR BARZAN HOLDINGS

INTERVIEW:

Abdullah Hassan Al-Khater
Vice President & Chief Strategic
Procurement Officer at Barzan
Holdings

How important is the Southeast Asia market for Barzan Holdings?

Barzan Holdings is a relatively young company compared to the other companies in the defence industry. When we established the company back in 2016, our aim was to first to serve the Qatar armed forces. However, this was our initial mandate and today we are looking to expand globally. In our planning process, we came to the decision that Southeast Asia would be the No.1 market that we would like to target. This was done, keeping in mind that many of the other defence markets, such as those in the USA and Europe are already saturated.

We believe that the Southeast Asia market is a very promising market for Barzan Holdings. We are keen to grow our relationships in this region and we have excellent diplomatic relations with the countries here. We believe that we can capitalise on that relationship and reach out to different countries around this region, and we hope to see success.

With regards to Day 1 of the show, it was fantastic for us, we met with several different delegations from different parts of the world and

were able to showcase our products. So, I would say our first participation at Defence & Security and our first day here was exciting and very successful.

What makes Barzan Holdings well suited to meet the demands of countries in the region?

A lot of countries are now changing their strategy to become more and more independent. They want to establish their own local defence industry and local defence services. We have gone through these very same experiences at Barzan Holdings over the last five years and we believe that we can bring that experience here and share it with various countries. This will also be an added advantage working with different countries in the region.

It is also an added advantage to have a good political relationship with a nation, as that helps open a door for business. Greater dialogue with different Government entities will help us establish relationships and take it a step further to establish partnership or joint ventures in the future. A recent example of this was our establishment of a joint venture with Indonesia, with whom we have a very strong and enduring political relationship. Our joint venture with Indonesia was built on the back of discussions that we held for two years.

Please provide an update on the current market situation at Barzan Holdings and the way forward?



With the current global political situation and what is going on around the world, we are also seeing a positive shift in defence budgets. Countries as far afield as Germany and Japan have raised their defence budgets significantly for example. More upward shifts in defence spending such as this, will lead to growing demand for our industry and we view this as an opportunity for us to grow and have a strong partnership with different countries, and to work closely with them.

Our mandate was to establish a thriving defence industry in the State of Qatar and also create a research and development backbone along with acquisition of key defence programmes. Our most important mandate is to fulfil the requirements of the State of Qatar, only after that do we look at opportunities for export and partnerships with other countries. In the continuance of this strategy, we have established joint ventures and subsidiaries in Qatar and around the globe. We have a footprint that is truly global in nature and we are working to fulfil our mandate and turn the vision for Barzan Holdings into reality.

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Thai officials are reportedly very impressed with the capabilities of the Mbombe 4, which has an independent suspension system that was developed by Paramount Group and features a monocoque hull. The vehicle also has a flat hull instead of the V shaped hull that is common on such vehicles. "This is the first vehicle in its class to have a flat hull," the official said, who added that the Mbombe 4 displayed at the show featured STANAG Level IV A and B blast protection. The Mbombe 4 also features a low centre of gravity, which allows heavy payloads to be carried atop the vehicle, such as remote-controlled weapon turrets (RCWS) or sensor payloads.

In March, Paramount Group, had announced that the Mbombe 4 Infantry Combat Vehicle (ICV), had been selected by five sovereign nations to equip their armed forces. The 16-tonne vehicle can be equipped with various weapon systems and loaded with ammunition, crew, and supplies. Other key features of the Mbombe 4, include a burst speed of 140km/hr, allowing for exceptional levels of mobility. The Mbombe 4 made its international 2Exhibition & Conference (IDEX) of 2019.

PARAMOUNT GROUP MBOMBE 4 MAKES SE ASIA DEBUT

South African armoured vehicle manufacturer, Paramount Group is targeting the Thai market with the Mbombe 4, which is being displayed at the show and making its SE Asia debut. The vehicle has been named D-Lion for the Thai market and Paramount Group has partnered with Thai firm Jatunapas to promote the vehicle. Thailand's Defence Technology Institute (DTI) is also partnering with both firms. The Mbombe vehicle on display is also

the first ever to be assembled in SE Asia, as previously the vehicles were imported in nearly complete condition. "We are currently trialling the vehicle here with various different departments within the Thai military. Once the trial period is completed, we will explore the options for the way forward," a Paramount Group official told Daily News. He added that the South African Group was currently focussed only on the Thai market.



SHOW DEBUT FOR CHAISERI FIRST WIN ARV

Thailand based armoured vehicles manufacturer; Chaiseri Defence Vehicles is making the show debut of its First Win armoured reconnaissance vehicle (ARV). "We are bringing this new ARV for the first time to the Defence & Security exhibition, to showcase our growing capability in the development of armoured vehicles for the Thai defence forces," a company official told Daily News. The First Win ARV features an electro-optical (EO) sensor, gun mount and smoke dispensers on the top of the vehicle and features STANAG 4569 Lv2 ballistic and mine protection capability. The vehicle has an operating crew of three plus a driver. The



13.5 tonne ARV is powered by 340 hp engine and it can attain a maximum speed of 110 kmph. The vehicle can attain a combat range of 800km and can carry a 1.5 tonne payload. Also, on display at the show is Chaiseri's First Win armoured fighting vehicle (AFV).



STRONGER TOGETHER

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تعزيز الاستقرار
EMPOWERING STABILITY



capability is essential, resulting in an increase in demand for equipment from allied countries.

American firms are participating at the show under the banner of 'The Power of Partnership' and features companies presenting a broad range of innovative technologies, equipment, and services from 16 different U.S. states. Many of the U.S. exhibitors already have significant business partnerships and operations in the region and are hoping to strengthen these ongoing relationships and forge new ones.

Thailand spent USD 7.6 billion on military technology in 2020 in line with the major military reform and restructuring plan introduced by the Thai Ministry of Defense in 2017, cumulating in 2026. According to the International Trade Administration (ITA), this plan "emphasizes research and development along with a focus on purchases of munitions, weapons, military vehicles, armed training aircraft, electronic warfare, and communication devices. To upgrade military capabilities, the Thai military will invest in additional purchases of helicopters, fighter jets, frigates, armored vehicles, utility vehicles, and internal security equipment."

UNITED STATES FOCUSES ON 'THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP'

The USA presence at the ongoing Defence & Security show is the 2nd largest national presence at the exhibition and is a showcase of the strong market prospects in Thailand for American companies. 23 U.S. Companies are exhibiting within the USA Partnership Pavilion, which features seven new exhibitors. U.S. companies participating at the show are competing for air, land, and sea contracts with Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries and are also looking to strengthen trade, innovation, and workforce partnerships with buyers and influencers in the region.

Defence spending of Thai military and law enforcement agencies primarily focuses on maintaining defence expenditure to safeguard the nation and strengthen its armed forces. As a result, purchasing for military equipment to modernize and upgrade military



THAI DRONE AMBITIONS ON DISPLAY



Thailand's efforts to develop indigenous unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and to induct military drones to meet its varied requirements are in evidence at the ongoing show. In addition to these efforts, several medium altitude long endurance (MALE) drones are being showcased by the Aero Technology Industry Company Limited (ATIL). The drones, which appear to be based on Chinese designs, include the armed DP-16 and DP 20-A. The smaller DP-16 is being displayed with two drone launched weapons (one under each wing) and a chin mounted electro-optical (EO) pod. The larger DP 20-A is being displayed with 16 such munitions, in

addition to being fitted with a fuselage mounted EO sensor. The third drone on display is the unarmed DP-20, which is fitted with a nose mounted EO sensor.

A scale model of the Royal Thai Navy's (RTN) new Maritime Aerial Reconnaissance Craft Unmanned System (MARCUS-B) Vertical Take-Off or Landing (VTOL) drone is on display for the first time at the show. Also breaking cover at the show are military drones to be used for medical aid and first responder duties. These medical emergency response team (MERT) drone designs feature three variants - MERT-P, MERT-R and RAPID MERT. One of the designs, the

MERT-P, appears to be an optionally manned design with space for one person.

The RTN's MARCUS-B, fixed wing VTOL drone, has a wingspan of 4.5m and a maximum take-off weight of 60kg. The MARCUS-B features pure electric or hybrid gas-electric propulsion and can attain a cruising speed of 50-55 knots. Endurance is claimed to be five hours. The VTOL naval drone, which is constructed out of fully dry-carbon, is nearing service entry and will be domestically manufactured by Thai firms. The MARCUS-B has also undergone testing aboard the RTN's sole aircraft carrier, HTMS Chakri Naruebet.

THAILAND CHARTS MODERNISATION PATH FOR NATIONAL NCW SYSTEM

For more than a decade, Thailand has operated a networked national air defence system that covers all of Thailand's territory. The most visible elements of this net centric warfare (NCW) capability are the Gripen fighters and Erieye AEW&C aircraft of the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF); but this system is more than an air force asset. Thailand's independent, national datalink system integrates RTAF airborne platforms with its wider national air surveillance radar network and multiple vessels of the Royal Thai Navy. This secure, high-speed, command-and-control (C2) system therefore links multiple elements of the Royal Thai Armed Forces at an operational level while also providing real-time data to the strategic commanders and national decision-makers. The next step in Thailand's NCW modernisation plan will deliver upgrades to the Erieye systems.

This system was delivered through a combined 'Team Sweden' contract with the Swedish government and industry; Sweden's Defence Material Administration (FMV) is the contract owner while the required equipment is supplied by Saab, supported by Thai industry partners. The capabilities of the system have been progressively improved and Thailand is now looking at new phases of further enhancements.



The RTAF is looking to upgrade its Saab 340 Erieye AEW&C aircraft as the next step in Thailand's NCW modernisation plan.

Over time, Thailand has carefully modernised and improved all aspects of the system. For example, the backbone of the C2 system – known as ACCS (Air Command and Control System) and based on Saab's 9AIRC41 product, was upgraded under a 2018 contract with Saab. A long-term Transfer of Technology programme has delivered local capacity to maintain and develop the national datalink. The latest MS20

upgrade for the Gripen fleet brings further enhancements to the overall NCW environment and this will continue through regular future software upgrades for the fighters.

Beyond this current activity, Thailand is looking at the potential to expand its NCW capability into a fully joint, tri-service network that would integrate Royal Thai Army assets for the first time. This logical growth path is made possible by the basic system architecture acquired by Thailand from Sweden that permits local adaptations that can be applied to all Thai assets in accordance to national, independent, security policy. In this respect alone, Thailand's NCW system remains a powerful sovereign capability that is unmatched in the region.

ROYAL THAI ARMY, AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAIN TOGETHER

The Royal Thai Army (RTA) and Australian Army troops recently trained together during Exercise Chapel Gold 2022. The RTA hosted the 11-day exercise in Thailand's Nakhon Sawan province throughout August. Members of the 2nd Infantry Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment of the RTA trained together with Australian soldiers from RCB rotation 136, predominantly made up of personnel from the Australian Army's 1st Armoured Regiment; 7th Battalion,

Royal Australian Regiment; 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. During the field training component of the exercise, a platoon from the 2nd Infantry Battalion RTA attached to RCB and a platoon from RCB attached to the Thai company. Officer Commanding RCB 136 Major Lachlan Joseph of the 1st Armoured Regiment, Australian Army said, "The training programme included anti-armoured stalk tactics, tactical combat casualty care, counter-insurgency training, jungle survival activities and close-quarter battle training, combat shooting, and culminated in a combined field training activity." Exercise Chapel Gold is an annual training

activity between the Australian and Thai armies and the latest edition marked the resumption of the training exercises, following a pause since the 2019 COVID-19 pandemic.



BOEING EYES EMERGING THAI DEFENCE NEEDS



Boeing is looking at offering additional capabilities that would meet Thailand's defence needs, including other unmanned aerial system (UAS) platforms, in addition to existing contracts that are already in place. "We look forward to discussing additional capabilities to meet Thailand's defence needs, including other UAS platforms like the Integrator and Integrator ER," a Boeing spokesperson told Daily News. "Furthermore, we look forward to exploring opportunities for a fully software-defined satellite offering that allows customers in Thailand to adjust capacity allocation to meet their evolving connectivity and services needs."

Boeing's 702X series was developed to provide customers unmatched

flexibility for their communications missions. The 702X is already in production and uses innovative manufacturing practices to simplify and reduce complexity. The spokesperson said that it can be delivered with schedule certainty and low risk and that Boeing had extensive history delivering satellites for government and commercial customers worldwide with over 300 total delivered.

Delivering Capability

Boeing was awarded a contract by the U.S. Department of Defence for the sale of eight AH-6 light attack reconnaissance helicopters, as part of a foreign military sale to Thailand in 2022. Thailand is Boeing's second international customer for the aircraft. "We welcome Thailand's selection of Boeing's AH-6 light attack reconnaissance helicopter and look forward to working with the U.S. and Thai governments as part of the foreign military sale process to deliver on our commitment. Deliveries are planned through 2024," the spokesperson said. The AH-6 is manufactured at Boeing's Mesa, Arizona facility.

Commenting on the facilities that needed to be created in Thailand

for the new type, the spokesperson stated that the AH-6 requires a small maintenance and hangar footprint and would use existing Royal Thai Army infrastructure.

The AH-6 is a highly capable light attack / armed reconnaissance helicopter. The AH-6 is purpose-built for customers who require advanced, easily configurable mission equipment packages for special operations, light/heavy precision attack, long-rang reconnaissance and troop insertion/extraction.

Boeing/Insitu has also delivered RQ-21A Blackjack UAS to the Royal Thai Navy (RTN), which has substantially enhanced its maritime domain awareness capabilities. The handover ceremony for the RQ-21A Blackjack to the Royal Thai Navy successfully convened on May 24 at Uthapao. The deliveries of the RQ-21A to the RTN also supported the U.S. government's Maritime Security Initiative.

Boeing is also supporting the RTN's in-service Harpoon anti-ship missiles. Boeing has been partnering with Thailand on its defence and security needs for almost half a century.



CHINA'S CAIHONG-4 DRONE TO RECEIVE UPGRADES

The Caihong-4 (CH-4) 'Rainbow' armed drone is slated to receive upgrades to further enhance its operational capabilities and will be introduced into the market in early 2023.

The CH-4 is slated to receive a new heavy-fuel piston engine. According to China Academy of Aerospace Aerodynamics, a subsidiary of China Aerospace Science and Technology

Corp, (CASC), a prototype drone fitted with the new engine recently completed all the tests required to verify its autonomous takeoff and landing, load capacity, flight ceiling and radius, as well as other functions. CH-4s that are presently in active service are powered by gasoline engines, while the new version will run either on diesel or kerosene. The CH-4 will gain greater operating endurance and payload capability as a result of the new engine. The CH-4 is China's most successful drone export and has been sold to at least 10 countries and according to its manufacturer has accumulated over 20,000 flight hours. The drone has a maximum take-off weight of 1.3 tonne and payload capability of 350 tonnes of weapons/sensors.

EMBRAER'S A-29 SUPER TUCANO EVOKES PLENTY OF INTEREST

Embraer is highlighting the versatility of the A-29 Super Tucano at the ongoing show and is confident about the aircraft finding more buyers in the region.

The A-29 Super Tucano, which has so far been selected by more than fifteen air forces globally, has earned a name for itself for its multi-mission capabilities, including light attack, aerial surveillance and interdiction, and counterinsurgency operations. More than 260 units of the aircraft has so far been sold, with the company said to be in discussions currently with potential buyers. In 2020, the company delivered the aircraft to the Philippine Air Force; the service currently has a six strong fleet. The aircraft was also recently delivered to the Nigerian Air Force and has been operational for a number of years in countries such as Indonesia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic.

The first light attack aircraft in the world with a US Air Force Military Type Certificate, the A-29 Super Tucano, which carries a wide variety of weapons, including precision-guided munitions, can operate from remote, unpaved airstrips to forward operating bases in hostile



environments with little support, with low operating costs and high availability. According to the company, it is the only advanced light attack, reconnaissance, and training turboprop platform currently in production across the world with proven combat capabilities. Embraer has two assembly lines for the production of the aircraft, in Brazil and the United States.

The A-29 has a max airspeed of 370mph and a cruise speed of 320mph, and perhaps most significantly, an endurance of over eight hours. It has a range of 830 miles and a combat range of 550 km. The aircraft, which is easily configurable on-site, is unique in how it is capable of operating from remote, unpaved airstrips to forward operating bases in hostile environments with little support, all with low operating costs and high availability. Earlier this year, the A-29 reached an important milestone by notching up 500,000 flight

hours globally, including 60,000 in combat. Low maintenance cost is another of the aircraft's attractive features.

Extensively used as an advanced trainer, A-29 Super Tucano's ability to simulate combat missions and upload and download flight data makes it a highly effective training platform. The aircraft is also used for Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) training, helping the troops on the ground to designate and coordinate ground attack scenarios.

The aircraft is equipped with a variety of state-of-the-art sensors and weapons, including an electro-optical/infrared system with laser designator, night vision goggles, secure communications, and a data-link package. Its systems allow the gathering and sharing of information real time, thus making the aircraft a key part of a networked environment.



RTN EVALUATING CHD620 ENGINES FOR S26T SUBMARINES

The Royal Thai Navy (RTN) is conducting an evaluation process of the CHD620 diesel engines to power a S26T submarine on order from China. The decision was the result of recent meeting between the China Shipbuilding & Offshore International Co. (CSOC) and the RTN. "But if the substitute from CSOC cannot pass the test, the contract must be terminated, and the two sides will have to hold talks to discuss compensation or a refund," said RTN spokesperson Vice Admiral Pokkrong

Monthatphalin as quoted by the Bangkok Post. CSOC is the trading arm of the Chinese state-owned enterprise China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC), the company which is to build the submarine under a THB13.5 billion (about US\$380 million) contract from the RTN inked in 2017. If the RTN approves CHD620 engines as the replacement for its S26T submarine powerplant, Thailand will be the first country to deploy these engines in active military duty.

BANGKOK DOCKS EXPLORES THAI OPV UPGRADE

The Bangkok Dock Company which built two Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) for the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) is exploring future upgrade options which could result in an enhanced class of OPVs. The upgrade would be performed in partnership with BAE Systems once requirements and scope of work is finalised by the RTN. The Thai shipyard is the primary interface with the RTN for the potential upgrade effort, which could result in a new class of four OPVs. Speaking to Daily News, a BAE Systems official said the company's OPV design was highly configurable, "one of the things we have done is explored with Bangkok Docks the potential of changing the design in terms of length, which clearly allows

the addition of further weapons or systems on board." The options being considered are an increase in the OPV length to 91m, 94m or 111m. The latter size would increase the OPV's size and capability nearing that of a Frigate over Corvette, as it would allow additional space for incorporation of more sophisticated sensors and weapons. "So, I think the message we really want to get across to the Royal Thai Navy in conjunction with Bangkok dock is this is a very adaptable design. Together, we have delivered two fantastic ships, but it can continue to evolve for the future it can continue to offer you



know, new capabilities based on the ever-changing requirements." The Bangkok Dock Company has built two OPVs – HTMS Krabi and HTMS Prachuap Khiri Khan under licence using the BAE Systems OPV design. BAE Systems has worked with the Thai shipyard since 2012, when the agreement to build the 90m OPVs in Thailand was initiated. These OPVs were based on an in-service Royal Navy design which was also purchased by the Brazilian Navy. The first of the Class, HTMS Krabi was launched by Bangkok Docks in 2013. Both OPVs have been significantly modified from the original BAE Systems base design. This has resulted in both OPVs being tailored to meet RTN requirements featuring Thai specific combat management systems, different radar and different weapons and systems. The RTN OPVs are also fitted Harpoon Block II anti-ship missiles. HTMS Prachuap Khiri Khan is fitted with a OTO MELARA 76/62 SRMF, 30mm DS30 MR and a 12.7 mm machine gun.



THAILAND EYES F35A, KEEN ON THE LOYAL WINGMAN

Thailand could join the list of US partners in Asia to acquire the F-35A.

Earlier this month, Thailand's House Budget Scrutiny Committee approved a budget of 369 million baht (US\$14.7 million) for the 2023 fiscal year for the Royal Thailand Air Force (RTAF) to procure two

unarmed F-35A, the Lockheed Martin-produced stealth fighter. The country will pay in installments, over four years, the total cost of 7.4 billion baht (US\$207 million) for the two jets. According to Air Force Chief ACM Napadej Dhupatemiya, Thailand will equip the two aircraft with its own weapons systems. According to the Air Force Chief, the RTAF hopes to have a 12-strong fleet of F-35As by 2032. Experts however are of the opinion that budgetary constraints might force the service to be satisfied with a lesser number of aircraft.

Thailand, which wants to have Southeast Asia's mightiest air force, is looking for a new fleet of fighter jets as the F-5 and F-16 aircraft are ageing, having been in service for over three decades. According to sources, buying new aircraft would be economically more feasible in the long run than doing maintenance on ageing aircraft. The F-35s have become an attractive proposition for the service because the price of the jet has come down from US\$142 million to US\$82 million since the time

the model entered the market. The other options for Thailand when it comes to fifth-generation stealth fighters are Russia's Su-57s and China's J-20s. Countries are generally shying away from Russian weapons given the country's war on Ukraine, and the J-20s are not for export.

The RTAF's existing fleet, which includes F-16 and F-5 jets and 12 Swedish JAS-39 Gripen fighters, commands plenty of respect. The JAS-39 Gripen fighters are undergoing MS20 configuration upgrades to enhance ground and air-to-air combat capabilities. According to the Air Force Chief, the RTAF is also interest in the concept of the Loyal Wingman, an unmanned aerial vehicle that flies as part of a team with a manned aircraft. Co-developed by Boeing and Australia's air force, the loyal wingman can be fitted with a weapons system and provides support to the manned aircraft. Acquiring the local wingman would help Thailand to reduce the number of new fighter jets that it plans to acquire.



MARITIME EXERCISES ENHANCE COOPERATION AMONGST INDO-PACIFIC PARTNERS

The 21st annual Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) exercise, which concluded on August 26, following 10 days of in-person and at-sea engagements enhanced collaboration among 21 Indo-Pacific partners and focused on shared maritime security challenges of the region. Twenty-one partner nations participated in the exercise, including Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam. The latest edition was the 21st iteration of the SEACAT exercise series.

SEACAT is a multilateral exercise designed to enhance cooperation among Southeast Asian countries and provide mutual support and a common goal to address crises, contingencies, and illegal activities in the maritime domain using standardized tactics, techniques, and procedures. "These past two weeks have reiterated what we already knew – our nations and maritime forces are smarter and stronger when we share information and work together," said Capt. Tom Ogden, commodore, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 7. "The in-person, multilateral collaboration exhibited in SEACAT has undoubtedly enhanced our relationships and promoted maritime security across the Indo-Pacific."

Non-military participants included members of EU Critical Maritime Route Wider Indian Ocean (CRIMARIO), International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University Singapore (LKYSPP NUS), The Pew Charitable Trusts, Risk Intelligence, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Stable Seas, and United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The shore phase also involved an Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) workshop that brought together UAS programs across the region to share best practices in UAS employment, planning and operations to develop and improve MDA. Vice Adm. Andrew Tiongson, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area commander said "Maritime Domain Awareness, which includes valuable input, collaboration and unity of effort from all partners, is key to maritime governance and security in the region."

The sea phase included boarding operations by multiple nations across the contracted vessel designed to provide training opportunities in real-world at-sea environments. Running concurrently with the sea phase, a command post exercise at Singapore's Information Fusion Center served as a centralized hub for information sharing in the tracking

of the contracted merchant vessel simulating suspicious vessels of interest in seas throughout Southeast Asia.

U.S. Navy participants included staff from DESRON 7, P-8A Poseidon aircraft assigned to Task Force 72, and personnel from Task Force 76, U.S. 7th Fleet, and U.S. Pacific Fleet. As the U.S. Navy's destroyer squadron forward-deployed in Southeast Asia, DESRON 7 serves as the primary tactical and operational commander of littoral combat ships rotationally deployed to Singapore, Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 7's Sea Combat Commander, and builds partnerships through training exercises and military-to-military engagements. Under Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with 35 maritime nations in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.



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