

Security Officials Conduct Regional Maritime Security Intelligence and Interdiction Exercise in Miami



U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Security Response Team personnel train on a rigid-hull inflatable boat from the Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) in the Gulf of Oman in 2018. Thunderbolt was deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and the Pacific through the western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points. *U.S. ARMY / Specialist David Resnick*

Maritime security stakeholders from foreign governments, federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement and port agencies came together in Miami June 9 to strengthen and focus collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders to promote whole-of-government efforts to address maritime security issues.

Led by the Maritime Domain Awareness Executive Steering Committee (MDA ESC), the Regional Maritime Security Intelligence and Interdiction table-top exercise (TTX) was held as part of the Maritime Security East 2021 conference, held June 8-9. The MDA ESC is led by Rear Adm. Gene Price, director of the National Maritime Intelligence-Integration Office, who represents the intelligence community in that role.

The goal of the TTX was to build a common understanding of organizations, roles and priorities involved in improving maritime domain awareness

According to Joe Cunningham, the MDA ESC's executive director, the TTX was designed to achieve several key objectives.

"We want to build a common understanding of organizations, roles, and priorities involved in improving MDA, as well as address potential unintentional barriers to whole-of-government MDA efforts. We're presenting problems and identifying gaps and barriers, as discussing ways to share information and get around those barriers. We have to coordinate, collaborate and communicate."

During the scenario, the participants discussed the deployment of various surveillance and response assets, and communicating and sharing intelligence between agencies at all levels.

"By shedding light on these issues, we were able to improve multilateral and regional MDA and response efforts, identify overlapping authorities and improve maritime information and intelligence sharing," Cunningham said.

"Information is a national asset that requires a responsible balancing act between information sharing and safeguarding," Cunningham said. "It is critical to interagency governance, coordination and unification efforts across the full spectrum of partners at all levels."

The MDA ESC is comprised of senior executive-level principals designated by their respective departmental executive agents for MDA from cabinet-level departments (currently State, Commerce, Defense, Transportation and Homeland Security) and the designated maritime representative of the intelligence community. The MDA ESC coordinates MDA policies, strategies, and initiatives.

The MDA ESC provides forums, activities, and venues to engage the global maritime community of interest to promote collaboration and information sharing to enhance MDA.

"We've been a partner of the MDA ESC for many years, and a

contributor to the important work they do,” said Sareth Neak, the conference’s organizer. “We’re pleased they chose to host this TTX at MARSEC East 2021.”