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U.S.-Singapore-Malaysia-Indonesia: Multilateral Dialogue on Biosecurity

Center on Contemporary Conflict

Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School

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The Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for Countering WMD (PASCC) is run at the Center on Contemporary Studies (CCC) and sponsored by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). PASCC awards and supports strategic studies and dialogues that anticipate and try to reduce the threat of WMD capabilities.



The CCC has a respected track record for providing research and timely analysis on a variety of topics to leading decision makers in the U.S. national security community. Located in the Naval Postgraduate School, the CCC is the research wing of the Department of National Security Affairs.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information, please contact pascc@nps.edu.

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Project Lead: Anita Cicero

Project Cost: \$235,000

FY15-16

Objective:

Countries in Southeast Asia are particularly vulnerable to biosecurity threats due to the region's dense population, high volume of cross-border traffic, and frequent, close-quarter co-location of humans and animals. For these reasons, Southeast Asia is susceptible to re-emerging and emerging diseases (e.g., SARS, H5N1, Nipah virus). Bioscience labs are also becoming more common in the region, and "viral sovereignty" continues to be an issue. Moreover, there are known terrorist networks active in the area. This project seeks to initiate sustainable and productive dialogue among the United States, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia on sensitive issues pertaining to deliberate, accidental, and naturally occurring biothreats, dual-use science, and infectious disease outbreaks. The dialogue will help promote habits of trust and collaboration within a region where there is limited agreement on how to navigate the challenges of sharing essential public health information. It will not only strengthen each nation's ability to identify and respond to biothreats, but also help practitioners and policy makers identify effective practices to diminish risks posed by these threats to international security.

Approach:

UMPC will convene two-day meetings in Singapore and Washington, D.C. The first will examine historic views and current perceptions of biological threats in each country, concerns about dual-use research, and lessons learned in biosecurity and biosafety. The second will discuss strategies to collectively strengthen the prevention of bioweapon use in the region and practical approaches to increasing biosafety and biosecurity. UPMC will release a report following each meeting.