

# STRENGTHENING AUSTRALIA'S OFFSHORE MARITIME SECURITY

## **Introduction**

Australia is further strengthening its offshore maritime security through a series of linked initiatives that will be implemented progressively through 2005.

These measures build on previously announced border protection and maritime security initiatives. They focus, in particular, on the protection of Australia's offshore oil and gas facilities, and on ensuring that any terrorist threat to Australia's maritime assets and the Australian coastline can be quickly detected and defeated.

## **An integrated approach to offshore maritime security**

Australia intends to achieve effective security for offshore oil and gas platforms and enhanced security measures within Australia's exclusive economic zone and territorial sea, in accordance with international and domestic law, through an integrated approach that combines:

- warning and maritime domain awareness (achieved through intelligence, cooperative international action, surveillance and the integrated use and analysis of available maritime information);
- deterrence (achieved through cooperative bilateral and multilateral action, increased patrolling and the demonstration of the intent and capability to achieve effective offshore maritime security);
- response (based on informed and effective planning and preparedness, clear command and control and sufficient available capabilities);
- enhanced protective security measures for offshore platforms, related onshore facilities and ports; and
- clear and practised consequence management arrangements.

## **Australian Maritime Identification System**

Based on cooperative international arrangements, including with neighbouring countries, in accordance with international and domestic law, the Australian Government proposes to establish a Maritime Identification System as a framework for seeking, analysing and managing information on vessel identity, crews, cargoes and ship movements to support Australia's maritime security needs, particularly in relation to vessels seeking to enter Australian ports.

The development of this proposal takes into account the limited circumstances in which positional information can be required from non-Australian flagged vessels.

Through the establishment of this identification system, the Australian Government aims to centrally coordinate and integrate the maritime information that is already collected by a number of Australian Government and State agencies. The collection of information on known and forecast vessel movements will assist in the more effective conduct of maritime surveillance within Australia's exclusive economic zone and territorial sea.

**This identification system would have graduated application in the following manner:**

- Up to 1,000 nautical miles or 48 hours steaming from the Australian coast, Australia will seek advanced arrival information from International Ship and Port Security Code vessels whose next port of call is in Australia. This information, on ship identity, crew, cargo, location, course, speed, and intended port of arrival is already collected for Australian Customs and International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS Code) purposes. Similar advanced arrival information is collected by other countries for the same domestic and international purposes.
- Up to 500 nautical miles or 24 hours steaming from Australia, information will be sought, on a wholly voluntary basis, on identity, course and speed from vessels proposing to transit Australia's exclusive economic zone or territorial sea.
- Within Australia's exclusive economic zone, the aim will be to identify all vessels, other than day recreational boats. Such information is already sought for purposes such as fisheries protection and is often provided voluntarily for maritime safety purposes.

**Joint Offshore Protection Command**

A Joint Offshore Protection Command is being established to link the Australian Defence Force responsibility for counter-terrorism prevention and response within Australia's maritime zones with the existing civil maritime surveillance and regulatory roles that are undertaken or coordinated by the Coastwatch Division of the Australian Customs Service.

This new Command will simplify and strengthen planning and command and control arrangements for offshore counter-terrorism response. The Command will also make the best use of all available resources.

The Director-General of Coastwatch, presently Rear Admiral Russ Crane, will also be the Commander of the Joint Offshore Protection Command. The Command will have a joint accountability structure, being responsible.

- to the Chief of the Defence Force for military offshore maritime protection functions, including the conduct of ADF offshore patrol, prevention, and response capabilities and activities in relation to counter-terrorism, the protection of offshore oil and gas platforms and the offshore interdiction of ships within Australia's exclusive economic zone and territorial sea; and
- to the Chief Executive Officer of Customs for the conduct of civil maritime surveillance, the coordination of maritime regulatory and law enforcement functions and support for activities such as border protection and control, immigration, quarantine and fisheries protection.

**The protection of offshore oil and gas facilities**

A programme of augmented security patrols of Australia's oil and gas fields in the Timor Sea and on the North West Shelf is proposed to increase the security of these

offshore facilities and to actively deter those who may be contemplating or planning an attack on these assets.

Augmented security patrolling, using available Defence Force and Customs patrol boats and aircraft, essentially involves the periodic but unpredictable saturation of selected areas with patrol assets for pre-determined periods of time.

Some of the oil and gas facilities in the Timor Sea that will be a focus of these enhanced patrols are in areas where Australia shares jurisdiction with Indonesia or East Timor.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs is writing to his counterparts to seek the cooperation of those countries in introducing these mutually-beneficial enhanced counter-terrorism security measures. Matters that Australia will be seeking to address include the enforcement of the existing safety zones around offshore facilities (established in accordance with the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea); and arrangements that would permit the boarding of suspect vessels within such sensitive areas.

The Australian Government also will continue to support the further development of multilateral and bilateral arrangements to strengthen offshore maritime security and counter-terrorism measures.

The direct protection of each offshore platform through the provision of appropriate security measures is the final element of the Government's integrated approach to enhanced offshore maritime security. The provision of such measures is an industry responsibility.

To assist industry in the development of protective security measures for offshore facilities, the *Maritime Transport Security Act 2003* is being extended to apply to offshore oil and gas facilities to provide the necessary advice and oversight in the implementation of any additional security measures.

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