

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Piracy and armed robbery is one of the threats in the contemporary Southeast Asian maritime area. Originally, it has long appeared in the region for centuries and its form has evolved. In the past, piracy was regarded to some native societies as a way of living yet conditionally illegitimate. Piracy and armed robbery in contemporary Southeast Asia began to be significant in late 20th century. The significant rises occurred after the Asian Financial Crisis and entering the 21st century, then began to decrease since 2003. This is because piracy and armed robbery are regarded as completely illegitimate which led to the rise of awareness in fighting against it. However, in 2010, the number of piracy and armed robbery in the region significantly increased due to the shift of focus of global economy to Southeast Asia and the appearance of a more organized group of pirates. The contemporary piracy and armed robbery vary from petty thieves or Asian pirates who are after small amount of money or goods, to organized syndicates of pirates who are armed with guns and equipped with plans. The impacts of piracy and armed robbery revolve not only around economic and social issues, but also political and environmental issues. It could cause loss of life, threaten the economy, raise political tension for the countries related to the occurrence and could also lead into environmental degradation.

In dealing with such issues, there have been efforts shown by governments, maritime industries, and international organizations. The efforts by governments of states in Southeast Asia focus on maintaining the security of their waters individually as well as collaboration with the neighbors. Bilateral and trilateral cooperation are conducted between neighboring states. As Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are bordering around the Malacca Strait, which is the main passage for most of trading ships passing the region, bilateral and trilateral collaborations have been arranged since the late 20th century. Most of the forms of collaboration are in form of joint-patrol, where each of the government agencies maintain patrols on their territorial waters and share information. Initiatives in countering piracy and armed robbery by international organization and the maritime industries are including the establishment of certain agencies which focus on information exchange as well as research and analysis, for instance the establishment of the Piracy Reporting Center (PRC) by the IMB in Malaysia in 1992 as a response to the demand by shipowners for reporting incidents. Maritime industries also conduct seminars and conferences to discuss and analyze the issue which has become their maritime security concern. At the same time, as a regional organization, the ASEAN has also shared the awareness by showing efforts in countering piracy through conferences and agenda, though most of the efforts are less strict. This is due to the fact that ASEAN was regarded as minimalist regional organization and the Southeast Asian states value sovereignty highly.

Despite the fact that there have been several efforts in countering piracy and armed robbery in the region, most of the efforts lack cooperation among the governments of the states. Collaboration among states tended to only focus on patrols on each of their territories. An idea of regional cooperation was proposed by a former Japan prime minister, Keizo Obuchi on ASEAN+1 SUMMIT in Manila in 1999. The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combatting Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), established in 2006, is aimed as an integrated cooperation for all the states to share and work together in fighting against piracy and armed robbery.

As a regime, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combatting Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) has a goal to combat piracy and armed robbery in Asia. In combatting piracy and armed robbery, ReCAAP has three pillars which include enhancing information sharing system, capacity building, as well as cooperative arrangements with other organizations with the same concern. All the three pillars are preceded through the establishment of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Center (ISC) as the agreement's operational mechanism, based on the ReCAAP Agreement.

The information sharing system, capacity building and cooperative arrangement with like-minded organizations have contributed to the reduction of piracy and armed robbery in Southeast Asia. The three concepts have contributed not in military form but in the enhanced cooperative behavior which has been shown by Southeast Asian states. Previously, most of Southeast Asian states tended to prefer on

handling piracy and armed robbery issues individually. This is due to the high sovereignty issue in the region. The information sharing system has eased the process of information gathering regarding piracy incidents. This has helped not only shipping companies but also states in preserving law enforcement on their territorial waters.

The capacity building programs are in form of training, workshops, discussions and other activities which enhance the capacity of the states to combat piracy and to be more cooperative. The capacity building programs have increased the cooperativeness sense among Southeast Asian countries. At last, cooperative arrangement with other organization that shares the same concern, which is piracy, has also eased the mobility to combat piracy and to track down piracy incidents. Regarding piracy and armed robbery issue, the foreign policy orientation of the states in Southeast Asia is shifting to status quo. This is due to the realization that the regime has benefited them.

One of the proofs that ReCAAP has been effective is the increasing number of contracting parties since the establishment in 2006. Up until 2014, ReCAAP has 20 contracting parties, three of which are European states. ReCAAP has also been engaged in partnering with other organizations to fight against piracy and armed robbery. The ReCAAP ISC has had official arrangement with maritime industries and organizations such as BIMCO, IMO, ASF and INTERTANKO. The signing of Cooperative Agreement with the International Crime Police Organization

(INTERPOL) shows that the cooperative arrangement is not limited to maritime industries and organizations but also any organizations which have similar concern.

Since 2006, the numbers of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Southeast Asia have been declining. In 2009 there was a significant change in the number which began to increase due to the shift of focus of the global economy toward the region. Since then the number remained constant. However qualitatively, piracy and armed robbery in Southeast Asia have become less severe. There has been reduction in the number of incidents which involved high level of violence. This is due to the focus of ReCAAP in prioritizing the more moderate attacks. The Information exchanges among the ReCAAP officers, the government agencies, and maritime industry officers have, in many cases, helped the recovery of hijacked vessels and the captures of the pirates. The smooth information exchange was due to the capacity building activities which have produced trained officers. Furthermore, the capacity building activities and information sharing system might not be conducted if ReCAAP had not partnered with other organizations. The cooperative arrangements which ReCAAP has established with other organizations and agencies have allowed ReCAAP to proceed the programs. In short, through the ISC, the ReCAAP has contributed in reducing piracy and armed robbery in Southeast Asia by enhancing the information sharing among the contracting parties, providing capacity building activities to integrate the capabilities of the contracting parties, and connecting to other organizations with the same concern.