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**COOPERATIVE MARITIME SECURITY IN THE
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DR EVAN LAKSMANA

SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE SENIOR FELLOW FOR SOUTHEAST
ASIAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE; EDITOR, ASIA PACIFIC
REGIONAL SECURITY ASSESSMENT,
IISS-ASIA

ADMIRAL SEGUCHI YOSHIO

COMMANDANT, JAPAN COAST GUARD

RICARDO MONTERO ALLENDE

UNDERSECRETARY OF DEFENSE, CHILE

LIEUTENANT GENERAL LE QUANG DAO

COMMANDER, VIETNAM COAST GUARD

ADMIRAL SIR TONY RADAKIN

CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF, UK

REAR ADMIRAL HU GANGFENG

VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY, PEOPLE'S
LIBERATION ARMY, CHINA

**Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence;
Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS–Asia**

We have roughly about 40, up to 50 minutes or so, for a question-and-answer discussion. I have seen a few questions and a few interventions, but for the first remarks, Admiral Vaujour, please, the floor is yours.

Admiral Nicolas Vaujour, Chief of Navy, France

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I am Admiral Vaujour, Chief of the French Navy. Firstly, I would like to thank the panellists for the insightful and fruitful discussion.

As a nation belonging to the Indo-Pacific, France takes its full part in ensuring maritime security and freedom of navigation. We are promoting proactive partnership through the Indian Ocean Navy Symposium (IONS). We were the chair from 2021 to 2023, and we will take the chair of the Western Pacific Navy Symposium (WPNS) after China in 2026.

However, let me state that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Montego Bay Convention was issued in 1982. It means 47 years ago. And the question we have is that interpretation by nation of the UNCLOS is sometimes really different. And I would like to ask you the question, more or less 50 years after the issuing of the UNCLOS, do you think it is time to review the UNCLOS or to be precise on some dedicated points, especially about the regulation about seabed and the protection of critical infrastructures? Or do you think that just reinforcing cooperation between nations will be enough? Thank you.

**Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence;
Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS–Asia**

Thank you. We will collect two more questions, and then we will ask the panellists to respond. From Brunei, a young leader, Hazwan, the floor is yours.

**Mohammad Hazwan Mohammad Azani, Senior Academic Adviser, Defence Academy Royal Brunei
Armed Forces**

Thank you very much, Evan. I have a question for Admiral Radakin and perhaps also Admiral Hu. A very good afternoon, Admiral. Thank you so much for sharing the three themes of your cooperation here in the Asia-Pacific.

I would like to ask, in light of the recent strengthening of the defence cooperation between the United Kingdom and China, is there any particular area where this cooperation will be going, moving forward, anything that we can expect in the near future, and if you could share anything concrete or any practical steps in the near future? Thank you.

**Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence;
Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS–Asia**

Thank you. From the Philippines, Xylee Paculba.

**Xylee Paculba, Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines
Diliman**

I would like to address a question to Admiral Hu. China has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to finalising a substantive and effective code of conduct (COC) with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In this context, how does China reconcile this with recent actions, such as the use of force against Philippine vessels, that appear to undermine the spirit of mutual restraint and peaceful dispute resolution envisioned in the COC? Additionally, how does China view the constructive role of

extra-regional partners in supporting maritime stability, transparency and adherence to international law in the South China Sea?

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. We have three quick questions from the audience. I feel like perhaps for all of the panellists, the question from the Admiral regarding is it a time to review the UNCLOS is certainly an interesting question that I hope all of the panellists can address. And then to Admiral Radakin on the UK-China maritime cooperation. And perhaps the last one to Admiral Hu on the actions of China in the South China Sea and the COC process.

Let me first turn to Admiral Seguchi, if you have any thoughts on the first question regarding UNCLOS review.

Admiral Seguchi Yoshio, Commandant, Japan Coast Guard

Since UNCLOS was established, it has been 50 years. Compared to 50 years ago and today, the environment facing the oceans has greatly changed. Whether it should be reviewed or not, let us put that aside. However, we need to look into everything that has been done in the interim to see if there is a need for formal revision.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. Mr Allende.

Ricardo Montero Allende, Undersecretary of Defense, Chile

I will say this is a huge challenge, and it is going to become more complex through the years. I think we need to be very responsible for this. As I say, for us, the protection of not just the maritime domain of each country, the general maritime domain is important for Chile. It is a main priority. I think that sustainable development must be a goal for all the countries. However, it is impossible, a solution, if we think about it just for ourselves.

We really think that any treaty that can provide us a bigger framework in order to protect the environment and have, again, development that is responsible, I think it is an opportunity that we must take.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. General Le.

Lieutenant General Le Quang Dao, Commander, Vietnam Coast Guard

To littoral states, including Vietnam, for the reviewing of UNCLOS, to make it more suitable to the current situation is important. And Vietnam will be very careful in reviewing and suggesting as well as submitting our content items that is related, so that the interest of every country in the world and in this region will be protected. Thank you.

Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, Chief of the Defence Staff, UK

Thank you, Nicolas Vaujour. I would not be a fan of going back and starting all over again. I think that might be quite risky, quite chaotic. It creates all kinds of opportunities for even bigger arguments. I would be a fan of banking all that we have and that is agreed by everybody and trying to extend that even further to get even more signatories. And I can see that, can we then try to deal with the points that are really at issue, and can we either refine or resolve those particular points? And can we make a

bigger effort to get after those issues before they fall into a more difficult space where you then start to get into conflict?

I think if that is the spirit of what is behind your question, and it is a good point that as we are approaching 50 years, then can we approach it in that manner?

And then on the question about the UK and China, it may be language, and it is not meant to be pointed, particularly when I am sat next to the Admiral and he had to suffer me providing a talk when the Admiral was at the National Defense University. And so, we were reflecting on that last night. However, if you are referring to my visit to Beijing, it was all about establishing military-to-military channels and communication. It was not about an ambition for cooperation, it was about something much more basic of ensuring that we have communication. And as part of that conversation with General Liu, we both thought it appropriate that we should keep those conversations private.

However, I hope he will not mind me saying that part of the theme of that conversation, when we are talking about the UK operating in this region, was a reinforcement that when we operate in the region, we do it in a very transparent way. It is something that we are really comfortable with because we see ourselves as operating under the rule of law, and we are doing activity that we consider to be entirely routine for a nation like the United Kingdom.

That is where we are. I think it is important that we had that conversation. However, that is just some refinement of what it actually means.

Dr Evan Laksmna, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. Rear Admiral Hu, the floor is yours.

Rear Admiral Hu Gangfeng, Vice President, National Defense University, People's Liberation Army, China

Thank you for your question. Firstly, I will answer the relations between China and the UK. As the East and the West civilisations' important representatives, for a long time, we appreciate each other, are attracted to each other, just with me and the Admiral Radakin. We sat at the same table last evening, and today we sit together.

The Chinese character ying is related to hero and to handsome, and they are all beautiful meanings. Chinese people, they take ying, many beautiful connotations. And just we take the UK, or in Chinese, Ying Guo, we give this beautiful word to the country, which can express the special relations between the two countries and the best wishes. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, the two countries have been improving our relations.

In recent years, we have marked many new achievements and injected positive energy to a turbulent world today. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the anti-fascist war and the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. The two countries are permanent members of UN Security Council, and we are all independent major powers. We are the important creator of the post-war order and also the safe-guarder.

We should strengthen unity and cooperation, and jointly safeguard the UN authority and status, and safeguard the international trade rules and the law and the world economic order, and practise true multilateralism. Just like the Chilean Commander has said, we should safeguard the true multilateralism. Just like Admiral Radakin said, the international situation, when it is more complicated, the UK and China should make even more correct strategic choices, and become the

reliable force in maintaining the international order, and promote the economic growth of the world, and lead the multilateral cooperation. Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. For the next round of questions, I will try and take maybe four, and then we will have the panellists respond again. From the young leader and from Japan, Riho Aizawa.

Riho Aizawa, Research Fellow, America, Europe, and Russia Division, Regional Studies Department, National Institute for Defense Studies

Thank you very much for this opportunity. Some analysts have suggested that a future conflict could begin with an accidental issue or accidental incident at sea. To all the panellists, what efforts are most needed to prevent such accidents from escalating into a broader conflict? For example, do you see the development of a communication mechanism, especially between coastguard agencies, as a critical step? Because while military-to-military frameworks like the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) or military-to-military bilateral mechanisms do exist, but coastguard-to-coastguard arrangements seem to be less developed. I do appreciate any ideas for preventing accidents from escalating into a broader conflict. Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. From the UK, Richard Lloyd Parry.

Richard Lloyd Parry, Asia Editor, *The Times*

Thank you. A question for Admiral Radakin. You said that although it is NATO first, it is not NATO only. I wanted to ask you what you thought of the remarks this morning by Secretary Hegseth, where he said he would prefer it for European nations to stay in Europe and concentrate on the defence of Europe. It has also been reported that Elbridge Colby has told UK officials, as I understand it, that this is not really a moment to be sending aircraft carriers out to Asia. Given that there is a war in Ukraine, in Europe, and that military forces are overstretched anyway, do they not have a good point there?

And then a very quick question for Admiral Hu. How do you feel about this British aircraft carrier coming to your region? You said that Britain has a very beautiful name in Chinese. How do you feel about this powerful ship not so far off your waters? Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. From China, Yuan Ma.

Colonel Ma Yuan, Associate Professor, National Security College, National Defense University, China

Admiral Radakin, thank you for your very informative speech. My question is about security cooperation mechanisms, as we all know that now there are many different security cooperation mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region. However, when looking at history, we also can see that sometimes misunderstandings and confrontations happened because of the lack of effective dialogues among different mechanisms. I was wondering, in your opinion, how to make all these different security mechanisms work in a positive interaction? And can we establish a larger and more inclusive mechanism in which all current mechanisms can find their position and better work together? Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. And lastly, from Singapore, Satishkumar Cheney Krishnan.

Satishkumar Cheney Krishnan, Bureau Chief of Singapore and Malaysia for Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Hello. Hi, I am Satish Cheney from AFP. My question is for Rear Admiral Hu. As you said earlier, consultation and dialogue is important. And based on that, I was wondering, would it not have been better for China to send a defence minister to attend this forum? Hegseth made a bit of a dig that he was here this morning and that someone is not, referring to China. Any comments on that?

And just one last question. Do you think Hegseth's tone and that the message that the United States will play a stronger role in the region, will that reduce or raise tensions here? Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. Perhaps, since there are a few questions to both Admiral Radakin and Rear Admiral Hu, maybe we start first again with the other panellists regarding the general questions for all of the panellists, which is how to prevent accidental incidents at sea. Admiral Seguchi, if you have anything.

Admiral Seguchi Yoshio, Commandant, Japan Coast Guard

As I mentioned earlier, it is important to deal with situations calmly, based on international law. However, that universal value set, the idea of maintaining maritime order based on the rule of law, this has to be a commonly held view among the nations, and each nation has to have the law-enforcement capabilities that are able to execute that. For that purpose, it is not enough for one nation alone to act. It needs to be done within a bilateral or a multilateral framework. And best practices should be shared among them so that they can have a common mindset with regard to values so that they can act.

In the case of Japan, we not only have bilateral frameworks such as this, but regional as well as global coastguard summits that we have organised. And so, within the frameworks, we work on building the necessary relationship in order to have that commonality in terms of values so that we can assist each other to achieve results.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. Mr Allende?

Ricardo Montero Allende, Undersecretary of Defense, Chile

Thank you. Well, I think the main framework must be the international law. However, I think we need to do more and do it better. I think we need to open the conversation at a different level. We need to talk at the political level and to the military level. It must be not just bilateral meetings; it must be multilateral meetings. I think this Dialogue and this meeting, it is a very, very good example. We came here. I know that it is an effort for all the authorities and all the military authorities too, to spend three whole days here talking and listening. And I really think that this is a good exercise, because when we meet each other, when we start a conversation, that opens a channel. And that, at some point, could be an opportunity.

What we are working today is not just sharing impressions; we are trying to listen to what everyone else is trying to say to us. And I am quite sure that it is the main responsibility that we have, because again, at some point, that could make the difference. A call, meet someone here during the meeting,

have a conversation, have an open dialogue. I think that the formal relations are important, but personal relations are important too.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. General Le.

Lieutenant General Le Quang Dao, Commander, Vietnam Coast Guard

We agree with the comment of the previous speaker, that from the Vietnam perspective, we want to be together with another country to maintain its peace and stability for this role of economy and social, especially maintain its peace and stability of its country.

To solve the problem on the sea, of the collisions on the sea, our perspective is resolving by respecting the sovereignty and especially the law, and especially the UNCLOS 1982, and also the laws of each country. And we also respect its agreement, especially on the bilateral and multilateral. Every country, we have the memorandum of understanding (MOU) to sign with each other. Especially for the country to have the law-enforcement agency, they need to educate the law-enforcement agency to respect another force.

In Vietnam, we have a quotation: make something big, big thing, to the small thing, and make the small thing to nothing. So that our relationship in the sea is peaceful and is stable.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you, General. Admiral Radakin.

Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, Chief of the Defence Staff, UK

Thank you. If I take the first question and the third question together, because they sounded very similar to me. And maybe my first point would be, yes, there were some areas where the tensions are high, and people are right to be concerned. However, can we be really careful not to catastrophise? Incidents might happen. However, the idea that tactical incidents happen, and that they then suddenly spiral, and they evolve to bigger conflict and another way to war, I just reject. I think there are people that love to do that spiralling out of control and comment on it. However, I would give some reassurance to this audience that I think that nations are much, much more aware of those risks, and they try to manage them at the time. And I do not think that it works like that.

However, on the point, do we need some additional mechanisms, and might we try to strive for those, I do accept that that is something that might be warranted. And I am so old that I can remember serving at sea in the Cold War and when we had those mechanisms in place for how we deal with Russia. However, in order to put those mechanisms in place, well, firstly, you need to have some very clear communication. You need to have a political frame where you have the authority to then start to have the conversations, where you then come up with some rules and procedures to just help to manage where you might have differences, whether it is under international law, or you might just recognise that there is a risk of miscalculation. And therefore, do you come up with specific rules as to how close you will be between each other, particularly with military evolutions? How do you manage your flying? How do you manage your sonar? How do you manage some of your other capabilities?

Those are mechanisms that have been used in the past, and we could definitely have a debate as to whether or not those might be helpful these days.

And then on to the question from Mr Lloyd Parry about the carriers and European carriers in the Indo-Pacific. I think, to me, there are lots of different layers where I would disagree with you. The first one would just be a philosophical one. The idea that somehow the world is neatly configured into these nice blocs of geography and there is not the interconnectedness is not something that we recognise philosophically. And you have seen that the war in Ukraine is a terrible war in Europe. However, at one level, it is relatively contained in a geographical sense, but its impact is global. Its impact is around energy prices and what that has meant, food prices, and some of the poorest people in the world have suffered the worst in terms of what that means for them. And it was Jens Stoltenberg who talked about, there is no such thing as regional security these days. There is only global security. I come at it that way.

The second one would just be the straightforward sovereignty. I take my orders from a UK government, and we are a P5 nation. We are a nuclear power. The government's highest priority is economic growth. And therefore, in a region that has 40% of the world's GDP, and that is increasing, and with a country that is fortunate to be the sixth-largest economy in the world, and is also fortunate to have a whole raft of partners and allies in this part of the world, I think I have instructions from a government which are very similar to the last government, which expects the UK to be in the Indo-Pacific. And there are a whole raft of other reasons why we should be here, diplomatically, culturally, but to just see it through the narrow lens of an aircraft carrier, I think, is not correct. And it is some of those other big things, like being a dialogue partner within ASEAN. It is also about being in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and what that means. There is a sovereignty, UK national-interest question.

That is not to be dismissive about our relationship with America and what that means. However, I may have heard Secretary Hegseth differently, because I think he said yes to European carriers being in the Indo-Pacific. And he reflected something that matched his speech, and which I know that Admiral Paparo really welcomes. And that is, whether it is an Italian or a French or a UK aircraft carrier, it adds to this broader tapestry of Western powers and their focus on the region. And that might present some dilemmas for those that are uncomfortable with us being in the region and some of the other language that Secretary Hegseth reflected.

And then I come to some straightforward practical points. Europe is not bereft of aircraft carriers. There is a French one, there is an Italian one, there is another British one. There are American ones that are in the area as well. So that is a starting point.

The second one, we have no plans to use our aircraft carrier in the Russia-Ukraine context. And I do not think that we have any expectation that Russia-Ukraine is going to suddenly erupt into something that is pressing us with our aircraft carrier. If you say, well, actually, we are a stressed military and so on, the marginal cost of sending an aircraft carrier is £75 million. Because all of the things that we are doing, embarking an air wing, the real journey that we are on, which is to declare the UK as being a carrier nation again, and at full operating capability, we would have to do in Europe with those jets. And we would probably have to go to America to do the highest-level exercises called *Red Flag*, where you really test your fifth-generation capabilities. And on this occasion, we are going to a phenomenally sophisticated exercise that Australia has developed, called *Talisman Sabre*, that fully allows you to then test your fifth-generation capabilities. And there are not many places in the world that you can have that operational prowess.

And then my final point, which might be an amazing insight from an admiral: ships float and move. And that actually they go to places, and if they need to, they can turn back and return. And you are talking about six weeks. If I look at the other parts of the UK armed forces and their readiness, the time it would take a brigade to fully move from the UK to just Eastern Europe, and never mind the time it

would take a division to move from the UK to Eastern Europe, then I am really confident that the aircraft carrier could join the other aircraft carrier that we have got in Europe.

It is not really something that I am sympathetic to. And it is not quite the weightiness that people, I think, are inferring, that somehow we have drained Europe and we are in a vulnerable position.

Dr Evan Laksmna, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you.

Rear Admiral Hu Gangfeng, Vice President, National Defense University, People's Liberation Army, China

As for the UK aircraft carrier to this region, this is an interesting question. I am willing to answer this question. As a man also used to the navy uniform, I would like to focus on the military perspective to discuss this question.

Firstly, how can we view this issue? The navy fleet or the navy ship is the most mobile service. It is very mobile. It is the feature of this service. In the ocean, the mobile deployment or exercise is a basic nature only if we apply or deploy it well. The ocean covers 70% of the world. Then the navy ship navigates on the ocean. It can safeguard the peace, promote friendship, just like fifteenth-century China's ancient General Zheng He. He led the most powerful fleet and went to the Indian Ocean seven times. He promoted the spread of advanced technology, promoted the friendship with other countries, and received the best wishes from other countries. I feel it is not strange, not surprising, and it is no big deal.

Secondly, how do we think about it? Just like Admiral Radakin said, navy ships navigate on the ocean, especially to the near sea or far sea, to other near countries. They take quite a risk. It may cause some misunderstanding, miscalculation or even cause some friction. Just like Admiral Radakin said, maybe at the beginning it has no bad purpose. Just like some war broke out in the region, you feel surprised. It is unexpected. However, in the logical sense, your military force, once sent there, the risk will definitely increase.

This reminds me of a book written by the University of California professor in computer technology. His name is Judea Pearl. He is the scholar of the US science academy. He has written a book, *The Book of Why*. The core opinion in his book, the cause and effect, is how to differentiate human and other species. That is how humans evolved into an intelligent creature. It is the basic cause and effect.

From sending the navy ship to a very far place or the near close water of other countries or enter the territorial water of other countries, it may inevitably contain some risk, lead to some severe situation. There is the possibility. That is the effect. It is the logic of cause and effect.

Thirdly, how can we deal with it? I think if we analyse the cause and effect well, we should eliminate the risk fundamentally in the air and the sea. Firstly, the purpose is to safeguard peace. We should not provoke or violate international laws or infringe upon other countries' security, order and stability. Not to provoke other countries' sovereignty, security and developmental interests.

Secondly, technologically speaking, we should strictly manage and control the front-line military activities. As I have mentioned, the air and the sea activities, we have some international rules. China also actively promoted and signed the third version of the [inaudible]. These rules, we should strictly comply with, so that we can stop the conflict or friction.

In one word, every serviceman, or experts, or even civilians should embrace a vision of building a community of shared future for mankind and a maritime community of shared future in the Asia-Pacific region. This is the responsibility of our times to everyone. In our history books or in some TV works, we can see the First World War and the Second World War was a miserable experience for mankind, so we should never forget such misery. We should make joint efforts to build peace and make efforts. Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS–Asia

Thank you, Rear Admiral. We have only about 11 minutes and I have about 11 questions, so that seems unlikely that we will get through all of them. I apologise if I cannot get to everyone. However, what I would like to do is perhaps gather only three last questions. And please keep it short if you can, two sentences max. And then we will give all of the speakers a chance for one last time to provide very short responses and concluding remarks for about a minute or so. So again, please keep it short and no more than two sentences, please.

From Japan, Atsushi Okudera.

Okudera Atsushi, Senior International Correspondent, *The Asahi Shimbun*

Thank you so much. To Admiral Hu, thank you so much. And as you mentioned, China has not threatened the surrounding countries, and also the freedom of navigation has not been maintained all the way. However, if we listen to the US and the Philippines, we listen to the different stories.

In order to bridge a gap, the dialogue itself is quite important. However, unfortunately, this time, we do not see any dialogue with the US or other nations. As the gentleman mentioned earlier, let me ask once again, why China did not send the Minister of Defence to this Shangri-La Dialogue. And what do you think is the importance of the dialogue with the US or other nations like Japan or other Asian countries? Thank you so much.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS–Asia

Thank you. From Indonesia and from the Young Leaders Programme, Gatra Priyandita.

Dr Gatra Priyandita, Senior Analyst, Cyber, Technology, and Security Program, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Thanks very much, Evan, and thanks to the panellists for the remarks. A question to all the panellists. Admiral Radakin spoke earlier about the importance of recognising cyber-related risks in the maritime sector and domain. Can members of the panel offer your thoughts on how the cyber-threat environment in the maritime sector has evolved, and whether this has also shaped thinking in the coastguard or the navy in your countries about the maritime–cyber security nexus? Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS–Asia

Thank you. From Singapore, Olivia Siong.

Olivia Siong, Senior Correspondent, Channel News Asia

Thank you. Yes, I would like to follow up on the gentleman to my left's question as well, in which you did mention that China is here to have dialogue and consultation, and that remark by Secretary Hegseth that seemed to make reference at the Chinese Minister of Defence not being in attendance at the Shangri-La Dialogue.

Also, I would like to get your comments. China and the US have spoken about wanting to uphold peace and stability in the region. Is there a message to the other countries in the room on how you see that happening, given that it seems to be heightening tensions between China and the US? Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you, and I apologise again if I could not get to everybody's questions. So, for all the speakers, we will follow the same order. And if you could please keep your final responses and concluding remarks to one minute, please. Admiral Seguchi.

Admiral Seguchi Yoshio, Commandant, Japan Coast Guard

With regard to cyber matters, communication on the seas has seen great advances in terms of technology, using satellite and so on. However, this issue is not something that can be resolved by the coastguard agency alone, but various relevant agencies within Japan needs to come up with cyber-security measures. And that is what Japan is doing.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. Mr Allende.

Ricardo Montero Allende, Undersecretary of Defense, Chile

We have a lot of questions in just a few minutes. Thank you very much to the IISS for the organisation and for letting us show our perspective from Latin America.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Thank you. General Le.

Lieutenant General Le Quang Dao, Commander, Vietnam Coast Guard

I do not have any question.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS-Asia

Perhaps Admiral Radakin.

Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, Chief of the Defence Staff, UK

Thank you. On the cyber question, I think there are two or three elements, for my mind. One is, the cyber threat is a threat for all aspects of our way of life now. And we have seen that with some attacks on the UK industry and the levels of disruption against the retail sector. I think for any sector it is an issue. And so it applies to the maritime sector, and especially in terms of our supply chains and how we go about our business.

And then I think there is an added dimension for the military. When you look at the operations that we conduct, then we need to have an assuredness that we can defeat some of those cyber attacks. And that is something that we need to get even stronger on.

And then to the final question, I am not too sure that I would agree, that I would jump to, that somehow there is heightened tension between China and the US. Again, I think that for all of us, it is about being responsible nations, it is about being transparent, it is about following the rules that we all acknowledge and being really strong in how we go about that, and playing down the catastrophising. And that

actually, there is a heightened tension because of speech A, which is on the back of speech B, and so on, I am very cautious about those commentaries.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS–Asia

Thank you. Rear Admiral Hu, the floor is yours.

Rear Admiral Hu Gangfeng, Vice President, National Defense University, People's Liberation Army, China

I will answer, focusing on one question. We always think that the Shangri-La Dialogue is a platform for all sides to discuss the Asia-Pacific security cooperation. China attaches great importance to this platform. We have for many years sent the delegation to this Dialogue. Actually, every time, we send the delegation on different levels. This is a completely normal work arrangement. It will not affect the explanation of our national-defence policies, ideas and the communication with others, or enhancing mutual trust. Objectively speaking, today, I am entrusted by our side to express our ideas. I think everyone may hear clearly our true thinking. Thank you.

Dr Evan Laksmana, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Southeast Asian Security and Defence; Editor, Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, IISS–Asia

Thank you so much, Rear Admiral Hu. Certainly, I think today we have heard a very strong set of diversity of the maritime security challenges, the importance of the diversity of perspectives on those issues, as well as the diversity of partnerships and relationships that we seek to build to address those challenges. Hopefully, we also focus on a constant rule of law at the international level and in the maritime domain.

Thank you very much for coming. Please give a big round of applause to our speakers today.