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## **7th Fleet, Royal Malaysian Navy Leaders Discuss CARAT, HA/DR During Staff Talks Onboard USS Blue Ridge**

*From U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Public Affairs*

WEST PORT, Malaysia - Senior leaders from the U.S. 7th Fleet and Malaysia Royal Navy met for a professional exchange of ideas in a variety of technical and tactical topics on board the 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) May 19.

The meetings, or "staff talks," included professional dialogue between the two allied staffs that were designed to share knowledge and develop methodologies for joint responses to any contingency within Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The exchange included discussion of maritime patrol and reconnaissance, maritime domain awareness, mine warfare, navigation, engineering and medical training.

Staff leaders also discussed upcoming Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) with Malaysia. Seventh Fleet will also join elements of the Malaysian Armed Forces in a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) exercise held under the auspices of ASEAN in June.

2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the CARAT exercise series, and the Malaysian Armed Forces have partnered with the United States since the exercise began in 1995

"This is a great opportunity to meet with our United States Allies," said First Adm. Dato' Pahlawan Sulaiman Bin, admiral Royal Malaysian Navy. "Staff Talks demonstrate a way to bring strength to our alliance."

The U.S. 7th Fleet intent for the staff talks is to increase Theater Security Cooperation through the facilitation of bilateral and multilateral military exchanges and dialogue. It provides a meeting place for partnered navies' subject matter experts to meet and discuss different aspects of their mission objectives and their responsibilities.

"The mission of staff talks is to engage with our partners in the Asia-Pacific and

strengthen our ties to allied nations,” said Lt. Reuben Attah, 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet’s Malaysian desk officer. “The most important part of this staff talk was to interact with our Malaysian counterparts, and have a face to face discussion to bring us closer as allies.”

Blue Ridge and embarked staff are in Malaysia for a scheduled port visit during a spring patrol operating forward, building maritime partnerships and conducting security and stability operations.

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