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**The Interests and Potential Roles of
Observers in the Arctic Council
– In the Context of Marine
Environmental Protection**

Dr. Zhen Sun

Overview

- **Legal Regime for the Arctic Marine Environmental Protection**
- **Observers in the Arctic Council**
- **Singapore and the Arctic**

Marine Environmental Issues in the Arctic Waters



- Climate Change
- Land-Based Pollution
- Offshore Oil & Gas Activities
- Shipping
- Fishing

Arctic Marine Environmental Legal Regime

Treaty Law:

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

IMO Conventions: MARPOL, London Convention/Protocol, OPRRC, HNS Protocol, Anti-Fouling System, (Ballast Water, Polar Code)

Environmental Treaties

Arctic-Specific Treaties: (Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response)

Soft Law:

IMO Guidelines

Declaration on Protection of the Arctic Environment and AEPS

Arctic Council Guidelines

UNEP Regional Action Plan to Protect the Arctic Marine Environment with Arctic States

National Law: Canada, Russia

External Actors in Arctic Marine Environmental Cooperation

- **Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy**
 - Unclear criteria for accrediting observers
 - Unclear rules of observers' rights and duties
 - Limited involvement
- **Arctic Council**
 - 1996 Ottawa Declaration
 - 2011 SAO Nuuk Report
 - 2013 Observer Manual & Rules of Procedure

Criteria for Admitting AC Observers

- Accepts and supports the objectives of the AC
- Recognizes Arctic States' sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction
- Recognizes the applicable legal framework
- Respects the values of Arctic indigenous peoples
- Has demonstrated a political willingness and financial ability to contribute to the work of Arctic indigenous peoples
- Has demonstrated their Arctic interests and experts relevant to the work of the AC
- Has demonstrated a concrete interest and ability to support the work of the AC, including bringing Arctic concerns to global decision-making bodies

Observers' Role

- Observe the work of the Arctic Council
- Attend meetings at invitation, submit statements/documents and provide views on the issues under discussion
- Make contribution through Working Groups and other subsidiary bodies
- Propose projects and make financial contribution

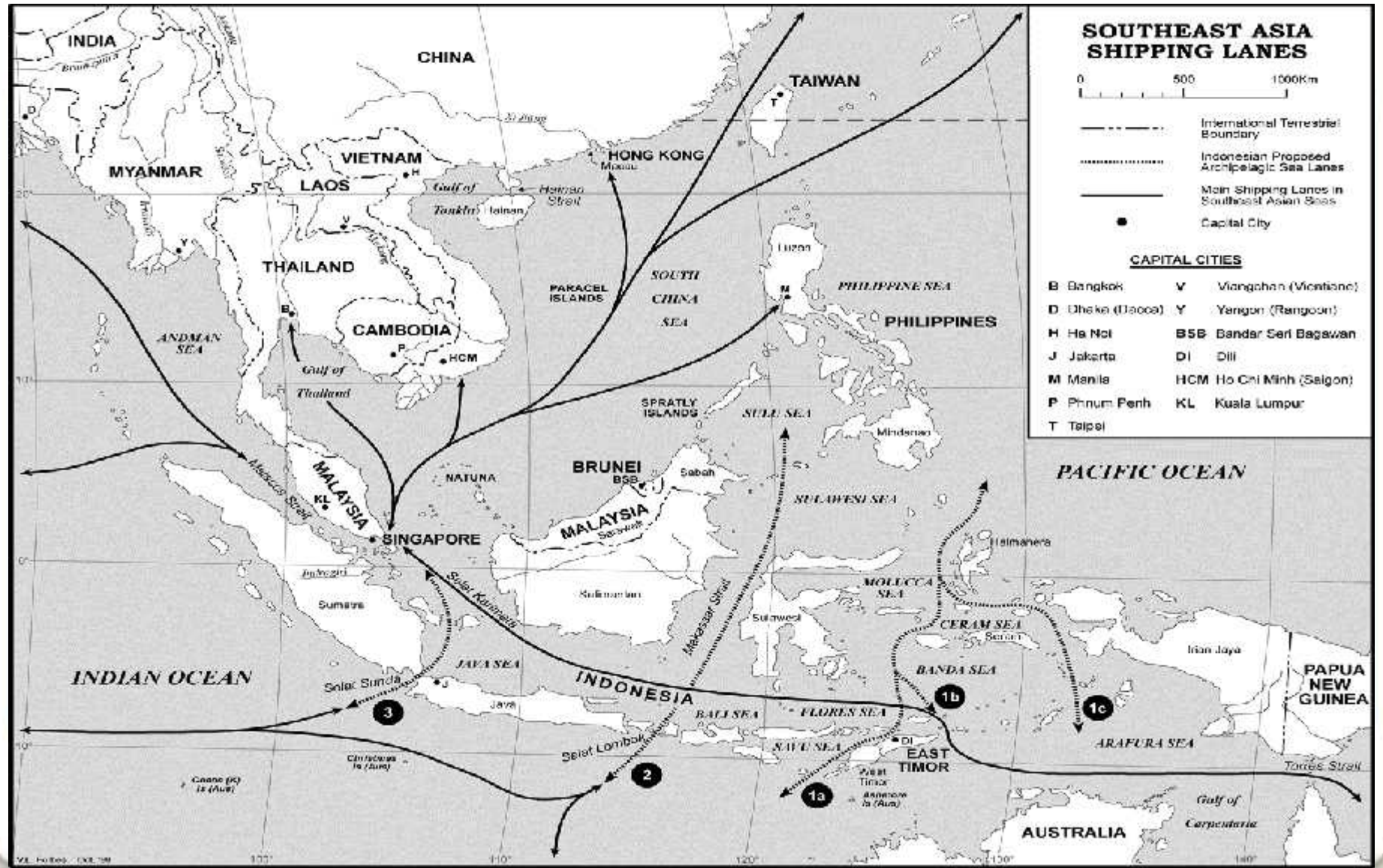
Debate on the Observer Issues

- The number of Observers
- Responsibilities of the Observers
- Involvement in decision-making
- Constrain on financial contributions
- Review system
- The value of been an AC Observer – *Symbolic?*

Singapore and the Arctic



Singapore



Singapore's Campaign

- Appointed a special envoy for Arctic affairs
- Met with Arctic States and Permanent Participants
- Demonstrated political willingness
- Demonstrated expertise in maritime affairs
- Hosted a study visit by members of Arctic indigenous peoples
- Offered specific expertise to three working groups

Singapore's Interests/Contribution in the Arctic

- Environmental Protection
- Development of A Safe Arctic Region
- Sustainable Economic Development
- Development of Human Capital

Singapore's Continuous Engagement in the Arctic

- Domestic efforts to promote the understanding of the Arctic
- Forming national policy/strategy for the Arctic
- Diplomatic level visit and participation in various Arctic forums
- Attending Arctic Council meetings
- Participating in the work of the AC subsidiary bodies: CAFF; EPPR; PAME; TFOPP
- Creating opportunities for dialogue between Singapore and the Arctic indigenous communities

Balance Sheet for Singapore as an AC Observer

What It Gives

- Accepts the criteria;
- Provides scientific and technologic expertise;
- Proposes training programme with Arctic indigenous communities;
- Works with global decision-making bodies on Arctic concerned issues;

What It Gets

- Increased knowledge of the Arctic;
- Domestic effects: policy, strategy, and research;
- International effects: placed Singapore on the map of Arctic affairs;

Conclusions

- Observers' roles are grounded in their ability to contribute at the working level;
- Observers' engagement is welcomed but to some extent restricted;
- How to address the Observers issue will affect the role of the Arctic Council in the context of circumpolar co-operation;