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HIGHER COLLISION RISKS FOR SUBMARINES

Operators of submarines in South-East Asia face much higher risks of collisions than in other parts of the world, a major regional conference has been told.

The observation has been made in a presentation to the “Regional Maritime Security Outlook 2018” conference in Singapore by Submarine Institute of Australia (SIA) Secretary and 31-year veteran of the Royal Australian Navy, Frank Owen.

A paper presented to the conference titled “Submarine Safety Measures in the Indo-Pacific – An Australian Perspective” said: “The Indo-Pacific Region is home to a growing number of submarines – its numbers far exceed those of Europe.

“In European waters, with the significant exception of Russia, most of the submarine operators are part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the water space is managed by that organisation and the US Navy.

“With no similar organisation, the newer South-East Asian submarine operators face much higher risks of submarine-submarine collisions.

“South-East Asia lacks the international agreements that generally have been adopted in the rest of the world that provides for a system to prevent mutual interference.”

The paper stated that with the South China Sea being one of the busiest areas for maritime activity in the world, Singapore has taken admirable steps to mitigate the risks.

The paper said: “Its (Singapore’s) recent establishment of the Safety Information Portal and endorsement of the adoption of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea are very worthy initiatives, especially for surface ships.

“The challenge is to translate these initiatives for submarines while recognising that compliance may compromise the stealth of a submarine.

“Even in peacetime, this may be a bridge too far.”

The full paper can be found on the SIA website by clicking [here](#).

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