

Applied to the Middle East, a progressive approach would see emphasis being given to the development of coordination procedures for the routine management of regional waters. Of related tasks, search and rescue, pollution control, and counter-terrorism hold the most promise.

Search and Rescue coordination procedures are normally developed on a bilateral basis in the first instance and cover a specific body of water. When those procedures are well established, they can be expanded. The principle issues to be agreed are:

- respective areas of primary responsibility and procedures for designating the search commander when necessary;
- number of units available for cooperative SAR operations and their readiness;
- language of co-operation;
- coordination procedures between both vessel control agencies and on-scene units (air and surface) including communication frequencies beyond the normal marine distress frequencies; and
- search and incident termination procedures.

In the case of the Middle East, it might prove easier to begin developing coordination procedures for the Red Sea/Gulf of Aqaba than for the Mediterranean. Shipping density and the environmental sensitivity of the area naturally lead towards common objectives whereas the openness of the eastern Mediterranean is less conducive to bilateral cooperation.