

Following acceptance of these proposals, Canada organized a workshop at the Canadian Coast Guard College in Sydney, Nova Scotia, in September 1993. The workshop emphasized practical, hands-on examination of both SAR and INCSEA concepts. Though all participants have Search and Rescue capabilities, co-operation in this field is not yet a common feature in the region. The concept of Prevention of Incidents at Sea is entirely new to the region.

At the end of the Sydney Workshop, which included Israeli and Arab participants, all agreed that a good beginning would be for regional states to exchange information on their SAR communications frequencies and their command and control provisions for SAR. On the issue of the prevention of incidents at sea, the workshop demonstrated that early communication of intentions between ships is the best means of avoiding misunderstandings and that the ready availability of a group of specially tailored signals can help prevent a benign misunderstanding from becoming a potential source of conflict. The participants agreed on the importance of timely and thorough consultations and on the need for a specific code of procedures for encounters at sea. In that regard, they asked Canada to prepare a draft text for a multilateral INCSEA Agreement in the Middle East.

Discussion on both issues resumed at a workshop last March in Antalya, Turkey. The talks focused on the desirability and mechanics of enhanced regional co-operation in the area of Search and Rescue and on Canada's draft INCSEA text which was accepted as a basic framework for the discussions.

As a way of supporting these discussions, Canada was asked to prepare two events this summer for officers of Middle Eastern navies. The first is a practical demonstration of both Search and Rescue and Prevention of Incidents at Sea concepts. The demonstration, involving Canadian and American warships — HMCS *Halifax* and USS *Santa Barbara* — currently stationed in the Mediterranean, will take place near Venice off the coast of Italy on July 15. Aviation units of the Italian navy will also participate. The demonstration is intended to allow Middle Eastern naval officers to acquire first-hand experience of the implementation of the Maritime Confidence-Building Measures under discussion.

The second event will be a symposium for the commanders of the Middle Eastern navies to be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in August. This will be the first time the commanders of Middle Eastern naval services have ever met.

Canada believes that, given the history of conflict in the Middle East, it is quite significant that Israeli and Arab naval officers are prepared to undertake an in-depth examination of Maritime Confidence-Building Measures.

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