All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office
US Department of Defense

Case: "Southeast Asia Triangles"
Case Resolution | 17 March 2023

(U) Key Findings

(U) AARO assesses that the subjects of the "Southeast Asia Triangles" case from 2017 almost certainly are cone-shaped static fishing nets floating on the surface of the ocean. This conclusion is based on a thorough review of the evidence by AARO's Intelligence and Science and Technology (S&T) Partners.

- (U) The image was originally flagged as containing potentially anomalous objects and posing a risk to navigation. Additional imagery of the area from 2017 was discovered and collected.

- (U) Both the Intelligence and S&T teams compared the size, shape, and location of the initial image to existing and subsequent images in the same region, and compared it to libraries of known morphologies.

(U) Intelligence Assessment

(U) AARO's Intelligence partners examined the image and compared it other imagery. Specifically, they located a clearer image in the vicinity of the objects in question.

- (U) The images from 2017 display several triangles and were confirmed to be static, cone-shaped fishing nets.

- (U) These triangular fishing nets were compared to the black triangles from the 2017 imagery and it was confirmed that are all are approximately the same size of about 11m x 7m.

(U) Case Essentials

(U) Six triangular objects in a formation were originally flagged as potentially anomalous and potentially posing a risk to navigation

(U) Location: Southeast Asia

(U) Date: 30 August 2017

(U) Altitude: N/A

(U) Shape: Six dark triangles

(U) Reporter: An Intelligence Community Member

(U) Sensor: Satellite imagery

(U) Behavior: Noted as possible risk to navigation

(U) Case Status: Resolved; Objects are fishing nets on the ocean surface

- (U) AARO's Intelligence partners have high confidence in their identification of these objects and assess they do not pose a hazard to navigation.

(U) Science & Technology Assessment

(U) Three of AARO's S&T partners agree that the objects imaged in 2017 are fishing nets.

(U) S&T Partner One specifically noted that subsequent images were especially clear; the location and the size comparison were critical in determining the assessment.

(U) S&T Partner Two acquired and analyzed other images of the same geographical area which revealed multiple similar triangular shapes taken in late 2022 and early 2023. These images also show significant downstream turbidity, confirming that these nets are on the water.

(U) S&T Partner Three also found stock footage of fishing nets on the same river, which confirms the underlying analysis.

(U) Figure 1: The original 2017 image (left) compared with another from 2017 (right) identified the objects as prosaic fishing nets.