

**CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY REPORT  
OF THE  
5<sup>TH</sup> ARF SECURITY POLICY CONFERENCE**

**8 MAY 2008  
SINGAPORE**

1. The Fifth ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) was held in Singapore on 8 May 2008. The Conference was chaired by the Singapore Permanent Secretary for Defence Mr Chiang Chie Foo. The Conference was attended by ARF members from Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, US and Vietnam as well as the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat. The list of participants is at **Annex A**.

**Item 1: Welcome Remarks**

2. In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed the participants to the Conference and noted that the ASPC provided a good opportunity for senior officials to exchange views on regional security and defence outlook and to discuss issues of mutual concern. The Chair also noted that the ASPC could facilitate constructive dialogue and practical cooperation on current and emerging security issues amongst the ARF defence establishments.

3. The Chair, on behalf of the ASPC participants, conveyed his sympathies and condolences to the people of Myanmar and expressed the hope that the international aid and humanitarian assistance offered would enable the people of Myanmar to recover as quickly as possible.

**Item 2: Adoption of Agenda**

4. The Conference considered and adopted the Agenda, which is at **Annex B**.

### **Item 3: Exchange of Views on the Regional Defence and Security Outlook**

5. The Conference exchanged views on the regional defence and security outlook, touching on the evolving strategic landscape and its implications on regional peace and stability. The Conference noted that the relatively stable relations amongst the major powers continued to play a key role in stabilising and enhancing the security of the Asia-Pacific region.

6. The Conference recognised that the region continued to face a range of traditional and non-traditional transnational security challenges including terrorism, piracy, natural disasters, epidemics, environmental degradation, energy security and food security. The Conference noted that all defence establishments and militaries shared the common tasks of maintaining peace and stability, and creating a favourable environment for regional prosperity and development. The Conference acknowledged that the ARF defence establishments had a wealth of experience in addressing these issues, and that the ARF countries could collectively bring the expertise, perspectives and resources to bear on these shared security challenges, through closer practical cooperation within the ARF.

7. The Conference further recognised that while the region was relatively stable, there were several potential flashpoints and hotspots that could have wider implications on the peace and stability of the region. The nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula and Iran, and the situation in the Middle East and the South Pacific islands, for example, had the potential to undermine peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. The Conference expressed support for the resolution of these issues through peaceful means.

8. The Conference recognised the importance of promoting the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and of striving towards a Regional Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, with a view to contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region.

9. The Conference noted that the regional security architecture was characterised by overlapping and multi-layered frameworks, ranging from the broad-based ASEAN Regional Forum to functional or professional groupings like the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS). The Conference noted that these fora and groupings served different roles but complemented one another. The Conference further acknowledged that it

was important that the regional security architecture evolve in an open and inclusive manner, which would be critical in sustaining regional peace, stability and progress.

10. The Conference further noted the importance to move beyond dialogues to forge practical cooperation in areas of common interest, noting disaster preparedness and emergency response as a useful common goal. Some delegations underscored the need to draw up good strategies to address the security challenges we faced as well as to identify measures to implement those strategies. The ARF would then be able to focus on more results-oriented approaches as we tackle the wide range of security challenges and issues.

11. The Conference also congratulated ASEAN on its adoption of the ASEAN Charter on 20 November 2007 during the 13<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit. The Conference noted that the ASEAN Charter would contribute towards further integration of the ASEAN Community and promote healthy relations with the major powers in the region, which would ensure a positive trend in regional security. The Conference expressed its strong support for the ASEAN Charter as a milestone in ASEAN's journey to realise the vision of an integrated, open, dynamic and resilient ASEAN Community.

12. The various papers submitted by the lead discussants, namely, China and Vietnam are at **Annexes C and D**.

#### **Item 4: Energy Security and Challenges to Defence Establishments**

13. The Conference noted that energy security encompassed a broader agenda that included not only energy diversification, but also energy diplomacy, energy conservation, infrastructural challenges, environmental protection and the development of alternative and renewable sources of energy. Energy security was also an issue of strategic concern to the defence establishments. The rise in oil prices and the scarcity of energy supplies could have implications for the operations of armed forces and militaries. Separately, the Conference noted that some militaries had taken on the additional task of safeguarding the storage of energy supplies as well as protecting the routes that transport the supply of energy.

14. Given the gradual decrease in available hydrocarbon fuel and the rapid increase in demand for it, the Conference noted the need to explore using alternative sources of energy, and the possibility of technology-sharing between countries. In this regard, the Conference welcomed the positive outcomes of the Second ARF Seminar on Energy Security that the European Union and Singapore co-hosted from 15-17 April 2008. The report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ARF Seminar on Energy Security is at **Annex E**.

15. The Conference acknowledged that the security of transit routes, in particular, the safety and security of vessels transiting through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore would be crucial to the energy concerns of all ARF members. Any serious disruption to vessel traffic through the Straits would have massive repercussions on the world economy. The Conference noted that the three littoral States (Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore) were fully committed to ensuring that the Straits remain safe, secure and open to international shipping and trade at all times.

16. The need for an assured supply of energy has also created new dynamics in the political and strategic arena. An issue of concern is potential conflict as a result of over-lapping claims on resource-rich areas. The Conference acknowledged that the overarching goal of achieving peace and stability in the region has also opened up opportunities for greater regional and international cooperation on difficult energy issues.

17. The Conference acknowledged that the region as a whole needed to take steps to improve energy security with measures such as increasing investment on joint exploration of new oil and gas fields and alternative energy sources, improving security of supply routes, creating regional mechanisms to deal with energy security issues.

18. The papers submitted by Indonesia and the Republic of Korea are at **Annexes F and G**.

**Item 5: Briefing on the Outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting in Singapore, 13-15 November 2007**

19. The Conference was briefed by Singapore on the outcomes and achievements of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) that Singapore hosted from 13-15 November 2007. The Conference welcomed the signing of the Joint Declaration by the ASEAN Defence Ministers as testimony of the ADMM's commitment to enhancing regional peace and stability. The Conference further noted the adoption of three other papers,

namely the Protocol to the ADMM Concept Paper, the ADMM Three-Year Work Programme and the ADMM-Plus Concept Paper as forward-looking and positive steps towards the realisation of an open, flexible, resilient and outward-looking ASEAN Political-Security Community by 2015. The Joint Declaration of the ASEAN Defence Ministers is at **Annex H**.

**Item 6: Any Other Matters**

20. The Meeting noted the briefing by Malaysia on the outcomes of the ARF Seminar on Anti-Personnel Landmines that it co-hosted with the European Union in Penang from 8-10 April 2008. The Co-Chairs' Summary Record of the ARF Seminar on Anti-Personnel Mines is at **Annex I**. Australia briefed the Conference on the outcomes of the ARF Desktop Exercise on Disaster Relief jointly hosted by Australia and Indonesia which was held in Jakarta from 1-2 May 08. The Co-Chairs' Summary Report of the ARF Desktop Exercise on Disaster Relief is at **Annex J**.

21. The Conference noted that Thailand, as the incoming Chair of ASEAN, would chair and host the next ASPC. Congratulating Singapore for chairing a productive and fruitful meeting this year, Thailand would build on the progress achieved by previous Chairs to lay the foundation for enhancing confidence building and open dialogue on issues of mutual concern. The agenda and dates of the next ASPC would be circulated in due course.

22. The Conference was also informed by the Chair that Singapore would host and chair the next ARF Defence Dialogue, to be held in conjunction with the 15<sup>th</sup> ARF Ministers' Meeting, on 23 July 2008.

**Item 7: Closing Remarks**

23. In his closing remarks, the Chair expressed his appreciation to the participants of the Conference for the active participation and valuable comments which had contributed to an engaging and successful meeting. The Conference thanked the Government of Singapore for the generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

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