

**Co-Chairs' Summary Report of the  
Seventh ASEAN Regional Forum  
Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) Meeting,  
Honolulu Hawaii, May 9-10, 2013**

**Introduction**

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 19th Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 12 July 2012, the Seventh Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) was held in Honolulu, Hawaii from May 9-10, 2013. The Meeting was co-chaired by Ralph Cossa, EEP of the United States, and Tan Sri Mohamed Jawhar, EEP of Malaysia.
2. The Meeting was attended by 18 EEPs from 18 ARF participants who were accompanied by an almost equal number of foreign and defense ministry officials plus two representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat. The list of attendees is attached as Annex 1. Deliberations were almost exclusively among the EEPs. The foreign ministry representative from Brunei, the current ARF Chair, also provided extremely useful insights. The EEPs strongly encourage representatives from the ARF Unit/ASEAN Secretariat and ARF Chair to attend all future EEP meetings.

**Summary of Discussions**

3. Co-Chairs Ralph Cossa and Mohamed Jawhar provided welcoming remarks. They each noted the "long slow journey" of the EEPs and outlined objectives of this meeting: to better understand the role and objectives of the EEPs, expectations of them by the ARF, and ways to increase the effectiveness and utility of the EEPs. Frustration was expressed over the lack of feedback from the ARF as regards reactions and/or actions taken in response to previous EEP recommendations.
4. Co-Chairs underscored the need for the EEPs (and all attendees) to speak in their private capacities. Given the diversity of views among ARF participants and their EEPs, a good benchmark is that the EEPs "move at a speed comfortable to none." It was proposed that EEPs should follow an action-oriented, issue-specific, results-based approach.
5. The group convened in plenary sessions throughout the meeting. Topics included: a review of ARF and EEPs' work on Preventive Diplomacy (PD); next steps for the ARF regarding PD; future direction of the ARF; and future roles of the EEPs. The agenda is attached as Annex 2. Each session began with preliminary remarks by participants who volunteered to speak. They were followed by open discussion among the EEPs.
6. Findings and recommendations:
  - 6.1 The EEPs encouraged the ARF to continue moving forward on PD, building on the ARF Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan. To do so, the ARF should consider:

- establishing nonviolent resolution of conflict as a central organizing principle that all members are expected to abide by within the region;
- establishing mutual support in response to crises as a regional expectation;
- identifying circumstances where the ARF should engage in operational PD measures;
- establishing specific PD roles for the ARF Chair, ASEAN Troika, and EEPs.

The EEPs also encouraged open publication and broader distribution of the “Joint Study on Best Practices and Lessons Learned in Preventive Diplomacy” commissioned by the ARF in 2008.

6.2 The EEPs applauded the ARF for adopting a standardized format for its Annual Security Outlook (ASO) and encouraged all ARF participants to produce annual reports in a timely manner so that the ASO could serve as a useful vehicle for identifying shared and divergent security concerns and potentially as an early warning mechanism to determine potential hotspots that might lend themselves to PD.

6.3 The EEPs understood the value of the ARF’s initial focus on non-traditional security challenges as a means of building habits of cooperation but also encouraged the ARF to move toward a discussion of more traditional security challenges that were more likely to be a cause of instability or potential conflict. If tasked by the ARF, the EEPs could help identify potential flashpoints of instability in the region and examine ways that PD measures could be applied to reduce the prospects of conflict.

6.4 Other potential roles for the EEPs included: identifying issues of common concern that could benefit from fact-finding missions along with the conduct of such missions if/as desired by the ARF; conducting deeper analysis of ASO submissions to identify common security concerns and potential hotspots; serving as resource persons at ISG and ISM sessions; and identifying and better defining the tools of PD and how they can best be applied in the Asia-Pacific region. Generally speaking, EEPs’ believe their participation in the Timor-Leste Election Observer Mission represented an important step forward for the ARF in moving toward a PD mission, although a few ARF members have different opinions of this activity. The EEPs encouraged more such missions, which would also serve to better develop monitoring expertise within the EEPs and ARF in general.

6.4.1 The EEPs are also prepared to do an assessment of the ARF and its progress to date after 20 years as part of the next EEPs agenda if desired by the ARF Ministers.

6.5 The EEPs noted and supported proposals being considered by the ARF to explore PD training and considered that EEPs should be involved in this process.

6.6 The ARF ISG on CBMs and PD is also encouraged to conduct case studies examining PD efforts undertaken by regional states and by ASEAN in an attempt to identify lessons learned that would apply to the conduct of PD by the ARF. The Aceh negotiations, the mediation efforts for the conflicts in southern Philippines and southern Thailand, the Six-Party Talks, and the various attempts to resolve the territorial dispute between Cambodia and Thailand are among the PD efforts (successful and otherwise) that might generate useful lessons learned for the future.

- 6.7 The EEPs noted that although as a forum the ARF has not undertaken any PD efforts for conflict situations yet, the ARF could learn from the many PD efforts already undertaken by ASEAN and individual ARF participants/ASEAN Member States, including those mentioned directly above.
- 6.8 The EEPs encouraged the ASEAN countries and China to continue making progress in implementing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and underscored the importance of reaching an agreement on a Code of Conduct.
- 7 At the request of the representative of the ARF Chair, the EEPs also carefully examined the “Discussion Paper on Moving toward Preventive Diplomacy” and provided a number of substantive recommendations for additions and edits to the current draft for consideration by its authors. EEPs appreciated the opportunity to comment on this draft and see the vetting of draft discussion papers, memorandums, action plans, etc., as another useful role for the EEPs.
- 8 The EEPs were encouraged by the support expressed in the Chairman’s Statement of the 19<sup>th</sup> ARF for the EEPs’ role in providing “visionary recommendations” at the track 1.5 level and by the Ministers’ willingness to explore the possibility for the EEPs to attend relevant ISM and ISG meetings as appropriate. Such attendance would facilitate interaction between the EEPs and the ARF, as would the EEPs’ participation in the ARF SOM and/or Ministerial. ARF participants were also encouraged to invite their respective EEPs to participate in ISG/ISMs as resource persons.
- 9 The EEPs applauded the efforts to identify and manage the overlap between the ARF and other ASEAN-driven mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus), and ASEAN Plus Three (APT), as well as with other forums such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meeting and other APEC gatherings. More remains to be done, however, to further eliminate overlap and clarify respective roles and missions among these initiatives and also between the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and other cooperative economic and trade initiatives. Studying how other regions in the world manage overlapping institutions might prove useful.
- 10 The EEP procedures and next steps:
- 10.1 The EEPs were pleasantly surprised to discover that the ARFNet Web Site had a page devoted to EEP Publications and will develop criteria for posting publications on this currently blank page. At a minimum, contents should include the Chairmen’s Summaries from all ARF EEPs meetings along with discussion papers or presentations made at these meetings. This could facilitate a review of the status of all EEPs’ recommendations to date. The ARFNet could be further enhanced by posting a readily accessible updated listing of the ARF EEPs with contact information and biographical data. ARF participating states are encouraged to provide an updated contact list of EEPs to the ARF unit for uploading to the website.

- 10.2 The EEPs discussed a number of other procedural steps that could be taken relative to the more effective utilization of the EEPs. These included: further development of an EEP page on the ARF web site; establishment of EEP committees to focus on specific research tasks; the EEPs' participation in ARF activities to ensure greater feedback and responsiveness; greater interaction between the EEPs and other regional Expert Groups and Track 2 organizations such as the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) and the EEP outreach programs to raise awareness of EEP activities. (A public panel session was held involving selected EEPs and involving over 100 members of the local Honolulu community at the end of this year's ARF EEPs Meeting.)
- 10.3 The EEPs endorsed the procedure instituted last year which calls for overlapping two year terms for the ARF EEP Co-Chairs and welcomed Malaysia to continue on as the 2014 ASEAN Co-Chair. The EU (Finland) has expressed interest in serving as the non-ASEAN Co-Chair and a few other EEPs expressed interest pending consultations with their respective foreign ministries.
- 10.4 The next meeting of the ARF EEPs is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2014 in Malaysia. The Malaysian Co-Chair will take the lead in developing the agenda with a careful eye toward guidance and recommendations emanating from the 20<sup>th</sup> ARF meeting.
- 11 Understanding that resource constraints are an important factor, the EEPs nonetheless repeated their recommendation, echoed in the Best Practices Joint Study, for an expanded ARF Unit to help facilitate the ARF's move toward PD and to help ensure greater integration of the EEPs recommendations into the ARF deliberation process.
- 12 The EEPs noted that the EEPs would like to have clear direction from the ARF regarding the contribution that would be most valued and relevant to the ARF. In this regard it hoped that the forthcoming ARF meeting would consider and give priority to concrete tasks for the EEPs to work on in the period ahead.
- 13 The EEPs expressed appreciation to the Co-Chairs for facilitating a frank and open discussion and thanked the government of the United States and the Pacific Forum CSIS for the excellent arrangements and hospitality extended to all participants.