

**SUMMARY REPORT
THE ELEVENTH ARF SECURITY POLICY CONFERENCE
YANGON, MYANMAR, 8 JUNE 2014**

1. The Eleventh ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) was convened in Yangon, Myanmar on 8 June 2014. The Conference was chaired by Commodore Aung Thaw, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

2. Representatives from the Ministry of Defence of all ARF participants except Bangladesh, Canada, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste attended the Conference. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat were also present. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX A**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING REMARKS

3. In his opening remarks, Commodore Aung Thaw welcomed all delegates to Myanmar and expressed his appreciation for the support of the ARF participants in the preparation and convening of the ASPC. He underscored that the ASPC is an important venue to promote synergy between the ARF and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). He was confident that these existing platforms help in promoting trust and building confidence among countries in the region. He believed that the views expressed in the Conference would shape the future of security in the Asia Pacific and subsequently, the national security policies of the ARF participants. His opening remarks appear as **ANNEX B**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4. The Conference adopted the Provisional Agenda which appears as **ANNEX C**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SITUATION

5. The Conference viewed that the ASPC has contributed to facilitating dialogue and promoting confidence among the regional defence forces since its inception in 2004. The Conference also acknowledged the unique role of the ARF in promoting confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy on priority issues, such as disaster relief, counter-terrorism, maritime security, and non-proliferation and disarmament. The Conference reaffirmed that the ARF has the potential in tackling non-traditional security challenges through cross-cooperation among different national agencies.

6. The Conference recognised that the regional security environment has become more complex with more prevalent signs of trust deficit. At the same time, the Conference viewed that irrespective of the current landscape, the Asia Pacific region remains conducive for economic developments. The Conference highlighted several regional security issues, such as strategic geopolitical tensions, disputes over territorial sovereignty and overlapping claims of maritime domain, as well as non-traditional security challenges such as terrorism, piracy, maritime security, natural and made-made disaster, trafficking of illicit drugs, human security, communicable diseases, and border security. The width and depth of the security issues facing the region pose serious challenges to relations among countries as well as to domestic stability.

7. While acknowledging the ever evolving dynamics of the region, the Conference was of the view that the challenges have presented opportunities for countries in the region to work together. The Conference noted the average of 3% increase of military budget throughout the Asian region that could indicate the growing assertiveness of the defence establishment in addressing current security challenges. The Conference concurred that it requires a sustained commitment from countries in the region to cooperate with the view of maintaining peace and security. The Conference noted the suggestion of narrowing the capability gap among defence establishments of countries in support of the ongoing efforts to tackle regional security challenges.

8. The Conference exchanged views on the recent developments in the South China Sea. Concerns were raised on the use of force and threats, that tend to raise tensions in the region. The Conference reiterated its support for maintaining peace, security, adherence to international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Conference encouraged ASEAN and China to pursue peaceful diplomatic dialogue to resolve the disputes under the framework of the DOC.

9. The Conference exchanged views on the recent developments in the Korean Peninsula. Some participants expressed apprehension towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's provocative actions that destabilise the entire region and incite an arms race among countries in the region. The Conference noted the calls for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the negotiation table in the Six-Party Talks. Some participants encouraged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to abide by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), and also supported to put into practice the noting of maximum self-restraint.

10. The Conference emphasised that defence establishments and armed forces in the region should strengthen communication, address each other's reasonable concerns, accumulate mutual trust through exchanges, and deepen mutual benefit through cooperation so as to jointly play a constructive role in maintaining regional peace. The Conference expressed its view that existing

mechanisms such as the ARF, the ADMM-Plus, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), should be utilised in this endeavour. In this regard, the Conference took note of the suggestion for a security concept in Asia with the core content of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. The Conference concurred that in the spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation, defence establishments should support the peaceful resolution of disputes in the region. Several past successful cases of peaceful dispute resolution in the ASEAN region were cited in this respect.

11. The Conference also noted views and concerns on the developments in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

12. The Conference welcomed the outcomes of the 13th Shangri-La Dialogue from 30 May – 1 June 2014 and the Seoul Defense Dialogue on 11-13 November 2013.

13. Australia, Singapore, China, Cambodia, Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Viet Nam, the United States, and Myanmar presented their views on the regional and international security situation. The presentations appear as **ANNEXES D, E, F, G, H, I, J and K.**

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARMED FORCES IN RESPONSE TO TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

14. The Conference discussed defence policies in response to traditional security challenges such as border and territorial disputes as well as non-traditional security challenges such as terrorism, piracy and armed robbery at sea, and natural disasters. The Conference recognised that robust cooperation is essential in addressing contemporary security challenges since no single country can address these challenges on its own. The lessons learned from the Typhoon Haiyan relief and recovery efforts, and the search and rescue operations for Malaysian Airlines flight 370 serve as cases in point.

15. The Conference underlined the interdependency among countries in the region in the realm of security and the notion that the region's security is the results of countries' collective efforts. The Conference shared the view that the peaceful environment has been a significant factor in the economic development and growth of many countries in the region.

16. The Conference suggested approaches to promote cooperation among armed forces in the region, namely, promotion of transparency in strategic security policy; dialogue and practical cooperation; and constructive engagement in the regional security architecture. Calls to refrain from provocations and pulling factors in resolving differences and commitment towards peaceful resolution through dialogue and cooperation were reiterated throughout the discussion. The Conference affirmed that trust is the key contribution of the armed forces.

Unimpeded communications of armed forces between countries such as the establishment of a direct communications link among ASEAN member states, approved by the Eighth ADMM can contribute significantly to confidence-building and diffuse tensions and confrontations.

17. The Conference discussed the evolution of the roles of the armed forces from its core function to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a nation to include a supporting role in addressing non-traditional security challenges. The Conference acknowledged that the armed forces of today have to undertake a wide array of responsibilities in order to respond to traditional and non-traditional security challenges. The ability of the armed forces to respond to these challenges in the lead or supporting role depends on the armed forces' mandate and operational readiness.

18. The Conference acknowledged the participation of and contributions by the armed forces of ARF participants to United Nations peacekeeping missions, international humanitarian missions, and joint counter-piracy patrols. These operations demonstrate the commitment of the armed forces in addressing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges as well as provide the opportunity for military units to work cooperatively and maintain their operational readiness.

19. The Conference discussed several constraints in the armed forces' involvement in addressing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, namely the political will of the national leadership, the legality of activities conducted by the armed forces, social constraints such as centuries-old animosity among belligerents that create significant barriers for defence cooperation, and the economic health of country which translates into availability of operational budget. Other issues such as lack of clarity in the mandate of the armed forces in conducting non-traditional security operations and the armed forces' established skills and doctrines that limit the use of capabilities and assets in non-traditional security issues were also identified as challenges facing the armed forces in dealing with non-traditional security issues. The Conference stressed that the expansion of the roles of the armed forces should be undertaken in accordance to the rules of law to prevent any illegitimate actions that could jeopardise the situation.

20. The Conference observed that within the sphere of non-traditional security, most armed forces play a supporting role to civilian law enforcement agencies. Some participants shared their armed forces' experiences in operations to curb piracy, to counter terrorist attacks and to respond to large scale disasters in the domestic and regional levels. In this context, the Conference highlighted the need for capacity-building of defence and armed forces to respond to common security challenges.

21. The Conference attached significant importance to the defence multilateral engagement through the ARF process. The Conference recognised the unique niche of the ARF to promote practical cooperation among different agencies in security arena. Such an advantage should be further reinforced by sufficient resources, time and commitment by the ARF participants to materialise.

22. Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan and Myanmar presented their views to the Conference on the Contribution of the Armed Forces in Response to Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Challenges. The briefing papers appear as **ANNEXES L, M, N, O, P, Q and R.**

AGENDA ITEM 5: BRIEFING ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE 8TH ADMM

23. Myanmar briefed the Conference on the outcomes of the 8th ADMM, which was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 20 May 2014. The briefing appears as **ANNEX S.**

AGENDA ITEM 6: OTHER MATTERS

24. The United States informed the Conference of the convening of the ARF Workshop on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response in Manila on 26-28 August 2014, co-chaired with the Philippines, and the proposed ARF Workshop on Multi-year Strategic Exercise Plan, co-chaired with Malaysia and Australia to be implemented in the next inter-sessional year.

AGENDA ITEM 7: CLOSING REMARKS

25. In his closing remarks, Commodore Aung Thaw summarised the outcomes of the discussion. He recognised that although ARF participants have diverse views and perspectives, they shared one common objective of a stable and secure Asia Pacific region. He wished all the ARF participants a safe return home. The closing remarks appear as **ANNEX T.**

26. The Conference commended the participants for a frank and fruitful discussion and thanked the Government of Myanmar for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality provided for the Conference.

■ ■ ■