SUMMARY REPORT

THE FIFTEENTH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SECURITY POLICY CONFERENCE

Singapore, 4 June 2018

1.   The Fifteenth ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Security Policy Conference (15th ASPC) was convened in Singapore on 4 June 2018. The Conference was chaired by Mr. Chan Yeng Kit, Permanent Secretary for Defence, Singapore and was attended by representatives from all ARF Member States except the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka. Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat were also in attendance. The List of participants appears as **ANNEX 1**.

AGENDA ITEM 1:   CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

2.   In his Opening Remarks, the Chair welcomed all delegates and stressed the importance of the ASPC as a confidence-building measure for ARF defence establishments to promote trust and mutual understanding. The Chair noted that the ASPC provided a platform for open dialogue and exchange of views among ARF Member States, and the issues being tabled for discussion at the Conference were pertinent security challenges that required all countries to collaborate and cooperate to maintain regional peace and stability. The Chair further expressed hope for a productive and fruitful discussion on ways to strengthen the regional security architecture and to address transboundary security challenges.

AGENDA ITEM 2:   ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3.   The Conference adopted the Provisional Agenda, which appears as **ANNEX 2**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

a. Maintaining a Rules-based Regional Order

4. The Conference was of the view that the Asia-Pacific region remained generally stable although a myriad of unprecedented security challenges including terrorism, violent extremism and cyberattacks continued to threaten the region's peace and stability. Such challenges are far too complex for one country to tackle alone and the Conference opined that bilateral and multilateral collaboration and cooperation are needed to effectively address these challenges.

5. The Conference reiterated that respect for the rule of law is the foundation of successful multilateralism as laws and norms guide relations among states. This would prevent misunderstanding, allow for peaceful resolution of differences and safeguard the stability, security and prosperity of the region. Recognising that ASEAN had provided a multilateral forum to promote peace and understanding, foster dialogue and mutual trust as well as promote economic growth in the region, the Conference further reaffirmed support to strengthen cooperation in ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), ARF and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting(ADMM)-Plus. The Conference further touched upon the recent developments in the South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula, and expressed hope for the early conclusion of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and was encouraged by the ongoing efforts to strengthen inter-Korean relationship.

b. Regional and Sub-regional Initiatives

6. The Conference exchanged views on the various transnational maritime security challenges in the region such as piracy and armed robbery at sea. On this note, the Conference acknowledged that the various regional and sub-regional initiatives including the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangements, and the Malacca Strait Patrols continued to successfully safeguard the region's overall maritime security. It was further noted that these initiatives also improved interoperability, promoted intelligence-sharing and increased confidence-building and trust among law enforcement agencies in the region.

7. The Conference further underlined the critical role of multilateral initiatives in maintaining peace and stability in the region, and was of the view that sub-regional cooperation and initiatives should be conducted in the spirit of complementarity. The Conference noted that various ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ARF, EAS and the ADMM-Plus remained successful platforms for dialogue, capacity building and promoting mutual trust. In the same vein, the Conference was of the view that fora such as the Shangri-La Dialogue, Xiangshan Forum, Moscow Conference on International Security, and the Seoul Defense Dialogue are useful platforms that

promoted dialogue between key stakeholders to foster mutual trust and understanding on ways to collectively address pertinent regional security challenges.

c. Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and Indian Ocean Region

8.   The Conference agreed that the geopolitical environment is becoming increasingly complex. While some Member States expressed support and commitment to the concept of "FOIP", other expressed a preference to continue using the nomenclature "Asia-Pacific". This notwithstanding, the Conference emphasised that it is important to maintain an open and inclusive regional security architecture with ASEAN at the centre. The Conference also commended the ADMM-Plus as an important platform that facilitated military-to-military practical cooperation, and welcomed initiatives that encouraged different key stakeholders to work together to address pertinent regional security challenges. The Conference further underscored the importance of maintaining a rules-based regional security order undergirded by principles of international law including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

AGENDA ITEM 4: EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND CHALLENGES TO DEFENCE AND SECURITY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

a. Briefing and Q&A by Dr. Collin Koh, Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore

9.   Dr. Koh delivered a presentation on "Disruptive Innovation and Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific". The presentation highlighted that while technological advancements such as underwater communication cables and Global Positioning System (GPS) system have contributed to the economic development, political and social stability in the region, they could constitute a set of hybrid threats, particularly to maritime security. Noting that some technological equipment can now be easily acquired at a relatively low cost, Dr. Koh noted that this could inadvertently lead to an increase in potential misuse. For example, the rise of low-level technology such as home-built GPS spoofing capabilities could disrupt marine navigational safety, particularly in areas with dense maritime traffic. The development of Additive Manufacturing (AM) or 3-dimensional (3D) printers, which have seen an increase by 26% over the past few years, have allowed individuals to manufacture equipment/tools at a significantly cheaper and faster rate compared to traditional manufacturing.

10.   Dr. Koh further outlined that the security implications of such technological advancements were significant as violent extremist groups or individuals may now have the means to download software to design and produce polymer materials such

as printed weapons, unmanned drones and jamming devices to cause mass disruption. The ease of acquiring these equipment have sidestepped transactions related to weapon sales and other material acquisition which in turn would hinder the detection and tracking of illicit activities. On this note, Dr. Koh underscored the need for multi-stakeholder and whole-of-government approach focused on prevention and cost mitigation. Dr. Koh also said that it is important to enhance existing framework for maritime situational awareness, as well as strengthen information-sharing, and intelligence exchange to better confront emerging maritime hybrid threats. Dr. Koh's presentation appears as **ANNEX 3.**

b.   Hybrid Threats

11.   The European Union (EU) briefed the Conference on emerging trends in hybrid threats and the EU's approach in addressing such threats. It was underlined that a threat can be considered as a hybrid threat when used as part of a strategy, with society as the main target. The Conference noted that there was a direct link between ungovernable spaces (including data and cyber space) and security risks. Therefore, understanding geopolitics and dynamics of the region as well as adherence to the rule of law would be necessary. The Conference further noted that the EU was addressing the issue of hybrid threats through four areas namely: (i) improvement of situational awareness and early warning systems; (ii) cyber diplomatic tool box; (iii) crisis response; and (iv) building resilience and response.

12.   It was further underlined that in building resilience against hybrid threats, States were required to recognise and share their vulnerabilities in order to identify common steps to counter and prevent such threats. In addition, swift decision-making at the political level was also needed to deter hybrid threats. Taking this into consideration, a high degree of mutual trust was needed to address hybrid threats at the multilateral level. The EU's presentation appears as **ANNEX 4.**

c.   Disruptive Technologies and Emerging Challenges to Defence and Security

13.   The Conference noted Japan and the United States' presentations on the current trends of disruptive technologies and their efforts at countering these challenges. In addressing emerging technological challenges, it was noted that Japan's Ministry of Defense had published three strategic documents: (i) Japan Defense Technology Strategy (JDTS) which described the basic policy on science and technology for defence; (ii) Medium-to-Long Term Defense Technology Outlook (DTO) which forecasted technological areas to be enhanced for the next 20 years; and (iii) Technology Research and Development Vision for Unmanned Equipment which provided a concept for future defense equipment and a road map for Research and Development (R&D). It was highlighted that the DTO focused on the

need to enhance efforts on: (i) Unmanned Technology to reduce functional and performance restrictions of manned system, (ii) Smart and Network Technology focused on the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to process large data and enhance threat prediction, (iii) High-Power Energy Technology to counter saturation attacks by missiles, and (iv) the improvement of the function and performance of existing systems. Recognising that technological advancements could also have disruptive potential, Japan concluded several agreements with other countries to ensure strict control against extra-purpose use and transfer of technology to third parties.

14.   The Conference also noted that the accelerating pace of technological development, intricacy between State and non-state actors, the shifting economic power as well as proliferation of information have all contributed to the increasingly complex nature of threats. The Conference also noted that Governments no longer remained as the largest R&D entity as the market was now driven by global companies. On this note, the United States established the Office of Naval Research (ONR) which focused on monitoring science and technology development and connecting researchers across the globe with researchers in the United States. The objectives of the ONR were to discover the best science and technology aligned with naval needs, maintain global awareness to ensure proper allocation of resources and to identify emerging disruptive technologies, as well as to build partnerships and collaboration to accelerate research for mutual benefit. Japan and United States' presentations appear as **ANNEX 5 and 6, respectively.**

d.   Emerging Challenges such as Cyber Threats

15.   The Philippines briefed the Conference on emerging cyber threats and their connection to other transnational crimes, including financial frauds and money laundering, cyber espionage, and cyber-attacks. It was recognised that cyber technology continued to advance at a rate that cannot be ignored as online connectivity had now been transformed from a luxury to a necessity. As the world became more dependent on ICTs, our vulnerability to cyber-attacks also increased inadvertently. Occurrences of cyber terrorism, cyber crimes and cyber espionage continued to increase and posed serious threats to the peace and security of the region. Cyber criminals and terrorist have used the cyber domain to engage in illegitimate transactions, recruitment and propaganda activities, as well as conduct targeted attacks toward critical infrastructures such as finance, service, and manufacturing industries. Cyber terrorists have also been reported to disrupt air traffic control and large ship navigation systems. As these activities were not limited to geographical boundaries and often anonymous in nature, there is now a pressing need to strengthen cyber defence capacity and capabilities and increase exchange of information and collaboration.

16.   Recognising that a whole-of-government endeavour would be necessary, the Philippines formulated the 2022 National Cyber Security Plan aimed at mitigating and preventing risks and threats. The Philippines also launched the Cybercrime Prevention Act in 2012 to establish a legal regime for online transactions. The Conference also noted that the Philippines was co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Cyber Security (EWG-CS) with New Zealand. The Conference noted that the ADMM-Plus EWG-CS held in May 2018 discussed confidence-building measures such as: (i) the creation of Points-of-Contacts (POCs), (ii) development of an online platform for information sharing and politics and best practices, (iii) conduct of multilateral trainings and exercises, and (iv) establishment of cyber security centers. The next EWG-CS would be held in November 2018 and a Table Top Exercise was scheduled to be held in 2019. Recognising the need to complement and synergise efforts, the Philippines also invited representatives from other ICT-related sectoral bodies such as the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting (ISM) on ICT and Seoul Defense Dialogue Cyber Working Group, among others, to discuss similar initiatives for optimal utilisation of resources. The Philippines' presentation appears as **ANNEX 7.**

> **e.   Emerging Challenges such as Chemical, Biological and Radiological Threats**

17.   Viet Nam briefed the Conference on the adverse consequences of proliferation of chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) weapons. It was noted that many transnational organised crime groups, terrorists and non-state actors employed high-tech equipment such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), remote control vehicles as well as shipping containers to transport CBR materials. These sophisticated smuggling methods pose a challenge for authorities to detect, intercept and prosecute perpetrators. Furthermore, it was observed that these organisations are extending their operations to move across borders and recruit more members to carry out CBR attacks. Perpetrators were also able to conduct their own research to produce CBR substances and sell these substances in the black market or internet.

18.   The Conference noted Viet Nam's views that international cooperation on the following three pillars could be considered: (i) Information sharing on the purchase, sales and transportation, and usage of CBR substances; (ii) implementation of a programme to prevent unauthorised distribution of CBR material, and (iii) enhancement of the capability of functional agencies to prevent trafficking of CBR substances. Countries could also strengthen cooperation on assessment and analysis of threats, to raise awareness and improve the capabilities and capacities of law enforcement agencies. At the national level, inter-agency and inter-department cooperation should also be strengthened. The Conference further noted that Viet Nam had actively participated in international cooperation on the mitigation of CBR including through participation in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical

Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) to undertake initiatives to respond and mitigate threats of illegal CBR trade.

19.   The Conference noted that the implications of such threats covered all aspects of social conditions i.e., political, cultural, and economic conditions. There was therefore a pressing need to strengthen cooperation and collaboration to address these challenges. In addition, it was recognised that the growing misuse of technology by non-state actors required collective effort and that a whole-of-government approach and comprehensive public-private partnership was needed to mitigate and prevent this threat.

AGENDA ITEM 5:   UPDATE ON THE PHILIPPINES' PROPOSAL TO MERGE THE ARF DEFENCE OFFICIALS' DIALOGUE AND THE ASPC

20.   The Conference was updated on the discussions at the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue (DOD) in Auckland in May 2018 regarding the Philippines' proposal to merge the ARF DOD and the ASPC into the ARF Defence and Security Policy Conference (ADSPC). The Conference noted that the ARF DOD did not reach consensus on the Philippines' proposal, and agreed to maintain the status quo of conducting one ARF DOD and one ASPC until Member States were ready to revisit the Philippines' proposal subsequently.

AGENDA ITEM 6:   CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

21.   In his Closing Remarks, the Chair expressed appreciation to all ARF Member States for their active contribution and support rendered towards the Conference. He reiterated that the robust exchange of ideas had provided valuable insights which contributed to the success of the Conference and enhanced regional peace and security.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

22.   The Conference expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Chair for the effective chairmanship and as well as for their hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

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