**REPORT ON THE
ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM DEFENCE OFFICIALS' DIALOGUE**

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam
22 May 2013

**Introduction**

1.      The ASEAN Regional Forum Defence Officials' Dialogue (ARF DOD) was convened in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam on 22 May 2013. The Dialogue was chaired by Haji Adi Ihram Dato Paduka Haji Mahmud, Acting Director of Defence Policy, Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam. Representatives from the Ministry of Defence of all ARF participants, except Mongolia, Russia and Sri Lanka, attended the Dialogue. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat were also present. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX A**.

**Agenda Item 1: Opening Remarks**

2.      At the outset, the Chair extended his heartfelt condolences to the USA for the loss of lives and damages caused by the recent tornado that hit Oklahoma City. He welcomed the delegates to the Dialogue, and highlighted the theme of this time's Dialogue, namely The Impact of Social Media on Defence and Security. He commented on the role of social media as an indispensable tool for social change and a "weapon of mass mobilization". He also pointed out the advantages of social media and the challenges it poses to the formulation of national defence and security policy, particularly the importance of clarifying the security concerns derived from the use of social media and developing guidelines for the conduct of military officials in social media networks.

**Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Agenda**

3.      The Dialogue adopted the agenda as at **ANNEX B**.

**Agenda Item 3: The Impact of Social Media on Defence And Security**

Topic 1: Defence Policy on the Role and Use of Social Media

4.      The Dialogue acknowledged the widespread of the use of social media by the defence and military establishments. Some ARF participants recalled that at the initial stage of the use of social media, the first reaction of the defence and military establishments was on how to curb social media from being used. The Dialogue highlighted that social media has both advantages and disadvantages to the defence and military establishments. The Dialogue highlighted the use of social media to

engage the media, dissemination of official information for defence personnel, public outreach and consultations on defence policies, activities and emergency/disaster information updates, and coordination of overseas crisis and military operations and missions.

5.      The Dialogue noted several principles that may be applied in the use of social media by the defence and military personnel, namely transparency, inclusiveness, respect, responsibility, accountability and do-no-harm. A number of best practices and standard operation procedures in the utilisation of social media by the defence and military personnel, such as compliance with national policies, ensuring legal review, development of rules of engagement, conduct of evaluation and engagement, and provision of guidance for the defence and military personnel, were mentioned.

6.      The Dialogue exchanged information on national policies on the use of social media for the defence personnel. In some ARF participants, social media policies attempt to address the issue of misuse of social media in a broad and encompassing manner. In some cases, the national policies impose the restriction in the use of social media for the defence and military personnel who are on overseas missions in view of protecting their family members. Such policies are implemented without the intention to ban the defence and military personnel from using the social media.

7.      The Dialogue discussed the challenges in the implementation of the national policies on social media. Defence-related sites such as defence alumni Websites and military unit's Facebook pages were identified as being prone to attacks by irresponsible individuals. The Dialogue noted the challenge to maintain the balance of the use of social media and the Internet by the defence and military establishments. While the Internet provides real-time important information for the defence and military establishments, it poses the risk of breach of classified defence and security information. The responses by the defence and military establishments to inappropriate information and remarks posted in their social media sites were also discussed.

8.      The Dialogue was of the view that the national response to the inappropriate use of social media requires application of a wide-breadth of national laws and regulations such as overall security instructions of the armed forces, the rules of cooperation security, guidance on the Internet communication, authorised use of computer system in the armed forces, and humanitarian law and civil and criminal law. In addition, engagement with other relevant stakeholders and international partners in promoting public awareness on the national law and regulations on social media was also mentioned. In the context of the defence and military establishment, national policies on the use of social media by the defence and military

personel are introduced since the early stage of the training of the personnel. The use of Facebook and Twitter smart card was mentioned by some participants.

9.  The Dialogue discussed the widespread use of social media by the younger, more Internet-savvy generation. This emphasises the importance of engaging social media to attract and maintain the interest of the younger generation in defence and military-related matters as well as to recruit the next generation of military officers. Participants shared their experiences in engaging the younger generation through popular social media sites such as Facebook, Weibo, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr.

10. Australia, Canada, the EU, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore and the US presented their national experiences. The presentations appear as **ANNEX C**.

Topic 2: Challenges and International Best Practices

11. The Dialogue recalled the statistic figure of utilisation of social media by countries in the Asia-Pacific and highlighted the risks posed by the utilisation of social media. Cases of leaking of classified military information through social media were mentioned. Some ARF participants admitted the slow response of the defence and military establishment in responding to misuse of social media.

12. The Dialogue identified the threats to national security instigated by the use of social media against the national policies, such as the use of social media by terrorist groups, negative public opinion and sentiment shaping, hacking of personal account, propaganda, blackmail, etc.

13. The Dialogue noted possible approaches to address misuse of social media by the defence and military personnel, including the following:
    - Clear and established social media policies can reduce communication blunders and minimise damage if they occur.
    - Training and awareness in the use of social media by the defence and military personnel should be conducted at all levels of the organisation structure.
    - Well-guided utilisation of social media could help promote its benefits in improving communication within military services, boost morale, drive recruitment and help public relations.
    - The social media policies of the defence and military establishments should be in conformity with the commander's programme.
    - A team to monitor the utilisation of social media by the defence and military personnel should be created within the defence and military establishments.

14. The Dialogue exchanged views and national experiences on the use of social media, and national defence policy on cyberspace and social media. The Dialogue noted the differences between developing a general policy on cyberspace and a specific policy on social media. The Dialogue also noted concerns raised by some ARF participants on the different capacities and resources of the ARF participants in addressing the challenges posed by the social media.

15. Brunei Darussalam, China, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and Viet Nam presented their national experiences. The presentations appear as **ANNEX D**.

## Agenda Item 4: Voluntary Briefing

16. The Dialogue noted China's briefing on their 8th Defence White Paper. China informed the Dialogue that its government has published seven Defence White Papers since 1998. The publication features China's perception of the overall international security, policy and principles of diversified employment of armed forces, and the main practice of the diversified employment of armed forces. In view of enhancing transparency, the White Paper has for the first time made public the size of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) mobile operational units and specific number of the combined corps, the size of the navy and the air force as well as the names of its ballistic and cruise missiles. The presentation appears as **ANNEX E**.

## Agenda Item 5: Other Matters

17. The Dialogue noted the briefing by the Philippines and the US on the proposal for the ARF project on Cross-Sectoral Security Cooperation on Bio Preparedness and Disaster Response, to be co-chaired by the Philippines and the US. The briefing explained the background and the past ARF works that have given the impetus to this proposal. The ARF participants are invited to be co-sponsors of this project. The proposal will be submitted to the ASEAN Regional Forum Senior Officials' Meeting (ARF SOM) for further consideration. The draft Concept Paper appears as **ANNEX F**.

## Agenda Item 6: Closing Remarks

18.  In his closing remarks, the Chair summarised the outcomes of the discussion. He underscored that the impact of social media to the defence and military establishment has created unexpected organisational change, which requires an effective response to mitigate the risk and harness the activities. He concluded his remarks by expressing his appreciation to the ARF participants for their active participation and contribution to the Dialogue.

19.  The Dialogue expressed appreciation to the Government of Brunei Darussalam for the excellent arrangements and the warm hospitality extended to all ARF participants.