



SUMMARY REPORT

THE SIXTEENTH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SECURITY POLICY CONFERENCE

Bangkok, Thailand, 23 May 2019

1. The Sixteenth ARF Security Policy Conference (16th ASPC) was chaired by General Natt Intracharoen, Permanent Secretary for Defence of Thailand and was attended by representatives from all ARF Participants except China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. 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 extended appreciation to all delegates for being a central part of moving forward the defence and security cooperation in the region, and also for supporting Thailand's chairmanship. The Chair congratulated Japan for the accession of Emperor Naruhito to the throne, marking the beginning of Japan's new era; and extended condolences and sympathy to the victims and families of the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka and New Zealand. He highlighted that the current security threats in the Asia-Pacific region are transboundary and increasing in frequency and severity, and that increasing connectivity and technology advancement has also made them more complex and unpredictable. Cooperation and coordination among countries in the region to collectively address the threats in a sustainable manner have increasingly become a necessity. The Chair expressed hope that the discussions will provide an opportunity for the participants to exchange experience and perspectives towards upholding peace, stability and security in the Asia-Pacific region.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

AGENDA ITEM 3: SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

3.1 Maritime Security: Challenges and Opportunities

4. The Conference noted that maritime security challenges have become a core concern among countries in the Asia Pacific region. Enhanced maritime cooperation is required to promote security, stability and prosperity in the region. Moreover, safe and secure Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) are essential to enhance maritime connectivity in the region which helps drive maritime commerce. Proactive actions and measures are needed to deter and address transnational crimes at sea, including piracy and armed robbery. Other maritime issues such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which brings about security implications also calls for closer cooperation.

5. The Republic of Korea (ROK) and Australia highlighted the increasingly complex security challenges in the maritime domain, posed by terrorism, natural disasters including extreme weather events, illegal fishing, piracy, the smuggling of drugs, people and goods, and the looming security challenges of climate change. Moreover, maritime border disputes remain sources of tension given that terrorists and criminals are using relatively porous maritime borders as their transportation routes. The Conference noted that security cooperation in the maritime domain remains limited, even during this time when economic interdependence among countries are expanding and intensifying. To address this issue, the ROK and Australia were of the view that maritime peace and security could be achieved if there was awareness to change competition at sea into cooperation. The Conference underscored that there is a need to establish a rules-based maritime order in which all states adhere to international law and norms, respect freedom of navigation and overflight, ensure peaceful resolution of disputes, non-militarisation of the shared maritime domain, and restrain from unilateral actions that could cause or escalate tensions.

6. The Conference further noted the ROK's recommendations to reinforce maritime security capabilities and to build confidence, namely (i) efforts to promote multilateral security cooperation in various levels should be continued while raising maritime domain awareness; 2) efforts to address conflicts within established rules such as Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) should be continued; 3) information on non-traditional security threats should be shared through various measures such as expanding the function of the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) to enable early identification of regional threats; and 4) the joint participation for the protection of the SLOCs through international collaboration is needed in order to respond to increasing regional maritime terrorism and piracy.

7. Australia reiterated its commitment to establishing regional peace and stability, and in this regard encouraged peaceful resolution of disputes peacefully through

bilateral and multilateral engagements. The Conference noted that the Australia Defence Forces has organised international programmes on maritime security, including bilateral and multilateral military exercises, port visits, maritime surveillance operations, and ship transits. The Conference also took note that at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in 2018, the Australian Prime Minister announced a package of maritime capacity building initiatives, which focused on maritime law enforcement, law of the sea, IUU fishing, and maritime boundary delineation. Australia also reaffirmed commitment to practical defence cooperation through the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) framework and in this regard commended Singapore and the ROK's role in co-chairing the ADMM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security.

8. In general, the Conference highlighted the vital role of the ARF to promote common understanding of maritime issues and develop interoperability as well as to consolidate and systemise maritime domain awareness, alongside the ADMM-Plus and the East Asia Summit.

3.2 Transnational Crimes and Border Management

9. The Conference noted that regional integration has enhanced connectivity by land, sea and air amongst countries in the region, which makes the borders more vulnerable and susceptible to transnational crimes. Border management has therefore increasingly become an important area of cooperation to protect the region from transnational crimes and ensure safe and sustainable cross-border flows of trade, investment and peoples.

10. Viet Nam shared with the Conference that threats posed by both non-traditional and traditional security in the region have increased and become more active with diversified activities, such as drug trafficking. These threats transcend boundaries and therefore require strengthened cooperation among countries in the region, especially through ASEAN-led mechanisms. The Conference noted Viet Nam's efforts in its border management through the establishment of border checkpoints and protection of its national sovereignty at sea, led by the Viet Nam border guard force. Viet Nam has also enhanced its international cooperation in border management, which include the Viet Nam-China land border cooperation; the Viet Nam-China defence exchange programme, joint river patrol and joint exercise on pandemics; and other border exchange programmes, including the recent Greater Mekong Sub-Region joint exercise which Thailand and Myanmar joined for the first time. Viet Nam called for the strengthening of ASEAN-led defence cooperation in border management, in order to maintain peace and stability on land and at sea, and welcomed all participants to the 17th ASPC next year in Viet Nam.

11. The European Union (EU) outlined the ways in which Europe and Asia are inextricably linked given the many common threats and challenges the two regions

share in the domain of transnational crime and border management. The Conference was also introduced to Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency's work. While Frontex is a centre for border control activities at the EU's external borders, the EU representative highlighted how border control and mitigating the challenges of transnational crime is the responsibility of everyone including that of national industry players. The Conference also noted the need to have an integrated approach in combating transnational crimes while maintaining the international rules-based order and respecting existing code of conducts in managing borders.

3.3 Countering Terrorism, Radicalism and Violent Extremism

12. The Conference recognised the profound challenges which terrorism, violent extremism and radicalism continue to pose to regional security, and with it the need to strengthen cooperation and collaboration on, among others, law enforcement and measures to practically counter these threats. Active exchange of information, experiences and expertise among countries in the region are indispensable in combating these challenges. In addition, combined cooperation to enhance moderation and de-radicalisation initiatives will help address the root causes of terrorism and conditions conducive to terrorism, violent extremism and radicalism.

13. Indonesia emphasised that in this era of interconnectedness, distance among countries is no longer a barrier, and that one of the most prominent challenges the world currently faces is global terrorist attacks. There is an ever-increasing problem of the spreading of extreme radical views, not only by terrorist organisations but also lone wolves; as well as the threat of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) returnees, including in Southeast Asia. The Conference noted the grave importance of strengthening law enforcement cooperation, and in this regard ASEAN has implemented a number of cooperation programmes, such as the "ASEAN Our Eyes" initiative under the ADMM and the ASEAN Work Plan to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2025) under the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC). The Conference also noted that the Government of Indonesia has taken strategic steps and measures through soft approaches such as counter-radicalisation, counter-ideology and counter-narratives, including by establishing dedicated law enforcement units on cyber and social media. Indonesia also highlighted women's role in the prevention of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism by empowering them through legal, financial and cultural means in order to address the root causes.

14. Meanwhile, Russia informed the Conference of its strong no-negotiations policy against terrorists. The Conference noted Russia's commitment in eliminating terrorists, and terrorism in all its forms and manifestations against, for example through the assistance to Syria as requested by the Government of Syria. Within the ARF context, Russia and Indonesia co-chaired the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC) in March 2019.

Additionally, the Ministry of Defence of Russia continues to work closely with Myanmar on counter-terrorism issues under the ADMM-Plus EWG on Counter Terrorism 2020-2023 cycle. Russia also called for the enhancement of the work of the United Nations Counter Terrorism Office (UNCTO) and for the promotion of synergy between the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council.

3.4 Cyber Security: Towards a Safe, Secure and Resilient Cyberspace

15. With over forty percent of the global population using the internet, the Conference noted that the Asia Pacific region is facing critical cyber security challenge and cybercrime. Therefore, enhanced cooperation at regional and international levels is critical to ensure a safe, secure and resilient cyberspace, and sufficient capabilities to combat cybercrime.

16. New Zealand shared its views that cybersecurity means ensuring that people and businesses prosper, the harm from cyber threats and cybercrime is reduced, fundamental rights online are protected, and significant national information infrastructure are defended. It was noted that the global cyber threat landscape has changed substantially over the last decade, along with the evolution of digital transformation and increasing reliance on technology. Malicious cyberspace actors, including state-sponsored and criminal actors continue to attack computer systems, hence is a risk on data privacy. There is also an increased use of cyber operations to advance nation-states' goals such as disinformation or influence campaign intended to disrupt other nations' political systems, which may lead to cyber warfare. Another area that would increasingly impact organisations and individuals is the "Internet of Things" – cyberspace helps to connect with the world, however this depends on an open, trusted and resilient cyberspace environment. While policies on cyberspace differ for each nation, there should be a commonality in governing the tool that we use, i.e. the Internet, and the goal is to minimise the risk in cyberspace without undermining the benefits of the Internet, for example the use of social media for terrorist activities.

17. The United States (U.S.) emphasised the significant implications of cybersecurity in Asia Pacific and reaffirmed commitment to partnering with ASEAN to address this issue. In September 2018, the U.S. released its National Cyber-Strategy, which outlines the steps which the U.S. Government is taking to advance an open, interoperable, reliable and secure cyberspace. It is structured around four pillars with focus areas and associated priority actions to preserve and secure cyberspace namely to (i) secure federal networks, information and national critical infrastructure; combat cybercrime and improve incident reporting. Internationally, the U.S. is supporting these focus areas by enhancing cooperation, sharing best practices, and building capacity with our foreign partners; (ii) foster a vibrant global technological ecosystem and innovation and to develop a cybersecurity workforce

through education and recruitment. The U.S. supports this by enhancing economic growth, innovation and efficiency and by promoting the free-flow of data across borders; (ii) counter disruptive, destructive, and otherwise destabilising behaviour in cyberspace, by enhancing cyber stability through the norms, and encouraging responsible behaviour among nation-states and deterring unacceptable behaviour in cyberspace; (iv) to promote an open, interoperable, reliable and secure internet by encouraging countries to enhance Internet freedom; to enhance a multi-stakeholder approach of Internet governance; and building international cyber capacity.

18. Both New Zealand and the U.S. called for the move to ensure the applicability of international law to state behaviour in cyberspace; the promotion of non-binding, voluntary norms of state behaviour in cyberspace during peace time; and the development and implementation of practical cyber-confidence building measures. This framework for responsible state behaviour seeks to reduce the risks of misunderstanding, escalation, and conflict; and enhances cyberspace stability, which are in line with the 2015 Report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts and the work of the ARF. The Conference also noted that preventing and responding to cyber intrusions and attacks requires a strong defence of a coordinated government approach, with support of the private sector.

19. The Conference took note of the U.S.' statement on the DPRK's disruptive and harmful cyber activities by hacking financial institutions and committing cybercrime. It was further noted that the U.S. will hold the DPRK accountable and will demonstrate to the DPRK that there is a cost to its provocative and irresponsible actions.

3.5 Regional Efforts in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

20. Large-scale natural disasters occur frequently and have political, economic and social impacts which are crucial for security, stability and prosperity in the region. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) therefore is a critical and cross-sectoral coordination issue. One of the challenges has been to promote closer integration of efforts across ASEAN sectoral bodies, as well as between ASEAN and other regional frameworks such as the ARF, EAS and the ADMM-Plus.

21. Japan shared with the Conference that in the area of HADR, it co-chaired the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR with Lao PDR from 2014-2016 which resulted in the adoption of the Multinational Coordination Centre (MNCC) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). To help with the familiarisation to the MNCC SOP, Japan invited ASEAN Member States to Tokyo to participate in the Table-Top Exercise (TTX) on MNCC SOP. The Conference also noted that other capacity building activities have

been organised by the Ministry of Defence of Japan to share experiences from the lessons that Japan has learned from frequent natural disasters.

22. ASEAN Member States thanked Japan for sharing its perspective and for its contribution in HADR, noting that the ASEAN region is disaster prone. Malaysia shared with the Conference that the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group (AMRG) on HADR as proposed in 2015 is currently being developed under the ambit of the EWG on HADR, which it co-chairs with the U.S.

AGENDA ITEM 4: ADVANCING PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE SECURITY

4.1 Approaches to Sustainable Security

23. As ASEAN Chair in 2019, the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand has made policy guidelines in moving forward the ASEAN Community under the key theme “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability”. It emphasises that all ASEAN Member States shall be moving forward together in order to build a people-centred community, focuses on the future and leaves no one behind. As the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus Chair in 2019, the Ministry of Defence of Thailand has determined the “3S” concept to push forward cooperation within the framework of the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus, namely sustainable security; strengthening, consolidating and optimising defence cooperation; and supporting cross-pillar activities.

24. Rapid changes in regional security environment and the implications of increasing regional integration and connectivity as well as technological advancement have prompted security challenges that are complex, unpredictable, trans-boundary and increasing in frequency and severity. Historically, global peace, security and stability has been intermittent and volatile. Relentless efforts are needed to strengthen partnership in order to collectively and effectively respond to all forms of threats in a sustainable fashion.

25. The forces of globalisation, increasing integration and technological advancements have paved the way for the emergence of non-traditional security challenges and consequently have altered our security landscape. A paradigm shift in the collective efforts and multilateral cooperation are needed to prevent these challenges, from a conventional approach to a more integrated approach. Southeast Asia has made significant strides in advancing defence and security cooperation under the framework of ASEAN, such as the ARF and the ADMM, among others. ASEAN has progressed from being a regional organisation. With regard to sustainable security, Brunei Darussalam explained how ASEAN has progressed from being a one-dimensional regional organisation to an institution which has

developed initiatives to embrace cross-sectoral synergies, including to engage civil society organisations, to bring about peaceful processes in inter-regional security challenges.

4.2 Strengthening Practical Cooperation to Achieve Comprehensive Security

26. Security threats and challenges in the Asia-Pacific are trans-boundary and increasing in frequency and severity. This emphasises the need for countries in the region to strengthen practical cooperation that yields tangible results. The ultimate goal is to find sustainable ways to achieve comprehensive security that addresses security issues at all levels, including national, society, community, family and individual levels and in all dimensions, including military, economic, social, environment and political dimensions.

27. At the heart of the discussions on current and emerging security challenges in the Asia Pacific, there was consensus amongst all discussants that collective and collaborative efforts must be engaged to counter the complex security challenges the region faces, and that unilateral action by any one country is insufficient. The Philippines highlighted how the ADMM-Plus EWGs are exemplifications of strong and comprehensive defence and security cooperation. The Philippines also highlighted the ARF's success in promoting dialogue, as ARF participants continue contributing to confidence building measures in the region. The Chair emphasised that achieving sustainable security requires comprehensive security cooperation, which involves strengthened intra and inter-agency coordination.

AGENDA ITEM 5: CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

28. In his Closing Remarks, the Chair expressed appreciation to all Participants for their active contribution and support rendered towards the success of the Conference. He reiterated that the robust exchange of ideas had provided valuable insights which contributed to achieving peace, security and stability in the region in a sustainable manner.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

29. 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.

