

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING
20 May 2005, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

Introduction

1. The ASEAN Regional Forum Senior Officials' Meeting was held in Vientiane on 20 May 2005.
2. The Meeting was attended by representatives of all ARF participating countries. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also present. The List of Delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.
3. The Meeting adopted the Agenda and the Programme of Activities, which appear as **ANNEX 2**.
4. In his Opening Statement, the Chairman said that after 12 years of successful confidence building activities, ARF is now ready to directly address challenges and threats to regional peace and security, including the situation in the Korean Peninsula, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, transnational crime, situation in the Middle East and others. The Chairman reported the progress of consultations on the several outstanding issues in the ARF, such as the participation of Timor Leste in the ARF; the renaming of the ISG on CBM into ISG on CBM and PD and expanding its agenda accordingly; enhance role of the ARF Chair including in issuing statements on behalf of ARF participants; establishment of the Friends of the Chair; the revival of the ISG on Disaster Relief; the establishment of the ARF Unit and the ARF Fund; and promoting Track I and Track II linkages.

Exchange of Views on Regional and International Issues

5. The Meeting exchanged views on recent regional and international issues and agreed that overall the security outlook for Asia and the Pacific is positive and stable. Relations among the major powers continued to improve while regional states concentrated with economic cooperation and development. Notwithstanding, serious security challenges remain, including terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
6. The Meeting reaffirmed the pivotal role of the ARF, as the primary multilateral security dialogue forum in the region, in the maintenance of regional peace and security. The Meeting reaffirmed the need to further strengthen the ARF and reiterated its support for ASEAN as the primary driving force of the ARF and

encouraged the contributions of all ARF participants in moving the ARF process forward.

7. The Meeting welcomed the accession of several non-Southeast Asian countries to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as a code of conduct in inter-state relations among the countries concerned. The Meeting was informed by New Zealand of its agreement in principle to accede to the TAC, which was consistent with how New Zealand had been conducting its relations with Southeast Asian countries.

8. The Meeting exchanged views on recent developments on the Korean Peninsula. The Meeting underlined the importance of finding a peaceful solution to the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and the necessity to engage in dialogue to promote mutual confidence and common approach. In this connection, the Meeting underlined the need for the earliest possible resumption of the Six-Party Talks on the basis of the principle of mutual respect for sovereignty and equality.

9. The Meeting welcomed the recent resumption of the inter-Korea dialogue and expressed the hope that the dialogue would continue in accordance with June 15 North-South Joint Declaration and hoped that inter-Korean relations will be conducive to the peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and to the peaceful achievement of the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula.

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11. The Meeting noted that the ARF participants parties to the NPT expressed support for the on-going NPT Review Conference in New York. The state parties to the NPT discussed the need for all such states to remain committed to nuclear non-proliferation regimes, including UNSC Resolution 1540. The Meeting also discussed the need to strengthen export controls against illicit transfer of technologies that could be used to develop weapons of mass destruction. Some countries expressed concern over the nuclear capabilities in Iran.

12. The Meeting took note of the briefing by Myanmar on the recent developments in the country, including the progress of the National Convention and expressed their concern at the pace of the democratization process. The Meeting called for the lifting of restrictions and for effective dialogue with all parties concerned. The Meeting also called for an early resumption of the visit to Myanmar by UNSG Special Representative and to continue cooperate with other relevant UN agencies.

13. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of further strengthening regional cooperation in the face of a persistent and evolving terrorist threats. The Meeting noted in particular the need for concerted national and international efforts in areas, including law enforcement, border control, intelligence, and maritime and transport security, to counter terrorist-related linkages and movements throughout the region. The Meeting acknowledged the value of capacity building and regional mechanisms, such as the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) and the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC). The Meeting welcomed the increased number of inter-faith dialogues aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and trust.

14. The Meeting welcomed the accession of several non-Southeast Asian countries to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as a code of conduct in inter-state relations among the countries concerned. The Meeting was informed by New Zealand of its agreement in principle to accede to the TAC, which was consistent with how New Zealand had been conducting its relations with Southeast Asian countries.

15. The Meeting mentioned the recent developments in the Middle East and stressed the need to carry out the road map and the relevant UNSC Resolutions to achieve durable peace in that region with the realization of the vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side, in peace within the secured and recognized borders. The Meeting welcomed Iraqi and Palestinian elections.

16. The Meeting welcomed the follow up efforts by ASEAN and China to implement the ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC). The Meeting welcomed the convening of the ASEAN SOM on the implementation of the DoC on 7 December 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia under the DoC which established an ASEAN-China Joint Working Group that will oversee the implementation of the DoC in accordance with the underlining spirit and principles of the DoC. The Meeting also welcomed the agreement on joint marine seismic undertaking by the National oil companies of the Philippines, Viet Nam and China as a concrete contribution to the peace and stability of the region.

Future Direction of the ARF

17. The Meeting expressed their satisfaction with further progress made in the implementation of the Nine Recommendations of the Stocktaking of the ARF process and underlined the importance of implementing all remaining recommendations.

18. The Meeting stressed the importance of the adopted Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy in guiding the ARF in its actions and works in the Preventive Diplomacy (PD) thus far, noting that some of the concepts have been

translated into actions. In this regard, the Meeting agreed to establish the ISG on CBMs and PD, to replace the ISG on CBMs.

19. The Meeting agreed to extend further cooperation and support for the ARF Chair in carrying out the mandates outlined in the paper on the Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair, particularly in assigning the ARF Unit to assist the ARF Chair in facilitating the work of the ARF. In this regard, the Meeting agreed that the draft terms of reference of the ARF Fund would be revised to reflect comments submitted by the ARF participants and circulated to all ARF participants before the 12th ARF.

20. The Meeting decided to formulate the standard operating procedures for the ARF Chair to perform its enhanced role. The Meeting also agreed to establish "Friends of the Chair" in the ARF, and welcomed the Philippines' offer to draft the terms of reference for this concept with the understanding that such an ad-hoc group shall have an advisory role to assist the ARF Chair and be flexible in terms of its membership.

21. The Meeting agreed to the need of streamlining and strengthening the working methods of the ARF and took note of the EU's Paper on the Operating Procedures which appears as **ANNEX 3**.

22. The Meeting agreed to revive the ISM on Disaster relief and welcomed Indonesia and China's offer to co-chair it.

23. The Meeting emphasized the need to further strengthening ties with other regional and international security organizations as well as linkages between Track I and Track II and noted the proposal to invite the Chair of CSCAP to the next ISG to brief the Meeting on Track II activities.

24. The Meeting noted that the continued publication of the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) is an important contribution to transparency as well as confidence building among ARF participants. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the sixth volume of the ASO compiled without editing by the ARF Chair. They also encouraged the continued submission of inputs on the next volume of the ASO.

25. The Meeting appreciated the publication of an updated Register of Experts/Eminent Persons (EEPs). The Meeting expressed their appreciation to the Republic of Korea in working closely with ARF countries to realize the concept of the ARF EEPs.

Consideration of the Reports of Track I Activities

26. The Meeting noted the ARF Reports of the Co-Chairs of the ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures (ISG on CBMs), co-chaired by Cambodia and the European Union, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 26-28 October 2003 and in Potsdam, Germany, 21-23 February 2005. The Co-Chair's Reports appear as **ANNEX 4**.

27. The Meeting noted that the Philippines and the United States will be the next Co-Chairs of the ISG on CBMs and PD. The Meeting noted the first meeting of the ISG on CBMs and PD for the inter-sessional year 2005-2006 will be held on 17-19 October 2005 in Honolulu, Hawaii and the second meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2006 in the Philippines.

28. The Meeting noted the Report of the Co-Chairs of the ARF Intersessional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crimes (ISM on CT-TC), co-chaired by Thailand and Canada, which was held in Bangkok on 6-8 April 2005.

29. The Meeting welcomed the offer of Brunei Darussalam and China to co-host the next Intersessional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime in 2006.

Consideration of Track I Activities

30. The Meeting noted the following activities, which were completed in intersessional year 2004/2005:

- 8th ARF Meeting of the Heads of Defence Colleges/Institutions, Singapore, 1-3 September 2004.
- ARF Workshop on Alternative Development, Kunming, China, 7-8 September 2004.
- ARF Workshop on Maritime Security, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 22-24 September 2004.
- ARF Seminar on Cyber Terrorism, Jeju Island, 13-15 October 2004
- ARF CBM on Regional Cooperation in Maritime Security, Singapore, 2-4 March 2005.
- ARF Seminar on Enhancing Cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues, Hinan, China, 7-8 March 2005.
- ARF Workshop on Peace Arrangements Ensuring Stability and Security in the Region, including Civil-Military Co-operation, Tokyo, Japan, 22-23 March 2005.

Future Activities of Track I

31. The Meeting endorsed the following proposed activities of the ARF ISG on CBM during this and the next intersessional year which appears include among others

- ARF Workshop on Changes in the Security Perceptions and Military Doctrines of ARF Members, Ulaanbaatar, 21-22 June 2005;
- ARF Seminar on Cyber Terrorism, Cebu, Philippines, 3-5 October 2005;
- Seminar on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) by the Kingdom of Cambodia and the EU for autumn 2005 in Phnom Penh;
- 9th ARF Meeting of the Heads of Defense Colleges/Institutions in September 2005 (Viet Nam);
- ARF Seminar on Civil Military Operations, Manila, Manila 11-14 September 2005;
- ARF Export Licensing Experts' Meeting, Singapore, 17-19 November 2005 (Singapore and Canada);
- ARF Workshop on Capacity Building on Maritime Security to be hosted by Japan in Autumn 2005;
- Workshop on Cyber Security, August/September 2005, New Delhi;
- Workshop on Training for Cooperative Maritime Security, October 2005, India.
- Seminar on Missile Defense, Bangkok, on 6-7 October 2005, to be co-hosted by the US and Thailand; and
- Seminar on Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction which will be co-chaired by the US, China and Singapore in spring 2006.

32. The Meeting took note of Singapore's proposal for an ARF Maritime Security Capacity Building Exercise as a CBM in 2006. The Concept Paper appears as ANNEX 5.

Preparation for the 12th ASEAN Regional Forum

33. The Meeting agreed to endorse the Provisional Agenda and Tentative Programme of the 12th ARF as appears in ANNEX 6. The Meeting noted that the ARF Retreat would focus on discussions of issues which are sensitive in nature and future direction of the ARF.

34. The Meeting took note of the draft **Chairman's** Statement of the 12th ARF circulated by Laos, as current ARF Chair which appears as **ANNEX 7**. The Meeting agreed that comments be submitted to Laos by 30 June 2005. The Meeting was informed that Laos prepared the draft, taking into consideration recent developments and views.

35. The Meeting endorsed the draft ARF Statement on Information Sharing and Intelligence Exchange and Document Integrity and Security in Enhancing Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Other Transnational Crime as appears as **ANNEX 8**, and agreed to forward the document to Ministers for consideration and approval at the 12th ARF.

Consideration of the Report of the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Vientiane, 18 May 2005

36. The Meeting welcomed the increased participation and activities by defence officials in the ARF process. The Meeting noted the Report of the ARF Defence/Military Officials' Luncheon and Meeting which was held in Vientiane on 18 May 2005, which appears as **ANNEX 9**.

37. The Meeting welcomed the outcomes of the First ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) in Beijing, China on 4-6 November 2004 and the Second ASPC in Vientiane, Laos on 18-19 May 2005. The Chair's Summaries of the First and Second ASPC appears as **ANNEX 10**. The Meeting further noted that the high-level interaction among the ARF defence policy officials contributed further to building confidence and fostering mutual understanding, thus contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

Other Matters

38. The Chair informed the Meeting of the applications received from Timor Leste, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic. The Meeting approved the Chair's recommendation to admit Timor Leste in the ARF.

39. The Meeting noted the Matrix of ARF Decisions and their Status prepared by the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat, which appears as **ANNEX 11**, and agreed to implement further such decisions. The Meeting welcomed the initial launching of the ARFNet consisting of a homepage and restricted communications network at www.aseanregionalforum.org.

Acknowledgement

40. The ARF participants expressed their appreciation to the People and Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.
