

**REPORT  
OF  
THE 6<sup>th</sup> ARF SECURITY POLICY CONFERENCE**

**19 MAY 2009  
PHUKET, THAILAND**

**Introduction**

1. The Sixth ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) was held on 19 May 2009 in Phuket, Thailand. The Conference was chaired by General Apichart Penkitti, Permanent Secretary for Defence, Kingdom of Thailand.
2. The Conference was attended by ARF members from Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, United States, Viet Nam as well as the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX A**.

**Item 1: Welcome Remarks**

3. In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed and expressed his gratitude to all participants and noted that the ARF had achieved considerable progress in strengthening cooperation among participating countries, through promoting confidence building measures and realising the preventive diplomacy concept, on a wide range of security issues in the region. The Chair also noted that dialogues among defence officials within the ARF framework had also been enhanced, in particular through the ASPC which had supplemented the ARF process in promoting mutual trust and confidence among ARF participating countries. Having been around for sixth years now, the ASPC has achieved much of what it set out to do. The ASFC has also become an important forum for senior defence and security officials to discuss regional security and political issues and global matters that have significant impacts on the region.

**Item 2: Adoption of Agenda**

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

**Item 3: Regional Efforts among Security Establishments to address Non-Traditional Security Threats**

5. The Conference shared the view that addressing security challenges continued to be at the core of defence policies and that effective international coordination and cooperation served as a critical contribution to addressing non-traditional security threats. The Conference underlined that although Globalisation had brought many

benefits, the international community had become more vulnerable to non-traditional security threats. The Conference noted that security challenges were multilateral in nature, therefore, multilateral efforts need to be promoted in response to both traditional and non-traditional threats. In this regard, the Conference noted that the ARF process as well as the ASPC served as important venues in strengthening regional security architecture in the Asia-Pacific.

6. The Conference also noted that although non-traditional security threats were pressing issues in today's world, both traditional and non-traditional security threats need to be balanced in terms of setting priorities and policy planning. The Conference identified various non-traditional security threats facing the region, namely, terrorism, transnational crime, large-scale disaster, pandemic disease, climate change, maritime security, energy and food security, cyber security and piracy, particularly in the Gulf of Aden. Given the diversity among Asia-Pacific countries, the Conference noted that regional efforts need to focus on defining common issues on which regional countries could work together in response to non-traditional security threats in order to ensure effective and robust cooperation.

7. The Conference took note of several approaches to promote comprehensive efforts in addressing non-traditional security threats including transparency in security policy planning as a part of confidence building, the role of domestic inter-agency and cross jurisdiction coordination and improved civil-military cooperation in facilitating international collaboration. The Conference also underlined the importance of the utilisation of not only a whole-of-government, but also a whole-of-society approach. The Conference also noted the need for international efforts in response to the threat from organised non-state actors.

8. The Conference underlined the need to enhance concrete and practical cooperation among countries in the Asia-Pacific that would facilitate capacity building and interoperability in response to non-traditional security threats such as the ARF Voluntary Demonstration of Response (VDR), which was a success in terms of providing an example for how regional countries could all work together for the common purpose of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The Conference further noted a hope to explore the possibility of future multilateral exercises.

9. The presentations given by the lead discussants, namely, the European Union, Malaysia, and Australia are at **ANNEXES C, D, and E.**

10. The papers submitted by Laos and Viet Nam are also at **ANNEXES F and G.**

#### **Item 4: Regional Defence and Security Implications of the Global Economic Crisis**

11. The Conference noted that the global economic crisis had widespread effects on all regions and sectors. Not only would it pose political and social instabilities as well as constraints on defence budgets, but also obstacles to sustainable

development. The Conference identified various issues which emerged from the crisis and worsened domestic security problems, such as high unemployment rates and illegal immigration.

12. The Conference recognised the complex nature of non-traditional security threats facing the region and the necessity for a call upon the defence and security sectors to undertake a wide range of activities to cope with these threats despite the economic downturn. In this regard, the Conference commended regional efforts and arrangements to resolve non-traditional security issues particularly in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as anti-piracy.

13. The Conference noted that although it is important, during an economic crisis, for countries to consider their budgetary choices and costs of doing business, it is crucial for bedrock relationships to endure. Interoperability, common systems, and common training are key elements of security cooperation that should endure throughout an economic downturn. The Conference also underlined that countries in the Asia-Pacific need to make wise fiscal choices and operate efficiently, while not sacrificing long-term security interests for short-term economic expediency.

14. In this respect, the Conference underlined the significance of cooperative and collective efforts in addressing non-traditional security threats in the Asia-Pacific region in times of economic hardship. Under this circumstance, countries in the Asia-Pacific region need to foster and strengthen existing defence cooperation mechanism at both bilateral and multilateral levels which served as a concrete framework to ensure interoperability and cost-reduction in training. Given fiscal and monetary constraints, the Conference noted that regional countries need to focus on priority setting and policy planning that would collectively achieve peace, security, and stability.

15. The Conference took note of various measures suggested to be taken including actively pursuing common security concerns, addressing the root causes of the financial crisis, resolving the problems related to the crisis, as well as promoting the recovery of the global economy.

16. The presentations given by the lead discussants, namely, the United States, Singapore, India, New Zealand, and China are at **ANNEXES H, I, J, K and L.**

**Item 5: Briefing on the Outcomes of the 3rd ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting**

17. The Conference was briefed by Thailand on the Outcomes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) that Thailand hosted on 26 February 2009 in Pattaya, Thailand. The Conference took note of the signing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ADMM Joint Declaration on Strengthening ASEAN Defence Establishments to meet the Challenges of Non-Traditional Security Threats, which reaffirmed the ADMM's earlier commitment to enhancing regional peace and stability, contributing to the realisation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) by 2015, and strengthening the

ADMM mechanism in response to security challenges. The Conference further noted the adoption of three papers, namely the Concept Paper on the Use of ASEAN Military Assets and Capacities in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, the Concept Paper on ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus): Principles for Membership, and the Concept Paper on ASEAN Defence Establishments and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Cooperation on Non-Traditional Security Threats.

**Item 6: Other Matters**

18. The Conference was informed by Cambodia that Japan and Cambodia would co-host the 3<sup>rd</sup> ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting, under the theme "Enhancing the Regional Capacity to Participate in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," during 24 – 26 June 2009 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

19. The Conference was informed by Thailand that the next ARF DoD would be held on 22 July 2009 in Thailand in conjunction with the 16<sup>th</sup> ARF Ministers' Meeting

20. The Conference noted that Viet Nam, as the incoming Chair of ASEAN, would chair and host the next ASPC. Congratulating Thailand for hosting a productive and meaningful Conference this year, Viet Nam would build on the progress made by previous Chairs to lay the foundation for enhancing confidence building and open dialogue on issues of mutual concern. The agenda and dates of the next ASPC would be circulated in due course.

**Item 7: Closing Remarks**

21. In his closing remarks, the Chair expressed his appreciation to the participants' contribution to the Conference. The Conference thanked the Ministry of Defence, Kingdom of Thailand, for the generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

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