

ANNEX 7

ARF MARITIME SECURITY SHORE EXERCISE

– A Concept Paper –

SINGAPORE

Introduction

Singapore had first tabled a proposal for an ARF Maritime Security Capacity Building Exercise at the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting that was held in Vientiane in May 05. The underlying rationale for this exercise was to build confidence, familiarity and interoperability among ARF maritime agencies, thereby increasing regional capacity to address various threats to maritime security. Our thinking was that an exercise would be an important step forward following the successful dialogues on maritime security that had been initiated within the ARF.

In response to the concerns expressed by a few countries, we had revised the Exercise Concept Paper twice for consideration at the ARF Intersessional Support Group Meetings on Confidence Building and Preventive Diplomacy in Honolulu in October 2005 and in Manila in March 2006. While there was a good consensus on the objectives of the exercise and its shore-based components, a few countries continued to have reservations about the exercise's sea phase.

Maritime security is an issue of critical importance to the region. It is thus important that the ARF continues to make progress in enhancing cooperation in this field. Singapore therefore proposes that the ARF take initial steps towards building greater operational cooperation in maritime security by proceeding with the shore-based elements of the Capacity Building Exercise, which all ARF countries are comfortable with. In the meantime, Singapore will continue consultations with ARF countries, with a view to conducting a sea exercise in the future.

Proposed Concept

Singapore proposes that an ARF Maritime Security Shore Exercise be conducted in the intersessional year 2006/2007. The shore exercise would involve operational teams from the navies, coast guards and other maritime agencies of all interested ARF members, and would focus on exploring the various modalities of inter-agency coordination and international cooperation in dealing with a range of maritime threats. The two-day programme could include a series of professional exchanges on

current maritime security issues, as well as the sharing of national experiences and best operational practices. The Shore Exercise will include simulations of realistic maritime security scenarios at the Republic of Singapore Navy's Tactical Training Centre, during which participants will have the opportunity to see how procedures can be applied for operational coordination.

Conclusion

The ARF has made significant progress in maritime security dialogue over the last two years. Singapore is willing to host the ARF Maritime Security Shore Exercise and we look forward to working with all interested ARF countries on implementing this CBM. Meanwhile, Singapore will continue consultations with all ARF countries on conducting a sea exercise in the future.

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