

ASEAN Regional Forum Senior Officials Meeting
(ARF SOM)
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Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Draft Chairman's Statement of the 8th ARF

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**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT
THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
HA NOI, 25 JULY 2001**

1. The Eighth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Ha Noi on 25 July 2001. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Nguyen Dy Nien, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.
2. The Meeting was attended by the Foreign Ministers of all ARF participating countries or their representatives. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also present. The List of Delegates appears as ANNEX A.

Overview of the ARF Process

3. The Ministers recognised that during the last inter-sessional year, the ARF process continued to make progress and play an important role in maintaining peace and stability in the region, particularly in enhancing and promoting dialogue and co-operation on political and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. In the context of the major developments in the region, the Ministers noted with satisfaction that the ARF was the key forum for participating countries not only to engage in a productive, free flowing exchange of views but also actively and constructively address key political and security issues with bearing on regional-peace and stability, including newly emerged issues as a result of globalisation.
4. The Ministers emphasised that, with what the ARF had contributed to the regional peace and stability, confidence-building is of essential importance to and remains the foundation and main thrust of the whole ARF process. They agreed that this process be further strengthened and more confidence building measures be encouraged. While highly appreciating the progress in the implementation of the overlapping measures between CBMs and Preventive Diplomacy (PD), the Ministers commended the efforts made by participating countries in developing the concept and principles of PD as to be applicable to the ARF context, contributing to the enhancement of the effectiveness of the ARF process.
5. The Ministers reaffirmed that the ARF will continue to develop step by step at a pace comfortable to all ARF participants and emphasised the importance of ARF making decision by consensus and on the basis of non-interference into one another's internal affairs. The Ministers noted with

satisfaction that the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) continued to play its leading role in the ARF and they expressed their support for this continued role in the ARF process. At the same time, the Ministers noted that each ARF participant had contributed more actively to advancing the ARF process. They expressed their satisfaction that the hotline had been exercised at three levels, thus facilitating the regular exchanges of information among the ARF participants.

6. In recalling the decision of the Sixth ARF in July 1999 on the overlap between CBMs and PD and that of the Seventh ARF in July 2000 on the enhancing role of the ARF Chair, the Ministers highly appreciated Viet Nam, as the ARF Chair, who had continued and expanded informal contacts with other international and regional organisations, particularly with the United Nations, the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Non-Aligned Movement. They agreed that such contacts were fruitful in promoting information exchange and experience sharing between ARF and these organisations and that these links could be continued in the future. The Ministers also acknowledged with satisfaction that the ARF Chair had been successful in serving as a conduit for information sharing in between ARF meetings, particularly between participants who had no bilateral diplomatic contacts, thus enabling the ARF participants to exchange information relevant to the ARF in a timely manner and on a voluntary basis. In this regards, the Ministers expressed their appreciation to Japan for its valuable work in preparing the Discussion Paper on the Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair.

7. The Ministers welcomed the establishment of the ARF Register of Experts/Eminent Persons to be available for use by ARF participants on the voluntary basis. The Ministers agreed to adopt the Paper on the Terms of Reference for ARF Experts/Eminent Persons which appears in ANNEX C. In this regards, they commended the excellent work done by the ISG on CBMs, particularly by the Co-Chairs of ISG-CBMs, i.e. Malaysia and the Republic of Korea, in finalising the Terms of Reference for the ARF Experts/Eminent Persons. The Ministers also encouraged the ARF participants to nominate their experts/ eminent persons for the Register on a voluntary basis with the ARF Chair serving as a focal point.

8. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to Singapore for its valuable contribution in submitting the Paper on the Concept and Principles of PD and to all ARF participants for their inputs to the Paper. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the progress in the discussion on the PD

Paper in the ARF and commended the work in this regards by ISG-CBMs which had agreed to adopt the PD Paper as a snapshot of the state of current discussion on PD in the ARF. The Ministers agreed with recommendation by the ARF-SOM and ISG that the ISG would continue to discuss PD in the next inter-sessional year and focus on those issues where there remained divergence of views.

9. The Ministers commended ARF participants for their efforts in producing individual Annual Security Outlook (ASO) and welcomed the second volume of the ARF ASO compiled without editing by the ARF Chair. While noting that the ASO could contribute to the promotion of mutual trust and understanding as well as facilitating the exchange of views among ARF participants, the Ministers agreed that the current and future ASOs would not be treated as confidential.

10. Noting the importance of the participation of defence and military officials in the ARF process, the Ministers welcomed the contribution of greater and active interaction among defence and military officials towards the promotion of mutual understanding. In this regards, the Ministers agreed to endorse the recommendation by the ISG and ARF SOM that Defence Officials Luncheon to be included as a regular feature of the ISG.

Highlights of Issues Discussed

11. The Ministers had in-depth and extensive discussions on the political and security situation in the Asia-Pacific since the Seventh ARF in July 2000, particularly on the major developments that affect regional security environment. Conducted in the ARF traditional open and candid atmosphere the exchange of views among the Ministers was very substantive and focussed, thus helping create better understanding of the security perceptions and concerns among ARF participants.

12. The Ministers shared the views that on the whole, the situation in the Asia-Pacific region remained relatively stable. The Ministers noted that despite certain challenges and uncertainties, and differences in political and strategic perceptions, the region continues to enjoy peace and stability. While giving due attention to the recent developments in the relations between the major powers and their impact on the regional security, the Ministers acknowledged the importance of peaceful and stable relations between those major powers as key to regional peace and security. The Ministers expressed their hope that the major powers would soon bring their

relations back to normal track and improve them so as to contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region.

13. The Ministers exchanged views on the accelerated globalisation and was of the view that under the multi-faceted impacts of globalisation as well as that of technologies, economic security is fast becoming a major concern of all nations, both developing and developed alike. They particularly noted with concern the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries. In this regards, the Ministers echoed the determination by the world Heads of State and Government expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to "create an environment - at the national and global levels alike- which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty".

14. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the recent positive development of overall situation on the Korean peninsula, including increased dialogue and co-operation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) following the North-South Summit on June 15,2000 in Pyongyang. They further encouraged both the DPRK and ROK to build on the success of the summit to continue the peace process, with a view to establishing lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers appreciated the active participation by the DPRK in ARF activities in the last year and considered this a contribution towards the strengthening the ARF process and advancing the cause of regional peace and security.

15. The Ministers noted that the situation in Southeast Asia on the whole had been peaceful and stable. The Ministers exchanged views on the recent developments in the South China Sea and welcomed the progress in the consultations between ASEAN and China to develop a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. The Ministers encouraged the continued exercise of self-restraint by all countries concerned and the promotion of confidence-building measures in this area, and welcomed their commitment to resolving disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the recognised principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as well as to ensuring the freedom of navigation in the area.

16. The Ministers noted that the 4th ASEAN Informal Summit (AIS) held in November 2000 was one of the most significant events that had taken place in the region since the ARF7. At the Summit, in recognising the need toward enhancing the Association's cohesiveness, the ASEAN leaders had

pushed forward proposals that would enable closer integration and help to reduce the development gap within ASEAN. Another key outcome of the Summit was the decision by the ASEAN leaders and the leaders of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to start moving towards closer East Asia co-operation. The Ministers shared the views by the ASEAN+3 leaders that a gradual approach towards closer East Asian Co-operation would contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity of the region.

17. The Ministers recognised the purposes and principles contained in the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as a basis for the promotion of co-operation, amity, and friendship within Southeast Asia and between ASEAN and the outside. The Ministers highly appreciated the adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the High Council of TAC by the ASEAN member countries at the AMM 34 in July 2001 in Ha Noi. They also encourage the consideration by non-Southeast Asian countries to accede to the TAC with a view to developing the TAC into a code of conduct governing relations between Southeast Asian States and those outside the region.

18. The Ministers welcomed the progress regarding the implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), which contributed towards non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the continued progress made in the consultation between the State Parties of the SEANWFZ Treaty and the Nuclear Weapon States regarding the latter's accession to the Protocol to the Treaty. In this regards, the Ministers highly appreciated the recent Direct Dialogue between the State Parties and the Nuclear Weapon States held in Ha Noi in May 2001 and considered this a significant step towards securing the accession of the Nuclear Weapon States to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ.

19. The Ministers appreciated efforts by the Government of Indonesia in maintaining the country's stability and expressed their continued support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Indonesia.

20. The Ministers noted the cooperation between East Timor and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor and reiterated the need for the support of international community including ASEAN to play an active role in the nation building efforts of East Timor. They supported the efforts to resolve the problem of East Timorese refugees in East Nusa Tenggara province in a comprehensive manner in order to ensure peace and

harmony of all Timorese. They welcomed the plan to hold election of the Legislative Council on 30 August 2001.

21. The Ministers welcomed the encouraging developments in Myanmar, the process of national reconciliation in particular. They highly appreciated the efforts of the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN, the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Myanmar, the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General and the EU Troika towards the positive developments in Myanmar.

22. The Ministers exchanged views on the situation in South Asia. While calling for greater efforts to be made in order to bring about more positive developments in the whole region, the Ministers expressed their concern over the situation in some South Asian countries, the Afghanistan in particular.

23. Some Ministers noted the ease of tension in Fiji and Solomon Islands and expressed the hope for positive results out of the Fijian elections to be held in August 2001.

24. The Ministers discussed issues relating to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery as well as the implications of ballistic missile defence systems. They noted the expressed support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. The Ministers also took note of the call for all states to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) without delay and to accede to the NPT and the call made in the NPT Review Conference Final Document on the Conference on Disarmament on immediate commencement of negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty. The Ministers further emphasised the importance of systematic and progressive efforts by Nuclear Weapon States on nuclear disarmament and called on them to work towards the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

25. The Ministers expressed their hope that the Protocol strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) would be finalised and urged all countries to speedily conclude their negotiations on the said Protocol.

26. The Ministers recognised that the transnational crimes could not only have potentially serious impacts on regional peace and stability, but also pose a threat to the national economic development and social well-being of

all states. In this regards, they noted the serious implications of drug production and trafficking and underscored the need to address this critical issue and other transnational crimes such as piracy, illegal migration, illicit trafficking of small arms, money laundering, terrorism, and cyber crime. The Ministers underlined the importance of greater bilateral, regional and international co-operative efforts in this regard. While noting that the Expert Group Meetings on transnational crime (EGMs) in the last year had generally been useful, the Ministers agreed with the recommendation by ARF SOM and ISG that those transnational crimes could be discussed in alternative formats such as ah-hoc workshops, seminars or symposia. The Ministers welcomed the Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocols and urged ARF participating countries to sign and ratify them soon. The Ministers expressed their supports for results of the UN Conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) which was held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001 and believed ARF participants would promote the regional co-operation pursuant to the UN Programme of action on SALW.

Reports of Track I and II Activities for the Current Inter-sessional Year (July 2000- July 2001)

Track I

27. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the successful implementation of Track I and II activities during the last inter-sessional year (July 2000-2001). They noted in particular the Report of the following major Track I activity: Co-Chairmen's Summary Report of the Meetings of the ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence-Building Measures (ISG on CBMs), co-chaired by Republic of Korea and Malaysia, held Seoul, Republic of Korea 1-3 November 2000 and in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 18-20 April 2001 (ANNEX)

28. The Ministers commended the work of the ISG on CBMs in contributing to the advancement of the ARF process. They endorsed the recommendations contained in the above-mentioned report.

29. The Ministers also noted that the following Track I activities took place under the auspices of the ISG on CBMs:

29.1. Combined Humanitarian Assistance Response Training (CHART) in Singapore in August 2000;

29.2. Fourth Meeting of Heads of Defence Colleges, Universities and Institutions in China in September 2000;

29.3. Seminar on Defence Conversion Co-operation in Beijing in September 2000 as well as the establishment of the ARF Regional Maritime Information Center (ARF-RMIC);

29.4. Seminar on Approaches to Confidence Building in Helsinki in October 2000;

29.5. Workshop on Anti-Piracy in Mumbai in October 2000; and

29.6. Seminar on Transparency and Responsibility in Transfers of Conventional Weapons in Phnom Penh in February 2001.

Track II

30. The Ministers took note of the CSCAP Maritime Co-operation Working Group Meetings in Philippines, China and Malaysia in 2000-2001 and the CSCAP's draft Memorandum on a Common Understanding of the Law of the Sea in the Asia-Pacific; the 8th Meeting of CSCAP Working Group on Transnational Crime and the 9th Meeting of CSCAP Working Group on Comprehensive and Co-operative Security.

31. The Ministers took note of the efforts made by ASEAN and the Russia relating to Pacific Concord and encouraged them to continue their consultations.

32. The Ministers agreed that the ISG on CBMs continue their work and welcomed the offers by Viet Nam and the Republic of India to co-chair the ISG on CBMs in the next inter-sessional year.

33. The Ministers endorsed the programme of work for the next inter-sessional year as contained in ANNEX .

Future Direction of the ARF Process

34. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to further develop the ARF as an effective forum for dialogue and co-operation on political and security

issues in the Asia-Pacific region. While reiterating that the ARF continue to follow an evolutionary approach in its development from confidence-building to preventive diplomacy (PD) to elaboration of approaches to conflict, the Ministers agreed that the ARF continues to move at a pace comfortable to all ARF participants and on the basis of consensus. They expressed their continued support for ASEAN's role as driving force in the ARF process.

35. While emphasising once again the importance of confidence-building as the foundation and the primary focus of the whole ARF process, the Ministers agreed that while moving towards PD, the ARF continue to strengthen its confidence-building process so as to substantially enhance mutual trust, confidence and understanding as well as co-operation among the ARF participants, thereby laying a firm ground for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific as well as for the next stages of the ARF. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress made in the discussion on the concept and principles of PD within the ARF's context based on the Paper on ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy as in ANNEX. The Ministers further agreed that ARF would continue its discussion on the concept and principles of PD so as to achieve common understanding and consensus among the ARF participants before ARF could move to the PD stage. In this regards, the Ministers requested the ISG on CMBs to intensifying its efforts in their discussion on PD, focusing on those areas where remained divergence of views and submit recommendation to ARF SOM and ARF Ministers at their next meetings.

36. While noting with satisfaction the progress in the implementation of the four CBM/PD overlap measures already agreed upon, namely an enhanced role of the ARF Chair, the ARF Register of Experts/Eminent Persons, the Annual Security Outlook, and voluntary background briefing on regional security issues, the Ministers agreed that the ARF continue its work on these measures as well as on further exploring the overlap between CBMs and PD.

37. The Ministers hold that the issues of the economic security, economic cooperation, promotion of trade and cultural cooperation between and among the nations would have major impacts on political and military security, contributing to strengthening peace and stability in the region and the world as a whole. In this regard, they welcomed the ARF decision to hold a seminar on "Economic Security in Asia and the Pacific in the First Decade of the 21 Century" in February 2002.