

## SPC Agenda Item 4: Synergy between ARF and the ADMM-Plus to avoid duplication of efforts

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### Welcome

- Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the importance of pursuing synergy between the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus).

### Regional Outlook

- The need to cooperate on shared security challenges is becoming more pressing.
  - The breadth of security challenges continues to make joint management of increasingly complex and inter-connected security challenges vital.
  - Within our region, we continue to work together to manage the impact of natural disasters; transnational crimes, including piracy, illegal fishing and people smuggling; border and sovereignty disputes; terrorism; and much more.
  - Faced with such diverse challenges, multilateral cooperation has expanded rapidly, with the development of the ADMM-Plus and this year's expansion of the East Asia Summit (EAS) to include the United States and Russia.
- The shared nature of many global and regional security challenges drives Australia's commitment to regional frameworks such as the ARF, ADMM-Plus and EAS, and the need to positively strengthen their role in our region.
  - These regional institutions address collective challenges that no one country could address alone.
  - Collaborative dialogue within ARF and ADMM-Plus provides greater opportunity for open discussion on how our nations' can work together to manage the broad range of potential security threats.

### Building effective regional architecture

- The discussion of the issue of synergy between the ARF and ADMM-Plus continues a conversation that began at the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue in Sydney in April this year.
- The Hanoi Plan of Action (clause 6.6) directs the ARF to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of activities between ARF and the ADMM-Plus.
  - We have each recognised that under this mandate, both forums need to consider how to align efforts and identify ways to cooperate to more effectively meet shared security challenges.
- Given their common agendas and priority cooperation areas – particularly disaster relief, peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, and maritime security – it is inevitable that the work programs of the ARF and the ADMM-Plus will overlap.
- This is not necessarily negative. Although aligning the work of the ARF and ADMM-Plus will bring challenges, it will also bring opportunities.

- Australia views the aims of the ARF and ADMM-Plus as complementary and acknowledges that overlap allows for issues to be discussed at different levels and in different ways.
- The ARF and ADMM-Plus have the potential to work together to build on each forum's strengths.
- With ASEAN central to both the ARF and to ADMM-Plus there is a natural opportunity to coordinate the policy direction of the ARF to feed into practical initiatives driven by the ADMM-Plus, and vice-versa.
  - o Of course this should not exclude the ARF from also working towards practical cooperation, or the ADMM-Plus from discussing strategic and defence issues facing the region.

#### **Synergy through information sharing**

- Australia believes improved information-sharing between the ARF and ADMM-Plus will be central to promoting effective coordination.
  - Institutionalising information exchange between the two fora will ensure awareness, transparency and coordination of policy objectives.
  - Information exchange would also keep ARF and ADMM-Plus members invested in the work of the forums – with the practical activities through the ADMM-Plus building regional capacity having a positive flow on effect for the ARF.
- As raised at the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue in April, the Defence Officials' Dialogue presents one forum which could act as a conduit of communication between the ARF and ADMM-Plus.
  - The Dialogue agreed that ADMM-Plus should be a standing agenda item for the ARF DOD, as a mechanism to commit to information-sharing.
  - This would act to inform the ARF of ADMM-Plus work, rather than report on or dictate the dictate the scope of ADMM-Plus activities.
- We should also consider strengthening links between the ARF, ADMM-Plus and the EAS, following agreement by ASEAN leaders at the 7-8 May ASEAN Summit to develop an EAS security agenda incorporating traditional and non-traditional security issues.
  - Australia welcomes this agreement, recognising that the EAS is the first, and only, leader-level grouping in East Asia now with the membership and mandate to address the range of security, political and economic issues facing the region.
  - It is important to consider the possibility of EAS leaders playing a stronger role in helping to coordinate and give impetus to activities in the ARF and ADMM-Plus, to encourage synergy across all three key regional forums.
- Effective multilateral cooperation on the management of shared security challenges relies on our ability to work together within, and across, the ARF, ADMM-Plus and the EAS.
  - Our willingness to share information and build on the aims of each of these forums has the potential to create greater opportunity for more robust discussion and movement towards greater practical security initiatives in the future.

#### **Background (For reference only)**

#### **Regional Outlook**

The ARF is the principal forum for security dialogue in Asia. To date, the ARF has focused on confidence building measures and has made modest gains in building a sense of strategic community. But efforts to develop tools of preventive diplomacy and conflict management are still at an early stage.

The ADMM-Plus was inaugurated on 12 October 2010 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Members include the ten ASEAN nations, plus Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States. Ministerial-level meetings are held every three years, with an ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting-Plus established to implement the agreements and decisions of the ADMM-Plus and explore areas for practical cooperation during intermittent years.

The advent of the ADMM-Plus – with its mandate to promote practical security and defence cooperation – opens up the possibility of ADMM-Plus smoothing a path for ARF cooperation in the future. Critically, ASEAN is central to this opportunity.

ASEAN Ministers at the 4th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting in May 2010 in Hanoi affirmed in their 'Joint Declaration on Strengthening ASEAN Defence Cooperation for Stability and Development of the Region' that ADMM-Plus would help to "better prepare ASEAN to address the complex security challenges". A smaller grouping than the ARF, the ADMM-Plus will foster cooperative military-military activities to enhance regional stability. ASEAN's capacity to manage security issues will grow through defence cooperation with non-ASEAN 'Plus' countries.

#### **Building effective regional architecture**

In time, ASEAN could extend its practical cooperative security ties out to ARF members which sit outside the ADMM-Plus framework. ASEAN would remain central to both ARF and ADMM-Plus processes; in line with ASEAN principles, enhanced practical defence cooperation with ARF members would only occur at a pace that is agreed by and comfortable to all.

In this way, the ARF could satisfy its members' need for gradual, consensus-based progress; ASEAN Ministers' aspiration for building capacity in ASEAN; and the ARF Ministers' desire for alignment between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus.

#### **Synergy through information sharing**

The security dialogue mandate of the ARF is distinct from the practical defence cooperation agenda of ADMM-Plus. However, while their functions are clearly different, their stated security priorities are very similar, coinciding in four key areas: counter-terrorism; disaster relief; maritime security; and peacekeeping operations. As the ARF transitions towards practical engagement and the ADMM-Plus working groups establish their operational agendas, there is a risk of overlap in the activities of the two fora.

The nexus between the two should be dedicated information sharing on shared security priorities; the ARF DOD is an obvious place for this to occur. The ARF DOD could include a standing agenda item for discussion and reporting back of ADMM-Plus work. The unique Defence leadership of ADMM-Plus would retain the ability to dictate the scope of ADMM-Plus activities and would be the pre-eminent security forum for military-military cooperation.