

Concept Paper for the Establishment of an ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting

I. BACKGROUND

1. The ASEAN Secretariat was requested by the Working Group on Security Cooperation of the ASEAN Special Senior Officials' Meeting (Special SOM), held in Yogyakarta on 9 May 2004, to draft a concept paper on establishing a forum for ASEAN Defence Ministers for the consideration of the ASEAN Special SOM Working Group on Security Cooperation at its next meeting. The Working Group agreed that a meeting of ASEAN Defence Ministers would contribute to the objectives of the ASEAN Security Community as stated in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II of 7 October 2003.

2. The 10th ASEAN Summit, held in Vientiane on 29 November 2004, adopted the ASEAN Security Community (ASC) Plan of Action. Section III.1(c) of the Areas of Activities of the ASC Plan of Action provides that ASEAN shall work towards the convening of an annual ADMM.

3. Recently, there has been increasing recognition of the role of regional cooperation in the promotion of peace and security. For instance, the United Nations has been promoting the concept of "security regions" and the U.N. Secretary-General's Report "In Larger Freedom", which was considered by the Heads of State and Governments in September 2005, called on regional organizations "to play complementary roles" with the United Nations in facing the challenges to international peace and security.

II. EXISTING DEFENCE-RELATED FORA

4. ASEAN defence officials have been involved in ASEAN's security dialogue through their participation in the annual ASEAN Special Senior Officials' Meeting (ASEAN Special SOM) as a Working Group on Security Cooperation since 1996. The ASEAN Special SOM serves as a joint forum between senior foreign and defence officials. Furthermore, ASEAN defence officials attend the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) ministerial meeting, ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (ARF-SOM), ARF Inter-Sessional Group on Confidence Building Measures (ARF-ISG-CBM), the ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC), and the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue (ARF-DOD).

5. Outside the ASEAN framework, various military-to-military interactions and activities have been held over the years, namely (a) ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (or Chiefs of Staff); (b) ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting; (c) ASEAN Navy Interaction; (d) ASEAN Air Force Chiefs Conference; (e) ASEAN Military Intelligence Meeting; and (f) ASEAN Armies Rifles Meet.

III. OBJECTIVES

6. An ADMM shall complement other regional efforts which are promoting security dialogue and cooperation. It shall have the following specific objectives:

- (a) To promote regional peace and stability through dialogue and cooperation in defence and security;
- (b) To give guidance to existing senior defence and military officials dialogue and cooperation in the field of defence and security within ASEAN and between ASEAN and dialogue partners;
- (c) To promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness; and
- (d) To contribute to the establishment of an ASEAN Security Community (ASC) as stipulated in the Bali Concord II and to promote the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) on ASC.

IV. AGENDA

7. The programme for the ADMM should be broad and flexible. The agenda of the ADMM may include the following:

- (a) Exchange of views on regional and international security and defence issues;
- (b) Voluntary briefings on defence and security policies;
- (c) Discussion on related activities outside the ASEAN process;
- (d) Discussion on interaction with external partners; and
- (e) Review of ASEAN defense cooperation.

V. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

8. In its efforts to promote regional peace and security, an ADMM shall be guided by the ASEAN fundamental principles as enshrined in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia of 24 February 1976.

9. Furthermore, the ADMM shall be an integral part of ASEAN and add value and complement the overall ASEAN process and be open, flexible and outward-looking in respect of actively engaging ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners as well as the ARF. In addition, ASEAN shall be in the driver's seat in the ADMM's interactions with ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners and ASEAN Defence Officials should take the lead in ADMM process.

VI. ORGANIZATION AND SECRETARIAT

10. The ADMM shall be the highest ministerial defence and security consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN. It shall report directly to the ASEAN Heads of Government.

11. The ADMM shall be assisted by an ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM), which shall take the lead in the preparations for the ADMM and its activities. The ADMM and ADSOM shall work closely with the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting (ASEAN-SOM), respectively.

12. All reports of defence meetings and activities, such as those mentioned in Section II of this Concept Paper, and future related meetings and activities shall be submitted to the ADMM.

13. Following ASEAN's existing practice, all ASEAN Member Countries shall take turns in chairing and hosting ADMM meetings. The Chairmanship and host of the ADMM shall follow the Chairmanship of the ASEAN Standing Committee. Retreats, special or emergency meetings may be held as necessary.

14. The ASEAN Secretariat shall assist the ADMM Chair, provide technical and secretarial support and act as the repository of ADMM documents. The ASEAN Secretariat shall furnish the ADMM Chair with the established ASEAN meetings practice guide.

15. The host of ADMM, ADSOM and meetings of other bodies under their purview shall assume the organizational cost of holding a meeting while each delegation shall assume the cost of overseas travel and accommodation.

VII. REVIEW

16. This concept paper, an evolving document, shall be adopted by the ASEAN Defence Ministers and can be subject to further review.