

**CONCEPT PAPER:
ESTABLISHMENT OF AD HOC WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP
GUIDELINES ON AIR ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN MILITARY AIRCRAFT**

1. The rising growth, development, and prosperity of countries in the Asia-Pacific has led to an increase in maritime and air traffic in the region. Specific to the air domain, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) estimates that commercial air traffic will double to 7.2 billion passengers in 2035, with more than 50% of this growth – or an additional 1.8 billion passengers – coming from the Asia-Pacific. With prosperity, regional countries are also modernising their militaries, including air forces, both for their own upgrading as well as to meet the demands arising from new regional security challenges. Looking ahead, defence expenditure in the Asia-Pacific is projected to rise by 23% to more than US\$530 billion in 2020. These trends will increase congestion in the air.

2. Since its establishment in 2006, the ADMM has made significant progress in promoting strategic dialogue and cooperation against common regional security challenges. Today, the ADMM cooperates in wide ranging areas from HADR to crisis communications, and crossed a milestone last year when we commemorated the 10th anniversary of its establishment.

3. Recognising that the safety and security of air lanes are important for the growth and prosperity of countries, the ADMM could consider developing a set of guidelines that military aircraft can practise. As a confidence-building mechanism for the region, this will reduce the likelihood of encounters or incidents spiralling into conflict in the event of a miscalculation. The guidelines would be in line with the spirit of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025, which calls on all ASEAN Member States to promote shared values and norms as well as principles of international law, in building a rules-based community. These guidelines will also complement existing aviation standards promulgated by the Convention on International Civil Aviation (the Chicago Convention), the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), and the International Code of Signals (ICS) which ADMM countries have subscribed to. In addition, they complement the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) adopted by the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, which naval aircraft of most ADMM countries already observe.

4. In line with the Joint Declaration of the 10th ADMM, this paper proposes for an ad hoc working group to be established to develop guidelines on air encounters between military aircraft.

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