

**Chairman's Report of the 2nd Meeting of Track II Network
of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutes (NADI)
2 - 5 November 2008**

Introduction

The second meeting of the Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) was organized by the Strategic Research Institute, National Defence Studies Institute, Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters (SRI). The meeting was held from 2-5 November 2008 at the Tide Resort, Bangsaen Beach, Chonburi Province, Thailand.

The list of representatives of ASEAN think tanks and defence ministry institutions is attached. Major General Wisith Jeangprajak, Director of SRI, chaired the meeting.

Adoption of Agenda

- Welcome remarks by Major General Wisith Jeangprajak, Director of the Strategic Research Institute, National Defence Studies Institute.
- Opening address by Ambassador Barry Desker, Dean, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS).
- Exchange of views on regional security and political outlook.
- Prospects for ASEAN defence and security cooperation, and recommendations for cooperation.

- NADI's role in the publication of the ASEAN Annual Defence and Security Outlook.
- Other matters.

The meeting adopted the above agenda.

Chairman's Welcome Address

In his welcome address, MG Wisith Jeangprajak welcomed the representatives of the ASEAN think tanks and defence institutes and offered special thanks to the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) for initiating NADI and serving as its secretariat. MG Wisith highlighted NADI's objective of generating fresh ideas on defence and security cooperation for consideration by the 3rd ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM). In addition to outlining the day's agenda, MG Wisith surveyed the range of security threats that challenge the region in spite of a broad pattern of stability and the promise of greater regional security cooperation.

Opening Address by Ambassador Barry Desker

Ambassador Barry Desker, Dean of RSIS, noted that the unofficial and informal nature of NADI would be conducive to a free exchange of views and ideas to better inform Track I dialogues. Ambassador Desker reviewed the establishment of the Track II of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions. He observed that NADI can contribute by thinking ahead of the curve, anticipating possible security challenges and generating relevant and timely suggestions for cooperation for consideration by the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting

(ADSOM) and the ASEAN Defence Track. Ambassador Desker hoped that NADI participants would participate in their personal capacity, giving free rein to new ideas about defence and security issues, beyond their governments' positions, in order to arrive at useful suggestions for the ASEAN Defence Track.

Exchange of Views on Regional Security and Political Outlook

The NADI representatives had an extensive and constructive exchange of views on the prevailing regional political and security situation. The discussion was framed by the enumeration of ten security trends at both the global and regional levels. The ten global trends are: the reality of US hegemony and a unipolar world order; the emergence of a trend toward multipolarity evident in the rise of China and India; the “clash of civilizations”; growth of global governance; transnational terrorism; war and ethnic conflicts; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; instability in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa; the resurgence of Russia; and the impact of the US election. At the regional level, issues include: the level of US engagement in the region; the prospect of conflict between the US and China; terrorism; the Korean peninsula; security of sea lanes; the possibility of a regional arms race; big-power competition in the region; inter- and intrastate conflicts; non-traditional security (NTS) issues; the ASEAN Charter and the future direction of ASEAN community building. Most critical in the near term is the impending fallout from the looming global economic downturn caused by the US financial crisis. Governments will face direct consequences, such as higher unemployment and increased illegal immigration, while constrained by tightened budgets.

NADI representatives noted that East Asia is relatively stable and the prospect of major inter-state wars within ASEAN appears remote. The most immediate and costly threats facing ASEAN Member Countries are transnational and NTS issues. ASEAN militaries will therefore assume greater roles in assisting their governments to manage these threats by providing support for disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and post-crisis rehabilitation, and ensuring security of sea lines of communication, most notably in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and the South China Sea. These efforts demand that ASEAN militaries continue to increase their capabilities, individually and collectively, to carry out Operations Other Than War (OOTW). Civil-military cooperation will be increasingly important in dealing with these emerging problems and challenges. Concerted, cooperative efforts among ASEAN Member Countries will be crucial in addressing the transnational nature of contemporary threats. However, ASEAN should continue to observe the principles of non-interference and non-intervention in ASEAN Member Countries' domestic affairs and work for mutual benefit in these cooperative efforts.

Prospects for ASEAN Defence and Security Cooperation and Recommendations for Cooperation

NADI took note of the seven threats identified by the 6th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Informal Meeting (ACDFIM). In view of this list of security threats facing the region, as well as the roles and capabilities of ASEAN militaries, consensus emerged that NADI could be most effective by convening working groups to address three issues: humanitarian assistance and disaster

relief (HADR); peacekeeping operations (PKO); and maritime security. The working groups could sponsor workshops, seminars and table-top exercises that would help build confidence and trust as well as enhance cooperation, not only between nations and governments, but also between defence establishments and civil-society organizations (CSOs). The working groups would identify and share international best practices while building relationships that will avail coordination and cooperation in a crisis. Non-government organizations (NGOs) and extra-regional experts could be involved in these discussions as considered necessary. It will also be useful to develop specific civil and military points of contact in ASEAN Member Countries to expedite communications and emergency responses in times of disaster or crisis. A register of ASEAN contact points including personnel and contact details should be compiled, disseminated and regularly updated. Through working group activities, ASEAN civil-military authorities could work out clear procedures for cooperation and coordination to facilitate quick responses in times of crisis.

In order to be more effective in monitoring and coordinating efforts among ASEAN Member Countries in non-traditional and transnational issues, the meeting recommends for consideration of ASEAN governments the establishment of an ASEAN Crisis Monitoring and Coordination Centre. In this regard, the meeting also recommends that a seminar or workshop be held to discuss various aspects of crisis management and peacekeeping, including proper operational procedures, asset capabilities, requirements and availability necessary for expeditious responses.

Participants further agreed that NADI working groups could usefully take up items identified in the ADMM Three-Year Work Programme, such as promoting the development of an ADMM Plus process with ASEAN Dialogue Partners, promoting agreements on the status of visiting forces, and sharing information on submissions to the UN Arms Register, consistent with ASEAN norms and principles.

The meeting addressed two further concerns, namely, funding models and how best to promote policy responsiveness. Participants agreed that greater mutual trust and more effective ASEAN-wide cooperation on issues of common interest would justify the relatively small sums required from participating governments. The possibility of substantial online networking, combined with an annual meeting, was also mooted. With respect to improving policy responsiveness, NADI has a vital role to play in thinking through threats before they materialize and in propagating best practices in its areas of concern. Recognizing the process of confidence building as a categorical good, participants agreed that an annual retreat of top defence officials, from Permanent Secretaries to Senior Policy Officials of the ASEAN Defence Ministries, could facilitate improved working relationships. Participants also acknowledged that NADI will be most likely to realize its promise by holding fast to its Track II and unofficial character, encouraging open discussion and avoiding duplication of existing efforts.

ASEAN Annual Security Outlook

The meeting noted that there are currently a number of annual regional security publications, including the ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) *Annual Security Outlook*, the ASEAN-Institutes for Strategic and International Studies' (ASEAN-ISIS) *Annual Asia Pacific Security Outlook*, and the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific's (CSCAP) *Regional Security Outlook*. The meeting determined that it remains useful for the ASEAN Defence Ministers' track to publish an ASEAN Annual Defence and Security Outlook to reflect the thinking and perception of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' track on regional security issues, the progress made in ASEAN militaries' cooperation and their new roles in the changing security environment. These issues could include contributions by ASEAN in disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and post-crisis rehabilitation and assistance. The publication could discuss best practices and procedures and how best to assist less-developed ASEAN Member Countries increase their capabilities to deal with natural disasters.

The ASEAN Annual Defence and Security Outlook could include the following topics:

- a. ASEAN Defence Ministries' views on regional defence and security outlook, the progress made in ASEAN militaries' cooperation and their roles in NTS issues such as disaster relief and humanitarian assistance;
- b. The efforts made by ASEAN Defence Ministries and militaries to promote confidence building in ASEAN, develop norms of ASEAN defence and security cooperation, and enhance collaboration in the ASEAN Defence Ministers Track;

- c. ASEAN efforts to build long-term personal relationships and promote better understanding and cooperation through various visits and exchange programs, including those of the Defence Colleges/Academies/Universities/Institutes, and annual retreats of key Senior Defence and Military officials;
- d. To highlight published ASEAN Countries' Defence White Papers and other defence and security documents to enhance understanding and transparency (by, for example, making these documents available on the ASEAN Secretariat website);
- e. Track II think tanks can be commissioned to write papers on defence and security issues confronting the region in both the traditional and non-traditional security sectors.

It may be desirable to hold a further meeting to work out a template for NADI publications.

Other matters

(a) Venue for next meeting

The meeting welcomed Vietnam's offer to host the third NADI meeting when it assumes the Chairmanship of the next ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM).

(b) Participation at future NADI meetings

The meeting discussed participation at future NADI meetings. Participants agreed that representatives of defence and security institutions would form the core of NADI delegations. However, representatives of other institutions and

organizations interested in relevant issues could be included in future NADI conferences, seminars, and workshops. The meeting further agreed that the participants at NADI meetings do not represent the positions of their governments but participate in their personal capacity. NADI should be forward-looking and should discuss defence and security issues of concern to ASEAN.

For future NADI workshops and seminars, it was agreed that the host would meet the local cost of conference facilities. However, the cost of airfares and accommodation will be borne by the participants.

Concluding Remarks

The representatives of ASEAN think tanks and defence institutions expressed their sincere appreciation to the Strategic Research Institute, National Defence Studies Institute, Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters, for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements, which ensured a productive 2nd meeting of the Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions.
