

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF
THE TRACK II NETWORK OF ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS
(NADI) WORKSHOP ON "STRENGTHENING CONFIDENCE BUILDING
MEASURES IN THE REGION"
20-21 July 2022
Singapore**

1. The Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) Workshop on "Strengthening Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in the Region" was organised by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, from 20 to 21 July 2022.
2. Representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam attended the Workshop. The list of participants is attached in Annex I. Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS, chaired the Workshop.

Opening Remarks by Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS; and Chairman of the NADI Workshop

3. Ambassador Ong Keng Yong warmly welcomed all delegates and distinguished speakers to the NADI Workshop. He noted that the theme of the Workshop is a timely one, especially since the strategic rivalry between China and the US continues to mount. He highlighted hotspots in the region. If these are not managed carefully, they could blow up into more serious conflict.
4. Ambassador Ong underscored that it was therefore imperative that all parties adhere to existing CBMs, and it was crucial for the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) to chart the way forward for CBMs in the region, with the discussions also taking place at the ADMM-Plus level and ADMM taking the lead on these discussions. Ambassador Ong also indicated that NADI has a major role to play to facilitate this process. He urged the NADI Workshop participants to discuss substantively the current state of CBMs, propose ideas for improving existing CBMs and consider if we need new CBMs.

Adoption of Agenda

5. The Workshop adopted the agenda and the programme, which are appended in Annex II and Annex III respectively.

Keynote Speaker: Ms Yeo Seow Peng, Director (ASEAN & International Affairs), Defence Policy Office, Defence Policy Group, Ministry of Defence, Singapore

6. Ms Yeo Seow Peng highlighted that CBMs are useful in building a safe and stable operating environment for the region's peace and prosperity, as they help reduce the risk of miscalculations – whether at sea or in the air. Ms Yeo said that the ADMM and ADMM-Plus had made good progress in developing and practising CBMs. For example, the ADMM-Plus adopted the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in 2017 and practised it through the ADMM-Plus

Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security Exercise in 2019. The ADMM adopted the Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME) in 2018 and operationalised it within ASEAN through discussions and a table-top exercise. Going forward, the ADMM and ADMM-Plus should continue practising CUES and GAME to ensure that airmen and seamen in the region remain familiar with them. The Plus countries which are interested in GAME can also practise it alongside the ADMM member states. Ms Yeo also stressed that CBMs can take many forms; CBMs can be any initiative or idea that promote trust and confidence building. The ADMM and ADMM-Plus should remain open to new CBMs or to updates to existing CBMs, to ensure that practices on the ground remain relevant.

SESSION I

Brunei Darussalam

Presentation by Ms Siti Diana Othman, Research Officer, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence

7. In her presentation, Ms Siti Diana Othman stated the fundamental role of CBMs in mitigating tensions and preventing disputes from arising between or among ASEAN Member States (AMS), specifically in defence establishments. ASEAN has succeeded in reducing tensions among its member states, by promoting regional cooperation and creating an environment conducive to peace and prosperity since its inception. In the defence sectors, ASEAN defence officials have been involved in security dialogues and CBMs since 1996 under the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). In 2006, the ADMM was established, further solidifying efforts toward increasing confidence in the region. Under the ADMM, there are 23 initiatives across 12 areas of security cooperation (as stated under the ADMM Stocktaking Paper). These have been created to increase CBMs in the region. Ms Siti Diana also updated on one of Brunei Darussalam's CBMs – the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI).
8. Overall, the CBMs opened up cooperative endeavours for the ADMM and created invaluable efforts in strengthening trust and confidence of the region's defence establishments. Although CBMs are viewed in abundance in ADMM cooperation mechanisms, in order for these mechanisms to function more effectively, effort needs to be streamlined to ensure full utilisation of the existing CBMs. As such, SHHBIDSS put forth the following recommendations:
 - a. Streamline current CBMs. Instead of conceptualising new CBMs, the consolidation of current CBMs can contribute to existing ASEAN arrangements. The ADMM Stocktaking Paper has listed the various CBMs and initiatives, and this can be further analysed to streamline these efforts to avoid wastage, identify shortages and make it more efficient.
 - b. Expand CBMs to other countries and stakeholders. ADMM can utilise its existing initiatives to further expand its membership to countries beyond

ASEAN. This will broaden and strengthen the CBMs as well as make it more inclusive and wide-reaching. With ADMM (ASEAN) at the driving table, this could help maintain and promote ASEAN Centrality and values and ensures it remains in the driving seat for defence and security concerns of the region.

- c. Strengthening accountability of existing CBMs. To have existing CBMs as legally binding documents would ensure participating countries comply with the measures that have been set out. However, understanding there may be long processes to comply with any legality measures, such existing CBMs may need to find ways to increase its accountability and ways to encourage participation. This can be done through a system of verification or rewards / recognitions to ensure active participation and the CBMs are on course.

Cambodia

Presentation by Captain Phan David, Research Officer, Department of Policy and Planning, General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence of Cambodia

9. Captain Phan David indicated that the CBMs such as CUES, GAME, and ADI are essential tools in preventing incidents and other potential issues that could lead to escalation and tension within the region. In order to increase the effectiveness of these mechanisms, it is important to be cautious in regard to the use of the terms and definitions to minimise ambiguity. For instance, in GAME, the use of the term “military aircraft” can become vague and pose a challenge to the application of GAME, such as in the case of encounters with UAVs. Specifically for Cambodia, there has not been any scenarios in which the use of CBMs is required. Nevertheless, these CBMs remain effective tools for AMS as well as other nations in maintaining a safe environment.
10. Cambodia encourages that AMS as well as other countries incorporates the CBMs such as CUES and GAME into the ADMM and ADMM-Plus military exercises to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to further enhance the effectiveness of the CBMs. Furthermore, these CBMs can potentially be expanded to be used in other areas, such as civilian vessels as well. Therefore, these CBMs have the potential to be further enhanced.

Indonesia

Presentation by Brigadier General A.Z.R. Dondokambey, S.E., M.Han., Head of Center for Strategic Studies, Research and Development, Tentara Nasional Indonesia

11. Brigadier General A.Z.R. Dondokambey, S.E., M.Han, Head of Center for Strategic Studies, Research and Development, Tentara Nasional Indonesia, highlighted that CUES and GAME are part of CBMs as instruments in international relations for suppressing, preventing, or resolving uncertainties among the AMS and their partners. CBMs are designed to prevent the escalation

of hostilities and build mutual trust, so implementing CBMs is “a must” for achieving stability in regional security. CUES and GAME as part of CBMs for AMS have not yet been maximally implemented. CBMs implementation related to CUES and GAME must refer to their main aspects so that each party may implement them. CBMs as a collective agreement requires consensus from AMS to comply with the initiative. Currently, CBMs are well implemented at the operational level and must be gradually enhanced to gain further regional security and stability.

12. Therefore, he recommended the following: (i) AMS needs to encourage the completion of the formulation of the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea (SCS) in implementing CUES and GAME as part of CBMs to improve and maintain regional security; (ii) AMS needs to socialise CUES and GAME to practitioners at the operational level through the preparation of references to the Rules of Engagement (ROE) used by elements in the field; (iii) AMS needs to carry out multilateral joint exercises as part of the socialisation of the implementation of CUES and GAME; and (iv) AMS needs to utilise the hotline that has been agreed to in anticipating emergency situations which occur in the field, so that any issues regarding incidents at sea can be handled swiftly.

Presentation by Colonel Dr Ir Hikmat Zakky Almubaroq, S.Pd., M.Si., Secretary of the Defense Management Study Program, Defense Management Faculty, Republic of Indonesia Defense University

13. Colonel Dr Ir Hikmat Zakky Almubaroq underscored that communication is the most important gateway for building trust between countries and individuals, therefore, implementing and maintaining effective integrated communication and transparency in actual and real-time data is needed so as to integrate the conditions of each state.
14. ASEAN must open up opportunities for such integration to build trust and maintain regional security and stability. Transparency must be underlined while still maintaining the boundaries in each country, thus a country may withhold information that it deems important to withhold.

Lao PDR

Presentation by Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit, Director General, Military Science and History Department, Ministry of Defence, Lao PDR

15. Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit highlighted that CBMs are important tools that can build trust because it is a prerequisite for effective negotiation. CBMs can help initiate or deepen negotiations to prevent violence or escalation of conflict instead of confronting it directly and can help improve relationships and collaboration and help promote the sustainable peace process. Additionally, the principle responding to the CUES and GAME are effective and adaptable to address the internal situations of many countries.
16. He also emphasised that Laos commits to promoting all existing mechanisms and always gets ready to work with AMS to increase the cooperation on CBMs. In

particular, CUES and GAME would help to reinforce the spirit of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025.

Malaysia

Presentation by Colonel Dr Nizlan bin Mohamed, Director Contemporary Security, Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security

17. Colonel Dr Nizlan bin Mohamed highlighted that, in applying CBMs, AMS have proven to be able to put their differences aside and focus on common goals and concerns. Undeniably, CBMs play a role in maintaining peace and prosperity in ASEAN. Many CBMs projects that were undertaken have proven to increase relations, friendship and trust within ASEAN and its partners. With the current security challenges, there is a pressing need to reduce miscommunications and miscalculations.
18. Malaysia firmly adheres to the CUES mechanism and believes it is time to discuss and further clarify some specific grey areas in CUES and to gauge its effectiveness through an evaluation process. Such an evaluation process could be done academically. With regard to GAME, it warrants fresh directions from the ASEAN Chiefs of Air Force, the need to establish a secretariat and identify the effectiveness of GAME.

Presentation by Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Rahman bin Alavi (Retired), Head of Peace Study Centre, Centre for Defence and International Security Studies (CDISS), National Defence University of Malaysia

19. Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Rahman bin Alavi (Retired) highlighted that CBMs have been found to be an effective tool in improving interstate relationships and cooperation during the Cold-War era, and it has been practiced ever since to reduce tensions and prevent accidental wars and unintended escalation in strife-ridden regions like in the SCS. In order to enhance and strengthen CBMs, it cannot be negotiated within the military sphere, but with other possible options promoting economic, cultural, and respect for human rights exchanges instead. The pragmatic CBMs in-place in the region were CUES and GAME, which were non-ASEAN originated products to reduce tensions in the SCS.
20. Since the establishment of ASEAN, which was the only international organisation that has a regional impact in tackling the SCS dispute, it has played to an extent a role in ensuring dialogue, expansion of overlapping regional interests, and development of trust and cooperation between the parties of the region. Despite the efforts and implementation of “ASEAN-way” regional-based CBMs through political and regional cooperation, the security in the SCS is still fragile and unstable. ASEAN should remain relevant and on top of the situation in the SCS by formulating its own narrative of code of encounters at sea. In mitigating the geopolitical tensions in SCS, one specific area that the regional CBMs should emphasise is to further strengthen the trust among the AMS. Trust and confidence should be built to support diplomatic efforts in strengthening cooperation by upholding the principle of freedom of navigation and the resource-sharing mechanisms for areas like fisheries and hydrocarbons.

SESSION II

Myanmar

Presentation by Major General Myint Kyaw Tun, Deputy Chief of Armed Forces Training (Strategic Studies), Office of the Chief of Armed Forces Training (OCAFT), Republic of the Union of Myanmar

21. Major General Myint Kyaw Tun mentioned that uncertainties between states, including military and political components, can be addressed, prevented, or resolved through CBMs, both formal and informal, and whether unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral. CBMs help reduce uncertainty, misunderstandings, and distrust, and thus reduce the likelihood of accidental or unintended war. He pointed out that the CBMs will not work without the willingness to cooperate on the part of the parties involved and those measures must be seen as “win-win,” not “win-lose.”
22. He argued that CBMs should have achievable, specific goals that are clearly defined, and that they will be most effective if they build on or follow the ASEAN Way. Furthermore, he cautioned that CBMs are not institutions; rather, they are stepping stones or building blocks that may be useful prerequisites for effective institution creation. He said that in order to maintain peace and stability in the region, AMS must act in a strong, consistent manner toward one another, strengthen CBMs, improve communication and close cooperation to address the region’s emerging internal security issues, broaden the scope of cooperation between AMS, and strengthen multilateral meetings in each dispute settlement with nations outside of ASEAN.

The Philippines

Presentation by Mr Aldrin C Cuña, Executive Vice President, National Defense College of the Philippines

23. In his presentation, Mr Aldrin C Cuña noted that the Asia-Pacific region’s security environment is largely underpinned by major power competition, principally between the US and China. Unlike the US-Soviet Union Cold War rivalry, the US-China competition is characterised by the economic interconnectedness of the two countries, as well as the difficulty of other countries in having clear-cut strategic alignment. Hence, being forced to choose sides is a decision that may not necessarily be in line with the national interests of many countries in the Asia-Pacific, including in Southeast Asia. For ASEAN, the strategic competition has implications for the organisation’s centrality in multilateral diplomacy, as well as certain geopolitical issues such as the South China Sea dispute. The evolving regional security environment also suggests that ASEAN must adapt to the changing times. The strategic milieu of the 1990s when ASEAN’s centrality in multilateral diplomacy began to emerge is different from the geopolitical context of 2022. In this regard, ASEAN could still play a modest role in promoting CBMs.

24. Mr Cuña proposed the following initiatives for consideration. First, review and assess current CBMs in accordance with the 2019 Concept Paper on Guidelines for the Assessment of ADMM initiatives, and the 2017 Concept Paper on ADMM and ADMM-Plus Initiatives. Second, encourage cross-sectoral synergies between the ADMM and ARF, particularly in the context of discussing the former's CBMs in the defence-oriented platforms of the latter, specifically the ARF Security Policy Conference (SPC), and the ARF Heads of Defence Universities / Colleges / Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM). Another possible area of synergy is consultation and information sharing among the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM) and the ADMM regarding CBMs, particularly in the context of the ongoing negotiations for an ASEAN-China COC. Third, continuation of existing CBMs such as educational visits and exchanges. The NDCP Executive Vice President also shared the possibility of exchanging best practices vis-à-vis online/hybrid learning in view of the experience under the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr Cuña also shared the College's efforts to promote confidence by inviting foreign military officers to study at NDCP, as well as the recently launched English Language Course (ELC) under the ambit of the ADMM-Wide Education and Training Exchanges (AETE).

Presentation by Brigadier General Edgardo C Palma PA (MNSA), Chief, Office for Strategic Studies and Strategy Management, Armed Forces of the Philippines

25. Brigadier General Edgardo C Palma focused on seven areas that need to be improved. These are: regional defence and security, natural disasters, transnational crimes and terrorism, food security, energy security, health, and cyberspace. First, on regional defence and security, there is a need to strengthen and enhance regional cooperation efforts especially on maritime and air CBMs. On natural disasters, there is a need to enhance and strengthen the region's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) capacity and capabilities. On transnational crimes and terrorism, there is a need to strengthen capacity building efforts through best practices sharing as well as enhance bilateral connections through exchange visits between military training institutions. On food security, there is a need to deepen multilateral agreements within AMS and organise collaborative research on food security. In terms of energy security, there is a need to enhance ASEAN energy cooperation and conduct joint research projects on energy security. On health, since we are heading towards a post-pandemic world, there is a need to strengthen the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and support the region's whole of government efforts. Lastly, on cyberspace, there is a need to strengthen the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (2021-2025) and engage more in various capacity building activities related to cybersecurity.
26. Brigadier General Palma then focused on possible cross-synergies among different CBMs. Utilising the seven focus areas, there is the need to enhance and deepen areas of cooperation and capacity building with other international organisations such as the United Nations (UN). Also, increased collaborative efforts should be sought to be able to further improve the region's CBMs. In the discussion of a possible new CBMs, ASEAN can look to learn and adopt with its counterpart in Europe, the European Union (EU). Thus, the ASEAN can look to:

Establish a CBMs programme; launch a grant competition among different state institutions; organise peace building cultural, educational, medical, and political meetings and seminars; and further develop comprehensive CBMs.

Singapore

Presentation by Ms Jane Chan, Senior Fellow, Coordinator of the Maritime Security Programme, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, RSIS

27. In her presentation, Ms Jane Chan indicated that there was increasing concern regarding the proliferation of unmanned systems, both aerial and subsurface, being deployed in regional waters by navies, enforcement agencies and private individuals. These had led to worries about a lack of rules regulating the use of these systems. As such, Ms Chan suggested the creation of a study group to contribute to the region's understanding of these systems, the responses towards the challenges these systems pose, and whether some of these systems would be deemed a threat. She underscored that such a study group would be useful if it is able to promote mutual trust and confidence, reduce misunderstandings and miscalculation in the air and at sea, and hence lessen the number incidents and accidents in the region.
28. Ms Chan therefore suggested that NADI convene a study group on "Regulating the Unmanned Systems in Regional Waters", which should bring together maritime and legal experts, as well as operational practitioners. The findings from the study group can be submitted to ADMM and should include recommendations on whether there is a need for regional protocols on the operation of unmanned systems in regional waters. As such, Ms Chan gave the following recommendations:
 - a. ASEAN/ADMM should reaffirm its commitment to existing CBMs that are relevant and vital to mitigate tensions and build trust among the defence establishments of AMS.
 - b. ASEAN/ADMM should support the NADI study group on "Regulating the Unmanned Systems in Regional Waters" to investigate and recommend appropriate regional protocols that are voluntary and, where necessary, legally binding, for the operation of unmanned systems in regional waters.

Thailand

Presentation by Flying Officer Siwalee Sirirojborirak, Researcher, Studies Division, Strategic Studies Center (SSC), National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI), Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters (RTARF HQ)

29. Flying Officer Siwalee Sirirojborirak highlighted that over the past decade, the regional geostrategic landscape has changed dramatically. These trends are growing intense and may potentially bring mishaps or miscalculations. Therefore, CBMs are one of the principles that can reduce the causes of mistrust and strengthen confidence between each other For ASEAN, the ASEAN Community

Vision 2025 and the ASEAN Political-Security Community have emphasised the region as one that resolves differences and disputes by peaceful means, while strengthening CBMs, promoting preventive diplomacy activities, and conflict resolution initiatives. Our region has had some success in promoting CBMs with the objective of crisis management and incident prevention such as (i) Codes of conduct and guidelines which are documents that improve the predictability of our actions and activities in the air and at sea, such as CUES, the ADMM's GAME and the ADMM's Guidelines for Maritime Interaction (GMI); all 18 ADMM-Plus navies signed on to CUES in 2017; and (ii) Crisis communication; the ADI is the primary mechanism for providing means by which any two ASEAN Defence Ministers may communicate with each other to arrive at mutual decisions in handling crises or emergency situations.

30. In order to strengthen CBMs in the ASEAN region, recommendations are: (i) Promote the implementation and key ASEAN mechanisms, such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), as a principle of action to build relationships and build trust-building measures among ASEAN member countries; (ii) Promoting CBMs and preventive diplomacy in the framework of the ASEAN Conference on Political and Security Cooperation in the ARF; (iii) Strengthening ASEAN Centrality in regional security and expanding the scope of cooperation to cover new security challenges, such as food security, energy, water, disasters, pandemic, transnational crime, and cyber threats under the ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ADMM-Plus and ARF, etc.; and (iv) ADMM should be more strategic in the design agenda and activities to promote CBMs.

Viet Nam

Presentation by Colonel Vu Cao Dinh, Deputy Director, Department of International Studies, Institute for Defence Strategy, Ministry of National Defence, Viet Nam

31. Colonel Vu Cao Dinh highlighted that, although many CBMs have been implemented, the regional security environment has not been much improved. There are several reasons why the CBMs have failed to meet expectations of the signatories. First, parties concerned lack a willingness to settle disputes and do not pay due regard to common interests. Second, some CBMs, especially the maritime CBMs, have exposed certain limitations during implementation. Third, the process of drafting, consultation, and application of CBMs is often slow, especially when they aim to address sensitive issues that have far-reaching implications for the national interests and strategic interests of parties concerned.
32. Upholding peace and security in the region requires ASEAN to make every effort to improve current CBMs. Accordingly, ASEAN needs to engage in dialogues to promote mutual understanding and overcome distrust; combine CBMs in the politics, diplomacy, and military domains with national defence; promote willingness to collaborate while paying due regard to legitimate interests of one another; consider expanding the scope of CBMs to ensure their effectiveness in actual practice; and harmonise national interests and common interests.

Exchange of Views

33. The workshop was generally positive about the usefulness of CBMs, such as CUES, GAME, GMI, and the ADI. Nevertheless, several delegates highlighted the need for strengthened cooperation to fully exploit the potential of existing CBMs. Delegates noted that more could be studied about unmanned systems given their recent technological development and their impacts on regional security. Views were also expressed on the importance of ensuring and aligning ASEAN CBMs to the concerns and priorities of AMS. The workshop agreed that CBMs in ASEAN should be premised on trust, transparency, and togetherness (3 Ts), as well as technology.
34. The value of cooperation and dialogue between the ADMM, ADMM-Plus, and ARF tracks was also highlighted. This was related to the broader point that a whole-of-government approach should be taken towards confidence building. Such an approach would be useful to address emerging non-traditional security issues which may require the support of the defence and military agencies. In this context, cross-sectoral collaboration and consolidation within ASEAN could help facilitate discussions about new CBMs or the improvement of existing CBMs. Efforts could be made to share information about CBMs across the various agencies under the ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

Recommendations

35. In view of the foregoing, the Workshop proposed the following recommendations:
 - a. NADI recommends more military-to-military and military-civilian interactions to promote exchange of ideas on regional security issues and existing CBMs, as well as to strengthen the ADMM-wide Education and Training Exchanges.
 - b. There should be greater interaction and synergy between the ADMM and the AMM by having regular discussions among officials to better coordinate positions on regional security issues.
 - c. NADI seeks ADMM's consideration to convene a study group to explore and recommend appropriate regional protocols in the operation of unmanned systems in regional waters and airspace.

Other Matters

Forthcoming NADI Activities

36. The meeting noted the updates on upcoming NADI activities:

Date	Activities	Country	Via
5 - 7 September 2022	NADI Workshop: Cyber Threats and Its Impacts to National and Regional Security in Southeast Asia	RIDU, Indonesia	VTC
15 - 17 November 2022	NADI Workshop: Strengthening Border Management Cooperation	CSSRD-TNI, Indonesia	VTC

Concluding Remarks

37. The Chairman of the NADI Workshop extended his sincere appreciation and thanks to all the delegates for their participation in and constructive contribution to the Workshop.
38. The NADI delegates expressed their appreciation to RSIS for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the NADI Workshop.