

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF**  
**THE TRACK II NETWORK OF ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY**  
**INSTITUTIONS(NADI) WORKSHOP ON "STRENGTHENING ASEAN'S CAPACITY**  
**AND RESILIENCE IN THE ADMM-PLUS AMID GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL**  
**CHANGES"**

**02-05 October 2023**

**Viet Nam**

1. The Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) Workshop on "Strengthening ASEAN's Capacity and Resilience in the ADMM-Plus amid Global Geopolitical Changes" was organised by the Institute for Defence Strategy (IDS), Ministry of National Defence of Viet Nam, at Silk Path Grand Hue Hotel, Hue City, Viet Nam, from 02 to 05 October 2023.
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. Major General Vu Cuong Quyet, Director General, IDS, chaired the Workshop.

**OPENING REMARKS BY MAJOR GENERAL VU CUONG QUYET, DIRECTOR GENERAL, IDS, CHAIRMAN OF THE NADI WORKSHOP**

3. Major General Vu Cuong Quyet welcomed the delegates and appreciated their participation in the Workshop. He stressed that over the past 13 years, defence cooperation in the framework of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) has been promoted, resulting in positive results achieved across seven Experts' Working Groups (EWGs), which drives ASEAN's defence cooperation to become stronger, combining strength inside and outside the region to maintain peace, stability, cooperation and development in the region. However, despite the advantages and results recorded, ASEAN's cooperation in the ADMM-Plus is faced with many difficulties and challenges due to the impacts of regional and global changes.
4. The Chairman emphasised the vital role played by NADI in providing recommendations to the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), especially in the dynamics of complicated strategic environment in the region and the world. He also mentioned that due to the menace to peace and stability in the region, ASEAN should constantly strengthen its capacity and self-reliance to consolidate and promote its central role in regional defence and security cooperation mechanisms, including ADMM-Plus, and improve the effectiveness of cooperation in response to common security challenges for each member state's security and interests, making contribution to peace and stability in the region and the world.

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

## **SESSION I: REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL CHANGES: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ASEAN**

**Keynote speaker: Mr Tran Chi Trung, Deputy Director General of the Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam**

6. Mr Tran Chi Trung emphasised that the world and region are characterised by intense strategic competition among major powers and complex developments of issues/flash-points. Although competition between major powers, especially between US and China, is increasingly fierce, complex, drastic, and comprehensive in all fields, there are efforts to navigate their multifaceted relationships. The Indo-Pacific region remains important in major powers' foreign policies. US, China, and Russia actively launch many initiatives to promote force gathering, which increases pressure on small- and medium-sized countries. Flash-points such as Ukraine and the South China Sea, among others, continue to witness complex developments.
7. In his presentation, Mr Tran Chi Trung pointed out that regional and global geopolitical changes present ASEAN with both opportunities and challenges. ASEAN can promote its core values, principles, and mechanisms; enhance its role in addressing regional and global issues; and harness resources from external partners through mechanisms of cooperation such as the ADMM-Plus. On the other hand, it has to confront three huge challenges. ASEAN' security environment is under threat. ASEAN unity and solidarity are challenged. ASEAN Centrality is severely tested in the face of US-led and China-led emerging security architectures.

## **SESSION II: IMPACT OF REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL CHANGES ON DEFENCE COOPERATION AND ASEAN CENTRALITY IN THE ADMM-PLUS**

**Brunei Darussalam (SHHBIDSS)**

**Presentation by Ms Muizzah Harun, Acting Senior Research Officer, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence**

8. Ms Muizzah Harun highlighted that the evolution of defence diplomacy within Southeast Asia indicate growing preference of adopting ASEAN-centred multilateralism in defence cooperation to collectively address pressing security challenges. In particular, the ADMM-Plus has emphasised ASEAN's pivotal role in the region by providing a platform for inclusive dialogue amongst its partners, where it could articulate normative power for engagement and promote confidence-building. Additionally, the seven active and operational ADMM-Plus EWGs have demonstrated ASEAN's ability to move beyond the toothless 'talk-

shop' narrative, through advancing interoperability and leveraging diversity in capabilities, expertise, and resources amongst defence establishments.

9. However, the presentation recognised that AMS defence officials may find it challenging to sustainably assert ASEAN's central role within the region's defence networks, especially against the backdrop of intensifying regional and global geopolitical challenges. These challenges have manifested in the ADMM-Plus, especially through the prevalence of strategic rivalry and mistrust, influence in its institutional outcomes and decision-making process, and avoidance of discussion on issues that may be deemed as sensitive, owing to the platform's primary focus on practical defence cooperation.
10. To strengthen ASEAN's central role in its defence cooperation, the presentation highlighted two recommendations. Firstly, to leverage on ASEAN's convening power to sustain constructive dialogue. The ADMM should continue to champion the ADMM and ADM-Plus as core platforms to address common security challenges and employ conflict and risk mitigation control, as well as foster confidence building between AMS and its partners. Secondly, to continue to review, streamline and synergise existing mechanisms and initiatives within the ADMM and ADMM-Plus. While stocktaking efforts are underway, the AMS defence leaders should continue to ensure that its mechanisms and initiatives can support the positive trajectory of the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus.

### **Kingdom of Cambodia (GDPFA)**

#### **Presentation by Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey, Deputy Director-General of General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs (GDPFA), Director of Sena Techo Unit, Ministry of National Defence**

11. Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey highlighted that the ASEAN has recognized the importance of a collective approach and togetherness to address security challenges, as well as to promote peace and stability in the region. As current environment continues, we are currently living in a challenging time with significant uncertainties as a result of numerous global concerns. As ASEAN passes the half-century mark, rising geopolitical tensions and political difficulties put the organization's structures and member nations to the test in both traditional and contemporary ways. However, The ASEAN's centrality remains crucial for managing the power rivalry the major powers and ensuring peace and stability in the newly forming multilateral and multilayered regional security organizations. ASEAN remains an influential architecture for the enhancement of regional peace, stability, prosperity, and the promotion of cooperation in all fields with its strategic partners.
12. She further mentioned that the ADMM-plus has continues to play key important role to foster communication and cooperation among ASEAN Defence Ministries

and their plus countries with the ultimate goals to enhance mutual trust and practical cooperation and enhances capacity among Member States. Adherent to the fundamental of the ASEAN Charter and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in order to maintain a rules-based regional order based on international law for the benefit of the people, as well as ASEAN's central role as the primary driving force in enhancing defence and security cooperation and confidence-building measures with its external partners with the common objective to maintain peace, security and prosperity in an open, transparent and inclusive regional architecture. AMS have to continuing sustainable efforts to build the ASEAN Community as well as a dedication to fostering friendly cooperations for peace, stability, and development both within ASEAN and with the rest of the world through seeking to understand the historical experiences in order to establish mutual understanding and mutual respects. To Understanding military history is an important building block in laying the foundation of deeper appreciation among each ASEAN Member States (AMS) military and history; and it is also a vital catalyst to promote profound cooperation through experience's sharing, and mutual respect of the past and future can be developed so that we can look to walk strong hand in hand into the future amid pressing challenges. Furthermore, the experience of an individual country in ending conflict can contribute to the development of theoretical approaches to conflict resolutions, where the studies of history and peace can be elevated.

### **Indonesia (CSSRD TNI)**

#### **Presentation by Major General Agape Zacharia Dondokambey, Head of Center for Strategic Studies, Research and Development of Tentara Nasional Indonesia**

13. Major General Agape Zacharia Dondokambey highlighted that global and regional geopolitical changes, especially the shift in power from the West to Asia, affect defense cooperation and ASEAN centrality in the ADMM-Plus process. ADMM-Plus has become an effective platform for practical cooperation among defense institutions of AMS, focusing on seven areas of practical cooperation. However, there are weaknesses in defense cooperation within the ADMM-Plus framework, namely the lack of effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms in ensuring commitment and implementation of cooperation results, as well as the lack of capacity to handle sensitive and complex security issues, such as the North Natuna Sea, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
14. Therefore he recommended that ADMM and ADMM-Plus must strengthen the ASEAN region as a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other weapons of mass destruction by bringing the discussion of nuclear issues and their threats to regional security into the ADMM-Plus agenda through the formation of a special Working Group within ADMM-Plus to discuss this issue comprehensively and

intensively. Second, ADMM and ADMM-Plus must support tackling the smuggling of narcotics and dangerous drugs by increasing the role of ASEAN Our Eyes in monitoring and tracking drug trafficking in the region. Third, ADMM and ADMM-Plus must actively support ASEAN's efforts to maintain territorial integrity and security in this region with intensive discussions in order to maintain regional security stability in the North Natuna Seabased on AOIP principles as guidelines in upholding the principles of international law, such as safety and freedom navigation.

### **Malaysia (MiDAS)**

#### **Presentation by Colonel Abdul Rahman bin Abdul Halim, Director of Regional Affairs, Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security**

15. In his presentation, Colonel Abdul Rahman bin Abdul Halim highlighted that the regional and geopolitical challenges that ASEAN is facing are the biggest test since its establishment. Although the political and economic development and technology were far more advanced during the First Cold War, it made matters more perplexing and complicated. ASEAN's main strength in facing these challenges is the continued activities under various platforms under the ADMM. This includes the soft power, which ADMM and other ASEAN institutions in the economic, education and cultural sectors are applying. The weaknesses would be that ASEAN could not control the superpowers' behaviours and actions; both are permanent members in the United Nations Security Council, and diplomacy is our only tool.

16. Therefore, he recommended that ASEAN needs to continue engaging the superpowers through various dialogues and mechanisms. Continue seeking and identifying common values and shared concerns. ADMM could persuade all its external members to conduct an exercise together to ensure that ASEAN and ADMM remain pivotal in the superpower's competition. Secondly, there is a need to test all the existing Confidence Building Measures (CBM) tools, namely Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME), Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) and the ASEAN China Hotline. These CBMs need review and perhaps upgrade. Thirdly, to continue to pursue the Declaration of Conduct (DOC) and push for the full implementation in the South China Sea in its entirety. In parallel, continue reminding all states to adhere to international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

### **The Philippines (NDCP)**

#### **Presentation by Christine Lisette M Castillo, MIS Defense Research Officer II, National Defense College of the Philippines**

17. In her presentation, Ms Christine Lisette Castillo identified key regional and global geopolitical changes and discussed how these affect defence diplomacy

and ASEAN centrality. Ms Castillo also identified the strengths and weaknesses of defence cooperation in ASEAN. For strengths, ASEAN promotes the peaceful settlement of intraregional differences which allows it to promote a rules-based order for the common good. In addition, the ADMM-Plus EWGs allows Dialogue partners to contribute meaningfully to regional issues. Finally, the willingness and openness to dialogues are always present within ASEAN. For weaknesses, there is a reluctance to take a stand on geopolitical issues and decision-making becomes challenging with consensus. Also, non-ASEAN minilateral groupings within the region may signify that ASEAN still lacks the authority to address regional security issues.

18. Ms Castillo presented some recommendations. First, it is recommended to promote a more purposive and intentional defence diplomacy. While the ADMM has done well in promoting mutual trust and confidence among states in the region, ASEAN still falls short of commanding its authority in the region partly because of the establishment of non-ASEAN security groupings in the region such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS). The presence of these groups indicates that ASEAN in general and the ADMM in particular, still need to improve to address the region's security needs. Second, the ADMM must harness the potential of and opportunities arising from non-ASEAN minilateral arrangements while also avoiding to be eclipsed by these groupings in terms of response to regional challenges. Third, it is important to highlight not only non-traditional security concerns but also elevate traditional security concerns to strengthen ASEAN as an outward-looking region with the help of its Dialogue Partners, as noted in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025. It is high time for ASEAN to reach beyond low hanging fruit. Finally, given the global effects of the energy crisis, it may be apt to consider the creation of an EWG on energy and environment security. Given the global effects of the energy crisis, ASEAN may take this opportunity to lead in promoting the transition to clean energy.

## **Viet Nam (IDS)**

### **Presentation by Sr.Col. Pham Ngoc Thanh**

#### **Director of the International Studies Department, IDS**

19. Sr.Col. Pham Ngoc Thanh pointed out that the geopolitical changes in the world and region have caused profound impacts and posed challenges to the ASEAN's centrality as well as effectiveness of cooperation in the ADMM-Plus. Some primary challenges include (i) the strategic competition among major powers posing challenges to the ASEAN's centrality and ADMM-Plus cooperative effectiveness, and possibly undermining the solidarity and consensus of ASEAN; (ii) the impact of isolated nationalism and power-based unilateral behaviors in international relations challenging ASEAN's multilateralism and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, including ADMM-Plus; (iii) the emergence of new

cooperation mechanisms leading to the competition for influence with ADMM-Plus and other ASEAN-centric mechanisms; (iv) security issues in the world and region evolving quickly and complicatedly some time beyond the coordinating and leading ability of ASEAN; (v) difficulties and challenges within ASEAN such as the gap in development levels, differences in capacity and interests among AMS, the lack of cohesive connection between ADMM-Plus and other ASEAN-centric mechanisms.

20. In order to strengthen ASEAN's capacity and resilience in ADMM-Plus, Sr.Col. Thanh recommended: (i) strengthening intra-regional cooperation on all three pillars of the ASEAN Community, especially economic cooperation to create necessary resources for defense and security cooperation; (ii) promoting the spirit of respect for international laws, mutual respect, equality, and mutual benefit in relations between ASEAN and major powers; (iii) consolidating and strengthening the confidence building among AMS and ASEAN with dialogue partner countries; (iv) complying with and effectively implement the Concept Paper on the ADMM's External Engagements, resolutely maintain ADMM's decisive role in the ADMM-Plus agenda and process; (v) considering reasonably organizing ASEAN-Plus meeting sidelines the ADMM-Plus and the participation of other countries in ADMM-Plus activities based on the interest of ASEAN and cooperative effectiveness.

### **SESSION III: WAY FORWARD FOR STRENGTHENING ASEAN'S CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE IN THE ADMM-PLUS**

#### **Indonesia (RIDU)**

**Presentation by Major General TNI Dr. Priyanto, S.IP., M.SI (Han)**

**Dean of Defence Strategic Faculty, Republic of Indonesia Defence University**

21. According to Major General Dr. Priyanto, in the face of escalating regional threats, enhancing security and resilience becomes paramount. A pivotal step in this direction is establishing the ADMM-Plus Information Fusion Center, envisioned as a nexus for swift information exchange and bolstered joint defence initiatives. There's a growing emphasis on weaving together advanced defence technology with biosecurity measures, laying the groundwork for innovative and agile responses to multifaceted challenges.

22. Major General Dr. Priyanto asserted that the Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) findings are poised to influence and shape the discourse at the upcoming ADMM-Plus in Jakarta, signalling the value of collaborative defence insights. Parallely, educational institutions emerge as crucibles of research, delving deep into the intricacies of defence and security in the ASEAN landscape, thereby playing a pivotal role in shaping the region's strategic future.

## **Lao PDR (MSHD)**

### **Presentation by B.G. Viengxay Somvichith**

#### **Director General of the Military Science and History Department, Ministry of National Defence**

23. B.G Viengxay SOMVICHIT emphasized that ADMM-Plus is an integral part of regional Defence and security architecture. ADMM-Plus is not only a mechanism for AMS and its dialogue partners to strengthen regional Defence and security cooperation, but it is also a mechanism to create initiatives for the practical cooperation of the national Defence in the region to jointly address the emerging issues of regional peace and security. ADMM-Plus has made notable progress in various areas, especially in 7 EWGs under the ADMM-Plus framework.

24. He highlighted that ASEAN's capability and resilience are crucial for addressing challenges, enhancing technical expertise, exchanging information and innovative ideas as well as fostering mutual trust and strength. He also stressed the significance of AMS and its dialogue partners on enhancing their relations and collaboration between ADMM and ADMM-Plus Defence establishments, and strengthening the areas of practical cooperation under the ADMM-Plus EWGs, which could contribute greatly to building of mutual trust, confident and capacity development among AMS and the Plus countries so as to address common security challenges based on the common principles of ASEAN, the ASEAN Charter, centrality and consensus.

## **Malaysia (NDUM)**

### **Presentation by Professor Dr Adam Leong Kok Wey**

#### **Director, Centre for Defence and International Security Studies (CDISS), National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM)**

25. Professor Dr. Adam Leong Kok Wey observed that the ADMM-Plus has made significant and respectable progress in enhancing regional security and contributing to dialogues on peace and security in the wider global perspective. With these inclusive dialogue partnerships, ADMM-Plus has focused on seven areas of practical cooperation, which are: maritime security (MS), counter-terrorism (CT), humanitarian assistance and disaster management (HADR), peacekeeping operations (PKO), military medicine (MM), humanitarian mine action (HMA) and cyber security (CS). The ADMM-Plus is one of the most unique platforms in the world that not just engages all 10 members of ASEAN but also with three of the world's most powerful states namely, China, Russia and the US, reinforcing the importance and value of the dialogue platform.

26. The National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM) proposes three strategies as ways forward to strengthen ASEAN's capacity and resilience in the context of



ADMM-Plus. Firstly, to initiate capacity building programs in cyber security with plus partners. Secondly, building cooperative partnerships in cyber defence industry with Plus partners to boost cyber capacity and resilience in ASEAN, and thirdly to extend NADI partnerships into a NADI-Plus platform with ADMM-Plus partners. These strategies have also taken into account of the varying capacities and state of resilience of ASEAN members in the domain of cyber security, which will be the targeted domain for cooperative efforts.

## **Myanmar (OCAFT)**

### **Presentation by Major General Myint Kyaw Tun, Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces Training, Office of the Chief of Armed Forces Training (OCAFT)**

27. Major General Myint Kyaw Tun highlighted that the ADMM-Plus was formed to boost security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, aiming to enhance stability and address security challenges through dialogue and collaboration among ASEAN member states and eight dialogue partners. He argued that although the ADMM-Plus aimed to enhance security and defense cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, there's controversy about whether it's fully achieved these goals. Some worry it might become a burden for ASEAN due to added pressure, uncertainty, and strategic competition in the region. He suggested that AMS and their partners should conduct a thorough review of the ADMM-Plus to weigh its benefits, like enhanced dialogue and cooperation, against potential downsides, including the risk of increasing regional tensions. This review is essential to shape the future direction of the ADMM-Plus in the best interests of ASEAN and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

28. He pointed out that ASEAN Centrality is vital in a changing Asia-Pacific, but it faces challenges like great power competition, South China Sea disputes, and economic dependence. To preserve it, member states must unite, bolster the organization's capacity, and navigate complex geopolitics. He warned that the emergence of alliances like QUAD, AUKUS, and the Trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue poses significant threats to ASEAN, introducing complexities and potentially disrupting regional stability. These alliances may also undermine ASEAN's centrality and unity as member countries align with different groups, diluting ASEAN's influence. Navigating this evolving geopolitical landscape to maintain centrality and unity remains a challenge for ASEAN. He emphasized that considering new dialogue partners like the EU, Canada, and the UK for ADMM-Plus is ongoing, but expanding to Western countries requires careful deliberation to maintain the forum's cohesion and effectiveness in promoting regional security. ASEAN should weigh the pros and cons before proceeding. At the end of his presentation, MG Myint Kyaw Tun made the following recommendations:

- ASEAN should conduct a review to assess whether there is an excessive reliance on non-ASEAN states for regional security and stability. Additionally, it should evaluate whether the involvement of Plus countries is impacting ASEAN's Centrality and Unity.
- ADMM should carefully consider the advantages and potential challenges associated with expanding ADMM-Plus, as it has the potential to impact ADMM's role in regional security and stability decision-making.
- All AMS and dialogue partners must adhere to the ASEAN Charter's principles, including mutual respect and equal rights among member states. Exclusion of any member state from activities like ADMM and ADMM-Plus is not acceptable and goes against the Charter. Every AMS has the inherent rights to represent their state and participate fully in all activities to uphold ASEAN's unity, integrity, and inclusivity.

### **The Philippines (OSSSM)**

**Presentation by COL HAROUN-AL-RASHID I JAJI PA (GSC),  
Chief, Office for Strategic Studies and Strategy Management, Armed Forces of  
the Philippines (OSSSM, AFP)**

29. Colonel Jaji discussed the importance of ASEAN's capacity and resilience in the ADMM-Plus. Four factors were taken into consideration, amplified economic resilience; diversified partnership; commitment to conflict resolution and peaceful negotiations; and adherence to the principle of non-interference. Further, four dimensions were identified which need to be strengthened in relation to ASEAN's capacity and reliance on the ADMM-Plus. These dimensions are: economic, environment, cybersecurity, and health. To strengthen the economic aspect, there is a need to heighten the level of trade and investment and focus on the growth of the manufacturing and service sector. One example of strengthening the economy is the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement. Second dimension is the environment. To strengthen the environmental aspect, there is a need to diversify the agricultural production and enhance the irrigation systems which would aid in the promotion of sustainable agriculture. One example is the ASEAN Green Growth. Third dimension is the cybersecurity which focused on strengthening and implementing the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (2021-2025). With this, there is a need to strengthen the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence. Last dimension is on Health. There is a need for ASEAN to champion the universal health care coverage by ensuring equitable access. This can be possible by strengthening public health systems and capabilities of disease surveillance and response.

30. As informed by Colonel Jaji, the Philippines is deeply committed in reinforcing ASEAN's self-reliance through various strategic initiatives. The country focuses on bolstering food security by leveraging its agricultural prowess to increase

productivity and streamline regional distribution. A paramount commitment lies in fortifying disaster resilience, with efforts concentrated on refining early warning systems, constructing disaster-resistant infrastructure, and enhancing preparedness and response capabilities. From these collective endeavors is the Philippines' resolute commitment to advancing regional self-reliance. The nation's conviction lies in the belief that a self-sustaining and robust ASEAN is paramount for fostering enduring peace, stability, and prosperity across the region. As a recommendation regarding the four aspects, there is a need to invest in inclusive growth and training; enhance disaster risk reduction capabilities; advance cyber readiness capabilities; and advocate universal health care coverage. For the way forward, ASEAN Centrality means building on their strength to lessen their external dependence; Food security is now a vital component of ASEAN Centrality; and Food Security encompasses the economic, environment, and health aspect.

## **Singapore (RSIS)**

**Presentation by Mr Lawrence Anderson,  
Senior Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies,  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore**

31. In his presentation, Mr Anderson highlighted that ASEAN's greatest achievement was to stabilise Southeast Asia by managing relations. He underscored that ASEAN Centrality meant that ASEAN, at the heart of the region's dynamics, provides the main regional security platforms to overcome challenges and engage with all the major powers. He emphasised that ASEAN is not a defence alliance, unlike the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Mr Anderson stressed that ASEAN needs to continue working with like-minded partners, make better use of its regional security platforms, and decide what the bloc is or is not prepared to do together and with the major powers. He suggested that AMS should continue to discuss regional geopolitical matters, even ones that are sensitive, and how AMS should respond to these contingencies.
32. Mr Anderson concluded that AMS must do all we can do strengthen ASEAN capacity and resilience. Key to this are the practical measures to reaffirm ASEAN Centrality and solidarity, engaging the great powers in an even-handed way, and keeping ASEAN's platforms as inclusive as possible. He made the following recommendations to that end:
  - ASEAN and its institutions should make all efforts to maintain ASEAN Centrality, especially in keeping ASEAN an inclusive platform for engaging the great powers and other external actors, no matter how tense the geopolitical rivalry is.

- To ensure ASEAN solidarity, ASEAN should discuss sensitive issues relating to great power rivalry and come up with common views before engaging with external countries directly. This includes having such discussions at the ADMM, and demonstrate a united stance on critical issues, before engaging the Plus countries.
- The ADMM could also look at conflict prevention in areas within Southeast Asia where great power conflict is likely to flare up, particularly Taiwan and the South China Sea, as well as how to respond to any contingency in those flashpoints.

## **Thailand (SSC)**

**Presentation by Group Captain Choosak Kasatewit,  
Director, Regional Studies Division, Strategic Studies Center (SSC),  
National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI), Royal Thai Armed Forces**

33. Group Captain Choosak Kasatewit emphasised that the ADMM-Plus is the main platform for ADMM to engage with Plus Countries. The ADMM established the platform as a robust, effective, open and inclusive component of the regional security architecture that would enable the ADMM to cooperate with the non-ASEAN countries to build capacity and prepare ASEAN to address the complex security challenges. However, in the recent years the strategic environment in Southeast Asia region changed significantly, which poses pressure for ADMM to engage with external powers as follows: (i) the increasing rivalry and strategic competition among major powers in the Indo-Pacific region. In the last few years, many countries unveiled their own concepts related to the region such as the Indo-Pacific concept as well as the formation of minilateral security arrangements which may impact on how ASEAN will engage with external powers and ASEAN Centrality in dealing with security issues in the region. ASEAN has adopted the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) reflecting the acknowledgement of the geopolitical change which AOIP could guide ASEAN's defence and security cooperation in order to maintain the stability of the Indo-Pacific region and Southeast Asia Region; (ii) the increasing complexity of cyber threats and cybercrimes with the advent of technological developments along with the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerate the digital transformation; (iii) the impact of climate change on defence infrastructure and military operations is already being felt and is expected to continue in the next future. The challenge from climate change may provide opportunities for defence sector to expand scope of cooperation. These above-mentioned challenges will continue in the future, so ASEAN's capacity and resilience in the ADMM-Plus need to be strengthened in order to overcome these future challenge.

34. In order to strengthen its capacity and resilience in the ADMM-Plus, recommendations are as follows: (i) ASEAN should send a clear message that major powers are welcome to cooperate with ASEAN with transparent approach and inclusive cooperation for regional benefit and development. However, AMS should not be forced to choose side among the competition; (ii) the ADMM should support the implementation of the AOIP; (iii) ADMM-Plus should remain to be the main platform of engagement between ADMM and Plus Countries; (iv) the ADMM and ADMM-Plus should have a holistic approach to cope with non-traditional security challenges, particularly cyber security; (v) the ADMM should define the specific areas of future defence cooperation, which have implications to the military interoperability especially on climate change.

## **EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

35. ASEAN Member States should remain committed towards the promotion of regional, social, political and economic connectivity to enhance comprehensive security, capacity building, sustainable development and regional cohesiveness to narrow the development gaps among AMS.

36. ADMM should consider the promotion of cooperation on pressing issues which necessitate greater defence efforts in the future such as food, energy and environment security in the ADMM-Plus contributing to equitable access to food, transition to clean energy and environmental concerns.

37. The workshop suggested the optimization of interaction between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the AMS.

38. The ADMM should respond to the rivalry of major powers in the region in a diplomatic, cohesive and united manner.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADMM CONSIDERATION**

39. On the basis of the Concept Paper on the ADMM's External Engagements, the ADMM should promote a more practical and effective defence diplomacy and cooperation with non ASEAN countries, emphasising that the collective interest of ASEAN is the priority.

40. ADMM should discuss internally on sensitive issues relating to great power rivalry and where possible come up with common views, united stance on critical issues before engaging the Plus countries.

41. ADMM could look at conflict prevention in Southeast Asia where great power conflict is likely to flare up and promote discussion of traditional security issues in the Indo-Pacific, including nuclear proliferation, Cross Straits development, South China Sea and their consequential threats to regional security into the ADMM-Plus agenda.
42. ADMM should identify concrete initiatives that are consistent with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
43. ADMM should enhance the promotion of mutual understanding, trust and confidence building through cooperation in military education and exchanges of military history and military culture among the AMS.
44. Together with strengthening the ADMM CyberSecurity and Information Centre of Excellence, ADMM should initiate capacity building programs and other initiatives to promote cooperation with Plus countries, particularly in cyber security, climate change, pandemic etc.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

45. Lao PDR will organize the 17<sup>th</sup> annual NADI meeting from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024.
46. Thailand will host a NADI workshop in late July 2024.
47. Cambodia will host a NADI workshop from September 20<sup>th</sup> to September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 in Siem Reap.
48. Singapore will host a NADI workshop in October/November 2024.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

49. The Chairman of the Workshop extended his appreciation to Heads of delegation and all delegates for the support and active contributions during the deliberations of the Workshop.
50. The NADI delegates expressed their sincere appreciation to the Institute for Defence Strategy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements, which ensured the success of Workshop.