
GOALS AND PRINCIPLES FOR ADMM

First, let me express what a pleasure it is for me to be here on this panel, together with my counterpart, Turkish Deputy Minister of National Defence Şuay Alpay. Let me also thank MiDAS for inviting Singapore to the 4th Putrajaya Forum and the wonderful hospitality in Malaysia. This is my 3rd Putrajaya Forum. It is always an honour to address this community. I am well aware that we have security experts here, so I do not intend to give a panoramic view of the security challenges. It would be redundant. But instead, I will focus on a few key points, for your consideration. And, I propose for the next 15 minutes or so, to focus on ASEAN, because as Prime Minister Najib eloquently said before me - the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), for all intents and purposes, is the regional security grouping for ASEAN.

ADMM's Progress as a Regional Security Grouping

ASEAN is home to over 622 million people, with a combined GDP of US\$2.6 trillion. Last year, ASEAN celebrated the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community, a major milestone in our regional integration. As a region, ASEAN has experienced strong economic growth in the recent two decades. With the third largest labour force in the world, booming middle class and huge potential in productivity gains, ASEAN is projected by some experts to become the world's fourth largest economic zone by 2030. Not very far away.

In the security arena, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting, or the ADMM, has also made good progress since its implementation ten years ago. Prime Minister Najib talked about how he inaugurated (the ADMM). He was Defence Minister in 2006 when the ADMM was inaugurated. And since then, the ADMM has embarked on cooperation to build confidence and capabilities in areas such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), maritime security, peacekeeping, and crisis management.

Yet, despite this progress, I would remind us all that the ADMM is still relatively very young as a regional security grouping when compared to say, NATO or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I think it will do well for ASEAN in this stage of development - the ADMM to learn from the strengths and weaknesses of other groupings if we want the ADMM to continue its important work in strengthening defence ties between its members.

Indeed, history teaches us that not many regional groupings have withstood the test of time to remain intact or relevant. Those that have succeeded have done so because they are able to anchor their organisation deeply on a set of goals and principles. These goals and principles provide for the common good of all and are able to withstand or surmount episodic challenges by continuing engagement between the members and with other partners.

The OSCE is an appropriate example. I remember just this February, when I attended the Munich Security Conference, how the German Defence Minister said to me, on looking back, how the OSCE had evolved; how it went through different security environments in Europe; and how she was very glad that this organisation provided a

platform when there were issues in Europe. And as many of you know, OSCE was born during the Cold War with the objective of improving relations between the Soviet bloc and the West. It was founded with the signing of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, a non-binding agreement, but which laid out ten guiding principles. These principles include, amongst others, respect for sovereign equality of its members, refraining from threat or use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes - much of which is in our ASEAN Charter as well. When the Cold War ended, the OSCE seemed destined for irrelevance. However, the OSCE continued to renew itself with new Charters throughout the years by building on its ten guiding principles. Today, the OSCE, with 57 members, is more relevant than ever before, and enhances Europe's security by tackling contemporary issues such as arms control, human trafficking and terrorism. Arising from recent events surrounding the Crimea and Ukraine, the mechanisms and platforms of the OSCE were useful in allowing its members to continue their dialogue, even when questions were raised with regard to adherence to the guiding principles of individual members.

ADMM Principles

Thus far, if I can come to the ADMM, the ADMM has been guided by principles enshrined in two major instruments, namely the ASEAN Charter and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. While these instruments have served us well, I believe that on the occasion of the ADMM's 10th anniversary this year, it is timely for the ADMM to establish a set of key principles specific to defence cooperation within the ADMM.

Some may ask why it is necessary to have key principles beyond the general aims of ASEAN. I believe that for the security communities, principles are necessary because they provide clear boundaries, so that the common space is delineated. Initiatives that fall within this space can be actively pursued, while initiatives that transgress boundaries can be early and more easily identified, before they cause unhappiness and discomfort among member states. Let me illustrate with an example which, again, PM Najib touched on - the Strait of Malacca. The Strait of Malacca initiatives, if I can serve your recollections, began in 2005. It was actually at the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) where this issue was discussed. At that time, piracy was an issue in the Strait of Malacca, some of you may have forgotten, but it was such a problem that Lloyds deemed the Strait of Malacca as a "war-risk zone" and raised insurance premiums for ships passing through the area. To address the issue, there was consensus on three principles for maritime security of the Strait of Malacca, and these principles were reached in the informal setting of SLD, namely: the primary responsibility lies with the littoral states; the international community, organisations such as the International Maritime Organisation and major user states have a role to play; and any measures taken must be in accordance with international law and must respect the sovereignty of the littoral states. Some of you may say these three principles are no brainers, but the very fact that they were articulated gave comfort to the international community, set boundaries of responsibility and sovereignty for the littoral states, and provided a framework. These principles articulated the clear lines of primary responsibility, out-of-bound markers for the individual states, as well as space for member states to provide assistance. They, in fact, laid the foundation for an overall framework where all members were clear on how they could contribute or could not. These principles were also translated into tangible initiatives for cooperation. It was PM Najib who proposed then the proposal for joint air patrols above the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS). This led to the launch of the Malacca Straits Patrols "Eyes-in-the-Skies" initiative

in Sep 2005. Singapore believes that similarly, a set of principles for the ADMM would be timely in this stage of our development.

I would again articulate three principles for consideration. First, the ADMM shall respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of each ASEAN member state, even as we build the ASEAN community. This includes deployment of the militaries of individual ASEAN member states (AMS) because it must be clear that while we operate or cooperate in partnerships, sovereignty of nations should never be compromised. As an example, this principle would give assurance that even if ASEAN supported any security initiative, it could not assume or override the authority of that member state in the deployment of its security forces. Second, cooperation shall be on a voluntary, non-binding and flexible basis. This principle is important because there may be specific circumstances when all AMS can reach an agreement as the interests of individual countries are aligned. But there could very well be instances where there are differences, and this provision allows members to observe their individual rights and obligations. The third principle: we must maintain an open and inclusive regional security architecture with ASEAN at the centre. We cannot tackle many of the security challenges that we face today by ourselves. We must be ready and willing to work with partners from around the world who also have a stake in the security and stability of our region. The Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea are clear examples.

These three principles that I have just articulated are not new to any of us, I am sure. Neither are they exhaustive. They have, in some form or other, been captured in ASEAN documents such as the ADMM Joint Declarations. But nonetheless, articulating them specifically provides clarity and predictability for ADMM and regional partners.

Our Common Goals

Besides principles, there ought to also be common goals and objectives for the ADMM and our partners. Let me suggest two areas to focus on.

First, we need to enhance regional peace and stability through dialogue and practical cooperation. Here I would like to report that the ADMM-Plus, in particular, which is ten plus eight countries, has achieved significant results by fostering mutual trust and practical cooperation to tackle non-traditional security issues. Let me give you an example. The ADMM-Plus HADR and Military Medicine Exercise hosted in 2013 by Brunei, which was then the chair of ASEAN, brought together all ten member states and eight Plus countries. It was a very substantive exercise. It involved more than 3,000 personnel, seven ships and 15 helicopters. We are extending this as an indication of our commitment to practical cooperation: four ADMM-Plus Exercises would be conducted this year. And I am happy to report that approximately 18 naval vessels and 20 Special Forces teams have already been committed to the Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism (MS&CT) Exercise that Singapore, Brunei, Australia and New Zealand will co-host next month. We should also explore new areas of cooperation where we can continue to work together. For example, the ADMM-Plus is now considering a new Experts' Working Group on cyber security, which will help to raise our abilities to deal with one of the more urgent security threats we face today.

Second, we need to come together to create and abide by a common set of mechanisms, protocols and norms that guide behaviour in this region. This will help to defuse tensions as well as reduce the risks of miscalculations and mistakes. We should quickly conclude the Code of Conduct, which our respective Government leaders

have agreed on as the most important deliverable to reduce tensions in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, it is important that we keep channels of communications open. I am glad that Brunei is now putting the finishing touches on a Direct Communication Link for all ten ASEAN members, with a view to expand it to include the Plus countries.

During the 3rd ADMM-Plus in Kuala Lumpur recently, Singapore suggested expanding the CUES, the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea that was promoted by China at the 14th Western Pacific Naval Symposium in April 2014, for white shipping, coast guards and fishing vessels, as we know encounters take place between them and military vessels. Regional navies can work towards creating a code of conduct to guide submariners on manoeuvring to prevent accidents during an unlikely encounter. We can also establish rules of behaviour to regulate air encounters between military aircraft, similar to the ones established between China and the United States in September 2015.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, together, these principles and goals will help the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus in tackling security challenges in our region. These principles will also help the ADMM as we work with other multilateral platforms and dialogues such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Our region has enjoyed substantial growth and prosperity for the past decades and it continues to demonstrate tremendous potential and promise. As PM Najib said, there is too much to lose. To keep it that way, ASEAN must work together with other partners to strengthen our regional security architecture. Establishing key principles gives us a common starting point while setting goals helps steer us in clear directions for the benefit of all of our people in ASEAN.

Thank you very much for the attention.
