

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**TRACK II NETWORK OF ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS  
(NADI) WORKSHOP**

**“ASEAN Centrality in an Era of Great-Power Competition”**

**16-17 December 2021**

**Via Videoconference**

**Introduction**

1. The Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) Workshop on “ASEAN Centrality in an Era of Great-Power Competition” was organised by the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP). It was held via videoconference on 16-17 December 2021.
2. The representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam attended the Workshop. The list of the participants is at **Annex I**. The workshop was chaired by Brigadier General Archimedes H Viaje AFP (Ret), PhD, MNSA, CESE, President, NDCP.

**Welcome Remarks by Brigadier General Archimedes H Viaje AFP (Ret), PhD, MNSA, CESE, President, NDCP**

3. Noting that the pandemic has yet to end, as the virus continues to evolve with new, more infectious variants, Brigadier General Viaje pointed out that rapid change also characterises the evolving security environment. These developments include the formation of the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) security pact, the continuing advancement of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), as well as the maritime and territorial disputes in the South China Sea (SCS). In this context, the topic of the workshop, “ASEAN Centrality in an Era of Great-Power Competition,” is very timely and relevant, given ongoing developments in the region's strategic milieu.
4. Brigadier General Viaje stressed that the region stands at a crossroad as great powers have begun to engage in an increasingly intense competition that spans economic, military, and even cultural, medical and scientific dimensions. Whilst competition is inevitable and may be beneficial in some cases, third parties such as ASEAN Member States (AMS) must be prepared to preserve their sovereignty and uphold their security. In this regard, the NADI is well positioned to discuss such issues. Founded in 2007, NADI was established as a “Track II think tank group to support the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM).” This track II character allows NADI to discuss defence and security issues that the ASEAN Summit and the ADMM have raised, as well as fresh ideas and issues that are ahead of the curve, and can contribute to further enhancing ADMM and its cooperation with the external countries through the ADMM-Plus.

## **Adoption of Agenda**

5. The meeting adopted the agenda and the programme attached in **Annex II** and **Annex III** respectively.

## **Session One: The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and the International Rule of Law**

### **Brunei Darussalam**

*Presentation by Muizzah binti Haji Harun, Research Officer, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam*

6. The presentation provided an overview of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), key historical strategic contexts which led to its establishment, as well as its evolvement. As a rules-based international organisation, the fundamental principles outlined in the TAC, such as mutual respect of all nations and non-interference, remains highly relevant for ASEAN in upholding the region's sovereignty, identity and centrality. The presenter also highlighted Brunei Darussalam's continued commitment towards advancing ASEAN's fundamental principles and in promoting international and regional engagement, since its membership into ASEAN in January 1984.
7. Under the ambit of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), Brunei Darussalam remains committed towards sustaining the momentum of defence cooperation amongst AMS and with its Plus partners, amidst challenges such as major power rivalry and the emergence of non-traditional security threats. For instance, the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), spearheaded by Brunei Darussalam, aims at providing a communications platform during emergencies and crises. The hotline's expansion to Plus Countries in 2019, provides further opportunity for peaceful resolution and is key for the mitigation of potential disagreements and in resolving disputes. In moving forward, several recommendations were highlighted for consideration of the ADMM and NADI members:
  - a. Firstly, continue to advance and strengthen AMS and Plus Countries' commitment towards ASEAN values and principles, amidst great power rivalry in the region. Such efforts have been championed by AMS through various initiatives and documents, such as the Concept Paper on The ADMM's External Engagements.
  - b. Secondly, to enhance opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration, particularly for the use of confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) amongst AMS and Plus Countries. For instance, the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI) may be an avenue to optimise information sharing and cooperation, and help promote trust, peaceful resolution and synergy.

- c. Lastly, for NADI Members to consider the development of activities on an ad-hoc basis, which engages think-tanks within and outside of ASEAN specialising on defence and strategic issues of importance to AMS, and particularly the ADMM. For example, as a follow-up of the NADI Workshop on “Emerging Technologies and its Impacts on Defence and Security”, NADI members may consider conducting an event centred around identifying ASEAN-led mechanisms to enable AMS in overcoming national and regional technological disparities.

## **Indonesia**

*Presentation by Lt Col Aviation Engineering Novky Asmoro, ST, MSi (Han), Lecturer of Defense Economics Study Program, Republic of Indonesia Defense University (RIDU)*

8. The proposed measures that can be submitted in increasing the effectiveness of ASEAN cooperation based on The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) principles should adapt to a new paradigm to deal with internal and external challenges of ASEAN. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation should be able to become the main instrument of centrality, unity and solidarity in strengthening the existence of ASEAN and develop effective cooperation not only through information sharing but also to the intelligence exchange level.
9. There are several points that we can take into account on the development of ASEAN in the last fifty four years, such as the adoption of the TAC. The treaty has not only been widely recognised as a code of conduct and international law for interstate relations in Southeast Asia but also in the wider region. Moreover, the TAC has successfully prevented any major outbreak of open conflict and war in Southeast Asia in the last fifty four years. In addition, the TAC has also become the hallmark of ASEAN's existence, centrality and engagement amongst its members with the non-regional states in the world.

## **Singapore**

*Presentation by Dr Joel Ng, Research Fellow, Centre for Multilateralism Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*

10. Dr Joel Ng described how ASEAN had developed the rule of law since the signing of the ASEAN Charter. He underscored that this organic process involved incrementally building on past precedents that included statements of values, the Charter, formal summit decisions, as well as other treaties and agreements to ensure consensual participation and support for the rule of law. Dr Ng affirmed that this task was more challenging with external partners who had fewer commitments aside from ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, but a similar process was being attempted that had seen tangible results such as the ADMM-Plus adopting the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea. Dr Ng stressed that the challenge now for ASEAN was that increased geostrategic

competition would make external consent harder to obtain, whilst rival frameworks were emerging that would threaten ASEAN centrality.

11. ASEAN therefore needed to strengthen its own structures and institutions to promote the rule of law. Dr Ng recommended that: (i) AMS should consider ways to move from general statements to specific mechanisms to narrow the space for arbitrariness and ambiguity; (ii) The ADMM should persist in efforts to create regional norms, best practices, and codes of conduct to respond to emerging non-traditional security issues such as cybersecurity and artificial intelligence; and (iii) The ADMM should work towards strengthening implementation mechanisms so that best practices may develop.

## **Session Two: ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) and Individual Country Relations with Major Powers**

### **Indonesia**

*Presentation by Major General Jhonny Djamaris, S.I.P, M.I.P., Head, Center for Strategic Studies, Research and Development (CSSRD), Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI)*

12. Major General Jhonny Djamaris, S.I.P, M.I.P. highlighted that the rivalry between the United States and China has been deeply entrenched politically and economically, as well as defence and security, thus affecting the stability of ASEAN. In this regard, he pointed out the importance of using the views of the AMS' Chiefs of Armed Forces, for the importance of maintaining peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in the region.
13. Therefore, he recommended minimising potential conflicts due to the competition for the influence of great powers in ASEAN by utilising relations with emerging powers to influence great powers; playing a transformative role through adaptive policies in addressing conflictual issues, not only in the calculation of profit and loss, but also on the consideration of cultural and historical factors; and responding to this competition, not only relying on a rationalistic-mechanistic approach such as dialogue at the regional level, but also through back-door diplomacy.

### **Myanmar**

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

14. Major General Myint Kyaw Tun, in his presentation, mentioned that China proposed to upgrade its relations with ASEAN to "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" as part of its Neighborhood Diplomacy, although South China Sea disputes between China and some AMS are not yet resolved. He also mentioned that the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy of the United States and the activities of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and the

Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) security partnership are believed to counterbalance China's growing power in the region. At the same time, some regional powers are also increasing engagement with the region through trade, investment, and deepening political and security ties. He raised his concern about Southeast Asia becoming a hotbed of strategic rivalry between major powers since they are trying to expand their influence in the region through various efforts. He also expressed his opinion that the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) is perceived to be an attempt to enhance ASEAN's community building process and to strengthen the existing ASEAN-led mechanisms.

15. He suggested that the ASEAN does not need to take sides and can overcome the current challenges by strengthening ASEAN centrality. He also expressed his doubt that major powers are manipulating ASEAN centrality. Moreover, he suggested that ASEAN should assert its role as a regional consensus-builder, and encourage building a multi-polar regional order to avoid undermining the value of ASEAN Centrality.

## **Philippines**

*Presentation by Mr Mico A Galang, Defense Research Officer II, Research and Special Studies Division, NDCP*

16. In his presentation, Mr Galang noted that the regional security environment is increasingly being defined by great power competition. Whilst ASEAN was founded during the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, the current geostrategic competition between Washington and Beijing is different in at least two ways. First, Washington and Beijing—as well as other countries in the region—are much more economically interdependent with each other. Second, with such economic interconnectedness, it is more difficult for most countries to have clear-cut strategic alignment, as many states did during the Cold War. He noted that for many years, ASEAN has been the driver of multilateral diplomacy in the region. The fact that major powers continue to engage and participate in ASEAN-led platforms suggest ASEAN's continued diplomatic role. However, the strategic milieu of the 1990s when ASEAN's centrality in multilateral diplomacy began to emerge is different from the current geopolitical context. In this regard, the emergence of new platforms, like the Quad or AUKUS, that also aim to manage or address security challenges, could be seen as complementary rather than in competition with ASEAN. After discussing the risks and opportunities of great-power competition for Southeast Asia, he underscored that ASEAN's primary role is to manage the relations between and amongst its members. If ASEAN manages Southeast Asian relations well, great powers would have minimal opportunities to exploit the organisation's internal divisions. A more coherent and peaceful ASEAN will enhance the organization's agency, as well as that of its member-states.
17. In moving forward, Mr Galang pointed out that there is an imperative to bridge the development gap amongst AMS. Strengthening the capacity of AMS to address various security challenges is another key imperative. The ADMM-Wide Education and Training Exchanges (AETE) can be used in this regard. In

both areas, ASEAN can leverage its long-standing relations with Dialogue Partners to advance security and development. There is also a need for ASEAN to enhance its current platforms and initiatives. Despite criticisms, ASEAN – the ADMM in particular – has adopted measures to help manage traditional security concerns, such as ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), Guidelines for Maritime Interaction (GMI), and the Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME). The implementation of the Concept Paper on the ADMM's External Engagements will reinforce ASEAN centrality in regional defense diplomacy. Moreover, there is also an imperative for ASEAN to continuously adapt to the evolving security environment, as well as to contemplate and help address emerging security concerns such as cybersecurity, and coercive actions which fall below the threshold of armed conflict.

## **Thailand**

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

18. Group Captain Choosak Kasatewit stated that ASEAN was established in 1967 to protect the region from the great power competition during the Cold War, and prevent the region from being divided or engaging great powers. ASEAN has managed itself well in terms of intra-regional issues for decades. The concept of ASEAN centrality was then formalized in the ASEAN Charter which was adopted in 2007, and ratified by member states in 2008. According to the ASEAN Charter, one of the purposes of ASEAN is to maintain its centrality as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with external partners in a regional architecture that is transparent, open, and inclusive. Under the APSC Blueprint 2025, there is an emphasis on the importance of strengthening ASEAN unity, cohesiveness, and centrality in shaping the evolving regional architecture built upon ASEAN-led mechanisms, as well as deepening the cooperation with dialogue partners and other external partners including the new potential ones. However, with the current changing global order and emerging tensions from major powers, particularly between the United States and China, ASEAN's role in the multilateral architecture has faced challenges, particularly from multilateralism driven by major powers rather than ASEAN and the proliferation of non-ASEAN-centric minilateral arrangements. The advent of US-led initiatives such as the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy, the Quad, and AUKUS, underscore the fact that extra-regional powers are seeking minilateral options outside the multilateral framework led by ASEAN. On the other hand, China, whilst still participating in the ASEAN-led mechanism, has developed its own direction through Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI).
19. In conclusion, Group Captain Choosak Kasatewit recommended the following:
  - a) ASEAN should be more cohesive and make sure that the pattern of great power rivalry is more cooperative than competitive; and
  - b) ASEAN should take advantage and engage with think- tanks institutions to come up with new creative ideas to strengthen the effectiveness of ASEAN-led mechanisms.

## **Viet Nam**

*Presentation by Colonel Hoang Van Canh, Researcher, Institute for Defence Strategy (IDS), Ministry of National Defence, Viet Nam*

20. Located in the central part of the Indo-Pacific, Southeast Asia is recognised as an important geostrategic area in the region. The ASEAN Community, after more than five years of foundation, is increasingly cohesive and constantly growing, becoming an indispensable factor in the region as well as in the strategies of major countries. Despite some shortcomings and limitations, the role of ASEAN centrality in regional security management through promoting dialogue and cooperation is undeniable. ASEAN-centric security cooperation mechanisms such as ADMM, ADMM-Plus, ARF, and EAS have increasingly proven effective and their influence has been beyond the region, attracting the attention and involvement of many countries as well as international organisations. ASEAN's status in relation with major countries is increasingly enhanced.
21. The international political and security environment in the region keeps changing rapidly and profoundly, bringing both opportunities and challenges to the consolidation and strengthening of the role of ASEAN centrality in the regional security architecture. In particular, the impact of competition amongst major powers may lead to the division and disunity within ASEAN, as well as increasing the risk of conflicts and arms race. The emergence of new cooperation mechanisms initiated by major powers such as Quad, AUKUS, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) can potentially compete for influence with the central role of ASEAN. To further consolidate and strengthen its central role in the regional architecture, ASEAN needs to persistently build trust amongst its member states, strengthening internal solidarity and creating collective strength in addressing international issues. Intra-block cooperation should be maintained practically and effectively, promoting mutual development whilst proactively preventing and responding to traditional and non-traditional security risks in the region. Tackling relationships flexibly, especially those with great countries, ensures harmony with interests and common stance of ASEAN's principles, including ADMM's external engagements.

## **Malaysia**

*Presentation by Professor Dr BA Hamzah, Director, Centre for Defence and International Security Studies, National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM)*

22. Prof Dr Hamzah chastised ASEAN's lack of centrality in managing regional security especially amongst the major powers. ASEAN centrality refers to the ability of the organisation to influence the behaviour of major powers not to undertake policies that could undermine or injure the interests of the AMS.

23. As the convener of regional security mechanisms, ASEAN encourages major powers to do its bidding. Whether in ASEAN-Plus Three (APT) that was formed in 1997, which includes China, Japan, and South Korea, the much-enlarged East Asia Summit (EAS) which held its first summit in 2005, or other ASEAN-led forum such as the ASEAN Regional Security Forum (ARF), ASEAN expects to set the agenda on regional security and in other regional economic forums including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the connectivity infrastructure mechanism. Recent studies show that ASEAN centrality in these institutions has been on the decline.
24. The involvement of Quad and AUKUS has further complicated the geopolitical dynamics and balance of power in the region. With its domestic problems, ASEAN is no longer the preferred choice for Washington that seeks to engage Quad and AUKUS to challenge China, its rival in the region. Although the consequence of sidelining and bypassing ASEAN will not be immediate, it has taken a toll on ASEAN's centrality.

### **Session Three: National Economic Interests and ASEAN Cooperation**

#### **Cambodia**

*Presentation by Lieutenant Colonel Mel Kunpiseth, Deputy Chief of Office of Social Services, Department of Policy and Planning, General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs (GDPFA), Ministry of National Defense, Cambodia*

25. In his presentation, Lieutenant Colonel Mel Kunpiseth noted the emergence of new financial and economic initiatives and how these can contribute to regional and international development and prosperity. In the context of the current development of Asia and its future needs, the formation of new economic and financial projects—such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)—is considered timely and relevant. Moreover, these initiatives have somewhat complemented the existing international financial institutions such as World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in fostering regional connectivity and economic development projects.
26. Lieutenant Colonel Mel Kunpiseth emphasised that whilst ASEAN engages in these economic and financial projects, ASEAN centrality and its leading role in regional economic architecture must be maintained. He suggested the following points to ensure ASEAN centrality amidst geopolitical competition:
- a. ASEAN should strengthen its commitments to narrow the socio-economic disparity, to reduce poverty and socio-economic disparity amongst AMS and between ASEAN and the rest of the world. This can be done through the full and effective implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integrations (IAI) and its Work Plan.
  - b. The role and implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) must be encouraged. In terms of strategic



significance, RCEP is a major accomplishment for ASEAN since it signifies another significant step forward of regional integration in line with the ASEAN Economic Community. It also contributes to enhancing ASEAN centrality in regional frameworks and strengthening ASEAN cooperation with regional partners

## **Lao PDR**

*Presentation by Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit, Director General, Military Science and History Department (MSHD), Ministry of National Defence, Lao PDR*

27. Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit stated that the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected most countries worldwide, especially in people's livelihood and economic development. Whilst many countries in the region are working towards economic recovery and resilience, the rivalry of major powers is testing ASEAN centrality whilst worsening its economic recovery and development.

28. In this regard, Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit suggested that in order to address the challenges of economic and trade competition, ASEAN should enhance comprehensive cooperation amongst its members and its dialogue partners in economy, trade and investment, and promote the realisation of the integration and connectivity mechanism to strengthen the national economic recovery under the ASEAN centrality for mutual benefits. ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), RCEP, the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025) are just a few examples of existing practical cooperation mechanisms that the region should take into account in order to strengthen the regional economy by integrating AMS and its dialogue partners. Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit also stressed that whilst connectivity plays an important role in supporting economic and investment cooperation, supply chains and regional and international financial institutional cooperation are also essential factors in driving the action plans, programs, projects, activities and other initiatives of ASEAN and its dialogue partners. Thus, ASEAN should also attach importance to the discussion and cooperation with all financial institutions which are interested in cooperating with ASEAN.

## **Malaysia**

*Presentation by Lt Col Dr Maimunah Omar, Assistant Director of Contemporary Security Study Centre, Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS), Ministry of Defence, Malaysia*

29. Increasingly, ASEAN is facing major power competition. The US rebalance to Asia, China's rise, and Japan's re-engagement with the region have the potential to weaken ASEAN's unity and solidarity due to their rivalry for influence in the region. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it has also contributed to the change of economic transformation and growth of AMS. The impacts of this crisis are unthinkable extensive and severe. The rivalry between the powers could reshape the stability and economy of ASEAN. Therefore,

ASEAN's unity and solidarity need to enable it to play the centrality role in the region.

30. To enhance ASEAN centrality, there is a need to think and understand collectively towards a common goal. Some initiatives that could be considered are contributing technical expertise and resources to assist ASEAN in building up its collective human and technical capacities, exchanging best practices and transparency, enhancing confidence, and capacity building. Apart from information exchange, it is critical to share experiences and lessons learned through seminars, workshops, or dialogues not only at a strategic level but also at various levels. In dealing with a regional power that could potentially disrupt regional stability, some mechanisms that ASEAN should look into are to deepen and strengthen its cooperation and connectivity amongst its members, strive to maintain ASEAN centrality in dealing with external powers, and avoid being drawn into major power rivalry that might undermine regional stability.
31. ASEAN can continue to be a central player in the region despite changes in the dynamics of major power rivalry and other issues. The challenge for ASEAN would be the management of external relations. If ASEAN cannot preserve its centrality, it would run the risk of becoming irrelevant and might open possibilities for the external powers to steer the situation to their advantage.

### **Summary of Discussions**

32. The participants discussed the need to uphold human rights in Southeast Asia. There should be no discrimination on the basis of race, language, or religion in furtherance of respecting diversity amongst the peoples of ASEAN. Some participants underscored that advancing human rights in the region can further strengthen ASEAN's stature in its relations with external countries.
33. In the context of the principle of non-interference enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, the participants also discussed backdoor diplomacy as one of mechanisms in addressing disputes in the region.
34. On the issue of ASEAN centrality, some participants noted that the concept, although not formally defined, refers to the organisation's efforts to be at the driver's seat of multilateral diplomacy in the region. Indeed, ASEAN is at the centre of regional mechanisms like ARF, EAS, and ADMM-Plus. Some participants pointed out that geopolitical competition has affected ASEAN centrality with the rise of other regional groupings like Quad and AUKUS. In this context, internal cohesion of ASEAN must be strengthened.
35. The participants also discussed how ASEAN should respond to the rise of AUKUS. Mindful of the different national interests of AMS, some participants raised that ASEAN could explore some form of coordinated response to the emergence of new regional platforms. Some participants noted that the emergence of new security architectures and the contestation of major powers could affect the balance of power in the region. In this regard, there is a need to adhere to the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty

(SEANWFZ), Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

### **Recommendations to the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)**

36. The NADI Workshop on “ASEAN Centrality in an Era of Great-Power Competition” recommends the following for ADMM’s consideration:

- a. Strengthen relations and cooperation amongst AMS. Bridging the development gap, addressing disputes, and supporting capacity-building efforts can help promote ASEAN’s internal coherence and stronger consensus on regional security issues. In this regard, the operationalisation of the ADMM-Wide Education and Training Exchanges (AETE) could further achieve the goal of strengthening the capacities of AMS in addressing defense and security challenges.
- b. Advance ASEAN centrality by strengthening platforms of cooperation and implementation of initiatives. AMS can reinforce the commitment and engagement of external countries to mechanisms such as the ARF, APT, EAS, and ADMM-Plus, which are inclusive platforms for dialogue and cooperation. These arrangements can promote more specific cooperative efforts to narrow the space for arbitrariness and ambiguity. The ADMM, in particular, can sustain its efforts in implementing initiatives which are aimed to bolster ASEAN’s central role in regional defense diplomacy, and to play a role in managing regional security concerns. Amongst others, these initiatives include the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), Guidelines for Maritime Interaction (GMI), Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME), and the Concept Paper on the ADMM’s External Engagements.
- c. Enhance the commitment of AMS and Plus Countries towards ASEAN’s norms and principles, amidst the era of great-power competition. Cognisant of the need to uphold the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and the principles of the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC), AMS should advance efforts to create regional norms, best practices, and codes of conduct to respond to a whole range of security challenges.
- d. Leverage the relations with Plus countries in order to advance cooperation on post-COVID-19 recovery efforts. As the region transitions into a new normal, collaboration amongst AMS and Plus countries is critical in shaping the trajectory of peace and prosperity after the pandemic. Mindful of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), and the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity 2025, the Plus countries can also support the AMS efforts in addressing economic disparities and building capacity.

- e. Continue to explore emerging areas of defence cooperation including, but not limited to, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and coercive actions below the threshold of armed conflict.
- f. Consider, for NADI members, the development of activities on an ad-hoc basis and keeping ASEAN in the driver's seat, when we engage with think-tanks within and outside of ASEAN specialising on defence and strategic issues of importance.

### **Other Matters**

37. Brunei Darussalam provided updates on the NADI joint publication initiative on emerging technologies.

38. The participants discussed the NADI activities for the year 2022:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Via</b>
21 - 23 March 2022	15 <sup>th</sup> NADI Annual Meeting / 7 <sup>th</sup> NADI Retreat	GDPFA, Cambodia	Physical / VTC
27 - 28 April 2022	NADI Workshop: Addressing Climate Change Holistically: Way Forward for Defence-Focused Contribution	SHHBIDSS, Brunei Darussalam	VTC
28 - 30 June 2022	NADI Workshop: ASEAN Security Challenges in the Next Five Years (2023-2027)	SSC, Thailand	VTC
19 - 21 July 2022	NADI Workshop: Strengthening ASEAN CBR Cooperation	RSIS, Singapore	VTC
Early September 2022	NADI Workshop: Cyber Threat and Its Impacts to National and Regional Security in Southeast Asia	RIDU, Indonesia	VTC / Physical
15 - 17 November 2022	NADI Workshop: Strengthening Border Management Cooperation in the Region	CSSRD TNI, Indonesia	Physical / VTC

### **Concluding Remarks**

#### **Closing Remarks by Brigadier General Archimedes H Viaje AFP (Ret), PhD, MNSA, CESE, President, NDCP**

39. In his remarks, Brigadier General Viaje congratulated the participants for the successful conduct of the NADI workshop. Although the issues discussed in the workshop may not be typical of the non-traditional security discussions, it is important that these issues be discussed because they are extremely relevant to the overall peace and security of the region.

40. The discussion of ASEAN's centrality is crucial, for it is a potential source of strength in helping Southeast Asia to navigate, if not manage, great-power competition in our region. Over the course of our workshop, the delegates discussed ways that this centrality could be strengthened, including economic cooperation within ASEAN, and continuing to operationalize the ASEAN Political Security Community. In closing, the NDCP President thanked all the delegates for their active participation in the NADI Workshop.

**Closing Remarks by Mr Jolkipli Bin Haji Hidop, Acting Director, SHHBIDSS, Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam**

41. Closing the remarks in his capacity as the NADI Chair 2021, Mr Jolkipli bin Haji Hidop first expressed condolences and sympathies to respective NADI colleagues and member states for the losses and devastation caused by the eruption of Mount Semeru in Indonesia, Typhoon Rai that hit the Philippines, and the COVID-19 pandemic across the region.

42. In partnership with RSIS as the NADI Secretariat, SHHBIDSS is reviewing the NADI Terms of Reference (TOR) and hopes to circulate the updated TOR to all NADI members before the 2022 NADI Annual Meeting. Mr Jolkipli bin Haji Hidop expressed hope that the updated TOR will be endorsed by all NADI members during the said meeting.

43. After commending the NDCP for successfully hosting the last NADI workshop for 2021, the SHHBIDSS Director noted the NADI members' unwavering commitment to achieve the objectives of NADI as a Track II platform, starting with the conduct of the 14th NADI Annual Meeting and followed by five (5) workshops through virtual mode under Brunei Darussalam's chairmanship.

44. After highlighting the various security issues and concerns raised during the NADI activities for 2021, Mr Jolkipli bin Haji Hidop expressed appreciation to all NADI members for supporting Brunei Darussalam's NADI chairmanship and looked forward to further enhancing cooperation under Cambodia's upcoming chairmanship.

**Acknowledgement**

45. The delegates conveyed their appreciation for the excellent arrangements by the Philippines in chairing the NADI Workshop on "ASEAN Centrality in an Era of Great-Power Competition."

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