CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF
Track II Network of ASEAN Defence AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS (NADI) Meeting

"The Emerging Security Architecture in Asia-Pacific, Assessment of Implications,
and Recommendations for ASEAN"
18th – 21st September 2024
Siem Reap, Cambodia

1. Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) Meeting on **"The Emerging Security Architecture in Asia-Pacific, Assessment of Implications, and Recommendations for ASEAN"** was organised by General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence, Cambodia from 18th – 21st September 2024

2. Representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Singapore, Kingdom of Thailand and Socialist Republic of Vietnam attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached in Annex I. Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey, Deputy Director-General of Policy and Foreign Affairs (GDPFA), Director of Sena Techo Unit. Ministry of National Defence, Cambodia chaired the meeting.

<u>Welcome Remarks by Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey, Deputy Director-General of Policy and Foreign Affairs (GDPFA), Director of Sena Techo Unit. Ministry of National Defence, Cambodia.</u>

3. LTG Nem Sowathey extend a warm welcome to head of delegates, colleagues and distinguished participants in the Track II NADI meeting, organised by the General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs (GDPFA), the Ministry of National Defence Cambodia. LTG Sowathey stated that this meeting aims to explore two critical topics of regional significance: "Assessment of the Evolving Mini-lateral Security Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific and its Impacts on Regional Security" and "Managing Proliferation and Addressing the Duality of Technological Application (AI and Cybersecurity) within ASEAN." These discussions, engaging defence and security studies institutions, think tanks, and academia from ASEAN Member States (AMS), seek to foster mutual trust and confidence among defence establishments amidst these evolving challenges.

4. In the current Asia-Pacific geopolitical landscape, the rise of new mini-lateral security arrangements alongside multilateral cooperation has reshaped the regional security order. ASEAN remains central to this evolving framework, and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus continue to play pivotal roles in maintaining peace and adapting to new security challenges. Emphasizing the importance of security enhancement and strategic understanding in the interconnected global context, Cambodia aims to enhance its defence capabilities and international relations through strategic planning and collaboration.

5. In the digital era, emerging technologies like AI and cybersecurity have become critical in the defence sector. While these technologies bring significant operational benefits, they also pose challenges for military adoption in safeguarding national security. NADI, through its diverse expertise, supports ASEAN mechanisms in addressing these evolving threats and provides valuable insights to the ADMM on strategies to manage the challenges posed by these technologies, particularly in response to growing cyber threats.

6. The expected outcomes from today's NADI Meeting are:

   a. First, we aim to examine the opportunities and challenges posed by evolving minilateral security arrangements in the region, with a focus on assessing their impacts and implications for the ASEAN-led regional architecture. This will include a

thorough analysis of how these arrangements may complement or challenge existing structures.

b. Second, we will explore ways in which ASEAN can enhance its capacity and resilience in cybersecurity, utilizing the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus mechanisms to strengthen regional cooperation.

c. Finally, we will deliberate on effective strategies to address the challenges posed by emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, while fostering collaborative efforts to reinforce regional resilience against cyber threats. Our discussions will also focus on identifying and developing appropriate mechanisms to address these challenges within the ASEAN framework.

Expert Presentation on "Assessment of Emerging Security Partnerships in Asia-Pacific and Its Impacts on Regional Security" – by H.E. Dr. Chheang Vannarith, Chairman of Advisory Council of the National Assembly of Cambodia.

7. H.E. Dr. Chheang Vannarith shared his views on geopolitical megatrends stressing the emergence of a multiplex world characterised by intensifying geopolitical rivalries, strategic trust deficit, disruptive technology, economic fragmentation, the decline of multilateralism and rules-based international order, and the clash of civilisations. He foresaw that geopolitical risks are on the rise and the world is getting more complex and volatile. In the Asia Pacific region is the epicentre of global power shifts. Indeed, it's at an inflection point.

8. There is a need to continuously promote strategic trust and confidence building measures, strengthen open and inclusive multilateralism and rules-based international order. ASEAN plays a pivotal role in shaping the evolving regional order, stressing the importance of trust, norms and rules and the promotion of the principles of peaceful co-existence, mutual respect, and mutual interest. The convening power and normative power of ASEAN needs to be maintained, with the support of dialogue partners. Within the context of the ADMM and ADMM Plus, we need to mitigate and reduce the risks of overpolicisation and oversecurisation of regional security issues. We should collectively conduct strategic foresight and futures thinking exercises so that we can build shared vision and move forward together. Trust-based, result-oriented, and forward-looking cooperation is needed. He also suggested revisiting the concept of security connectivity during Cambodian chairmanship of ASEAN in 2012.

Keynote Addresses by General Nem Sowath, Director-General of Policy and Foreign Affairs, Cambodia's ADSOM Leader

9. General Nem Sowath expressed his sincere appreciation as well as his deepest sympathies for the devastating impact of the recent severe floods and typhoons in Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Philippines, and Thailand. He stated that in recent decades global power dynamics have shifted dramatically, transitioning from a bipolar world order between 1945 and 1989, to a unipolar system from 1989 to 2008, and now towards a complex multipolarity. This evolution is largely driven by the rise of emerging powers, particularly in Asia, which have altered the international system. Major powers such as China, India, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and key actors from the Global South are playing increasingly pivotal roles in shaping global affairs. This multipolar landscape is characterised by a balance of power that aims to ensure political stability and foster peace through economic interdependence. Regional mechanisms, such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), QUAD, AUKUS, and defence-related forums like the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, serve as essential platforms for cooperation across economic, political, and military domains. Cambodia, exemplifying its commitment to multilateralism, has reiterated its dedication to peace and dialogue, as demonstrated through its active participation in such frameworks and

its promotion of the Win-Win Policy to resolve conflicts. This multipolar order offers a promising avenue for deeper integration, regional stability, and peaceful coexistence.

10. Cambodia, with its history of civil war, strongly opposes actions that fuel rivalry, divisiveness, or threaten peace and security. The nation's peace was achieved through implementation of the Win-Win Policy, which ended civil conflict and facilitated Cambodia's national development. Cambodia is committed to contributing to a peaceful ASEAN and believes that the members of ASEAN can work together to promote peace, harmony, and development across ASEAN, despite their differences in culture, religion, and history.

11. The rapid advancement of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity has become a significant topic of global concern. While these innovations promise to enhance human communication and cooperation, their swift development also presents new challenges, particularly in the realms of security and governance. In today's workshop, we seek to engage in a meaningful exchange of perspectives, offering recommendations to the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) on how best to address these issues. Cambodia has actively contributed to the ADMM-Plus framework, having co-chaired the Expert Working Groups (EWG) on Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) in previous cycles. In the 2024-2027 cycle, Cambodia will assume the co-chairmanship of the EWG on Cybersecurity alongside Australia, with a focus on enhancing ASEAN's cyber capabilities and regional resilience. This leadership role offers an opportunity to strengthen cooperation and interoperability among ADMM-Plus nations in addressing the complex challenges of the digital age. He also emphasised the importance of maintaining ASEAN centrality and consensus in shaping the ADMM-Plus mechanism, as these principles are crucial for ensuring its effectiveness and sustained relevance. He strongly believes that this meeting will yield fruitful outcomes and further regional cooperation.

Adoption of the agenda:

12. The meeting adopted the agenda and the program, which are attached in Annex II and Annex III respectively.

SESSION I: Presentation on the "Assessment of Emerging Security Partnerships in Asia-Pacific and Its Impact on ASEAN Centrality and Unity"

Brunei Darussalam
Presentation by Mr. Abdul Malik Kamis, Acting Director of Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam

13. Mr. Abdul Malik Kamis highlighted that in a world increasingly focused on the geostrategic competition between US and China, the recent proliferation of new political and security partnerships will pose a challenge to ASEAN's centrality and unity in the evolving regional security architecture. He focused on major partnerships such as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) that seeks to reaffirm ASEAN centrality; the various US-led minilaterals such as the QUAD and AUKUS; and China's security partnerships through the utilisation of its major geopolitical tools, notably the Global Security Initiative (GSI). By design, the non-ASEAN-centric partnerships are either too mutually exclusive or align closely towards great power interests. Should these partnerships be treated as alternatives rather than additions, they have the potential to diminish ASEAN's centrality, affect the AOIP's future implementation, and can end up complicating the intense geopolitical landscape, threatening to split ASEAN along fault lines as Member States' commitment to ASEAN are challenged by the allure of new groupings that appeal more to their national interests and alignments with certain powers.

14. Most recent developments in the geopolitical order suggest that the emerging partnerships, and also the trend of forming new partnerships, are here to stay; and while ASEAN faces

threats from these partnerships, there are also opportunities. Therefore, the following recommendations were suggested:

a. ASEAN should strengthen both its centrality and unity, which will likely require ASEAN to redefine the concept of centrality itself, to ensure that the AOIP will be consistently and effectively implemented, as well as enhancing ASEAN's capacity in driving regionalism, and thus further reaffirming ASEAN centrality as the way of conduct in the regional security architecture.

b. ASEAN should leverage the opportunities arising from emerging partnerships, by fostering cooperation and dialogue with major players, and more importantly to adapt by refurbishing its ASEAN-centred mechanisms and exploring new, innovative approaches to enhance ASEAN's strategic importance in an increasingly crowded geopolitical order.

Republic of Indonesia (CSSRD, TNI)
Presentation by Air-Vice Marshal Jorry S. Koloay, S.IP, M.Han, Chief of CSSRD TNI

15. Air Vice Marshall Jorry S. Koloay, S.IP, M.Han highlighted the emerging security partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region that is complex dynamics shaping regional security governance and their implications for ASEAN centrality and unity. The evolution of strategic partnerships, the role of great powers, and the impact of regional crises underscore the importance of effective cooperation and leadership in addressing security challenges. ASEAN's ability to navigate these dynamics, maintain unity among its member states, and engage with external partners will be key in shaping the region's security architecture and promoting stability and cooperation. ASEAN should therefore remain focused on a more inclusive multilateralism, maintain its unity, and serve as a neutral platform for managing broader regional dynamics.

16. Based on the conclusions regarding security partnership in the Asia-Pacific and its impact on ASEAN centrality and unity, here are three concrete recommendations that can be implemented by the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM):

a. Intensification of ADMM Cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). This can be done by encouraging the active involvement of all ASEAN member states in security dialogue and cooperation, and ensuring that these platforms remain inclusive and neutral, so as to reduce the dependence of ASEAN countries on major powers and strengthen their bargaining position in facing regional security dynamics. In this regard, ASEAN Member States need to avoid being too involved in minilateralism to avoid fragmentation, while maintaining the principle of non-intervention.

b. Developing Collective Response Mechanisms to Non-Traditional Threats. The ADMM should focus its efforts on developing collective response mechanisms to address non-traditional security challenges, such as terrorism, climate change, and natural disasters. This can be done by expanding the scope of cooperation within the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre) and facilitating joint exercises and capacity building in disaster management and cybersecurity. In doing so, the ADMM can strengthen ASEAN solidarity and maintain its centrality in maintaining regional stability.

c. Strengthening ASEAN Centrality Through More Proactive Defence Diplomacy. The ADMM can take steps to strengthen ASEAN centrality by conducting more proactive defence diplomacy in the form of joint exercises to enhance interoperability both bilaterally and multilaterally, one of which is by establishing strategic partnerships with partner countries outside the region that are in line with ASEAN's interests, without relying too much on one great power. In addition, the ADMM should continue to encourage the resolution of regional disputes through ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the negotiation of the Code of

Conduct in the South China Sea, to ensure that ASEAN remains a key driver in the regional security architecture.

Lao People's Democratic Republic
Presentation by Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit, Director General of MSHD

17. BG. Viengxay Somvichit explained the ASEAN security cooperation with partners, especially EWG such as: counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, military medicine, maritime security, peacekeeping, cyber security and humanitarian mine action, under the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus which is the top security cooperative mechanism between ASEAN Member States and the Plus countries. He also emphasised that the challenges of ADMM-Plus are related to the dialogue partners is the maintained of ASEAN Centrality or it could dilute the decision-making process based on consensus once the dialogue partners do not recognise and deeply understand the provisions of ADMM including loose connections, lack of continuity of coordination, insufficient strategy and effective agreement. At the same time, the competition between the major powers has been increasing "strategic investment" in a comprehensive way to strengthen the military cooperation between the allied countries in the region.

18. In order to deal with the challenges, he highlighted the ASEAN Member States should build a consensus to maintain the ASEAN Centrality and unity for regional cooperation as well as promote ASEAN community in a formal and effective manner. At the same time, ASEAN should increase its internal resilience; as well as raising capacity, technical expertise and coordination at the national level; as well as requiring support from external partners. In addition, defence and security cooperation should ensure that bilateral cooperation with external powers does not affect the transparency or political and security sensitivities and misunderstandings between ASEAN and the dialogue partners.

Malaysia (MiDAS)
Presentation by Brigadier General Zainudin Bahari Senior Director Comprehensive Defence, MiDAS
Presentation by Colonel Samhasri Samah Director Regional Affair, MiDAS

19. Since the early millennium, security partnerships such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) have emerged to improve Indo-Pacific security through strategic alliances, technology cooperation, and addressing regional threats. However, concerns have been raised that AUKUS may trigger geopolitical reactions, intensify an arms race, and jeopardise ASEAN's leadership and cohesion in regional security matters. Australia has stated that nuclear-powered submarines will not carry nuclear weapons, will not breach the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), will not develop any nuclear-armed submarines, and will follow regulations governing submarine passage through Indonesian waters established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Australian public's stance on acquiring nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS agreement is divided.

20. MiDAS proposes three recommendations: Maintain regional unity and centrality by reaffirming its commitment to the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) while supporting inclusivity, transparency, and international law. Strengthen intra-ASEAN collaboration through the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Political-Security Community. ASEAN should broaden its partnerships with other big powers and engage in global forums; It should continue its engagement with Australia, which presents both opportunities and challenges, emphasise inclusivity, and promote its role in regional security dialogues. Continuously seek assurances from AUKUS members that the agreement will not undermine ASEAN's unity, ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality), or SEANWFZ (Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone); Lastly, ASEAN must adapt to changing geopolitical realities by rethinking assumptions and exploring new engagement methods. By leveraging its position, ASEAN can bridge major powers, contributing to regional stability and prosperity.

Republic of the Philippines (NDCP)
Presentation by Colonel Myroade De Leon Assistant Chief of OSSSM

21. The presentation of Col. De Leon focuses on the impact of emerging security partnerships in the Asia-Pacific on ASEAN's centrality and unity, examining arrangements like the QUAD and AUKUS. It highlights how these minilateral initiatives challenge ASEAN's influence by potentially creating divergent interests among member states. The QUAD's focus on technology and maritime security and AUKUS's provision of nuclear-powered submarines could strain regional security dynamics. However, ASEAN could mitigate these challenges by enhancing cooperation with these external partners through mechanisms like ADMM-Plus and focusing on joint efforts in areas like cybersecurity, maritime security, and counter-terrorism.

22. Key recommendations emphasize ASEAN's need to take a proactive role in these security dialogues. First, ASEAN should foster collaboration with external partners to ensure it maintains its centrality in shaping the regional security framework. This includes integrating the capabilities of minilateral groups into ASEAN-led forums and joint security exercises. Second, ASEAN must strengthen its internal consensus on external engagements, especially around advanced military technologies and arms races, to present a united front. Lastly, leveraging these partnerships for capacity building in defence, cybersecurity, and non-traditional threats would allow ASEAN to enhance its regional security posture.

Kingdom of Thailand
Presentation by Col. Thanita Wongjinda Deputy Director of Regional Studies Division, SSC, NDSI, RTARF HQ

23. Col. Thanita Wongjinda stated that the Asia-Pacific region has witnessed a significant rise in emerging security partnerships, driven by geopolitical shifts and competing interests. These partnerships, including the Quad, AUKUS, U.S-led bilateral security alliances, and China's BRI with its growing defence engagements, have significant implications for ASEAN's centrality and unity. While these partnerships aim to promote regional stability, they also risk undermining ASEAN's role as the primary security actor in the region. The proliferation of security arrangements can create a complex and competitive security environment, potentially leading to fragmentation and a loss of ASEAN's collective voice as AMS are pulled in different directions by external powers. Thailand, with its neutral stance and ability to maintain strong diplomatic ties with both major powers, has played a crucial role in strengthening ASEAN centrality and unity in this evolving security environment. The Thai government and military have actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to promote dialogue, cooperation, and confidence-building measures among ASEAN member states and external powers. Thailand has also emphasized the importance of ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM), as platforms for regional security cooperation. However, balancing its relationships with both China and the U.S. has become increasingly complex.

24. To further mitigate the impact of emerging security partnerships on ASEAN centrality and unity, ASEAN should: 1) Strengthen existing defence mechanisms: Revitalize the ARF and ADMM-Plus to ensure they remain the primary platforms for regional dialogue and cooperation, 2) Engage with external powers: Actively participate in discussions with QUAD and China to prevent ASEAN from being sidelined, 3) Prioritize a multilateral approach: Emphasize inclusivity and neutrality in regional security mechanisms to ensure they are driven by the interests of all AMS, and 4) Enhance internal defence cooperation: Strengthen cooperation through ADMM and ADMM-Plus, including joint military exercises, intelligence-sharing, and maritime and cyber defence.

SESSION II: Presentation on "Managing Proliferation and Addressing Duality of Technological application (AI and Cyber Security) within ASEAN"

Expert Presentation

Presentation by Col. Samnang Seima, Deputy-Director of Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of National Defence, Cambodia

25. Col. Samnang Seima stated that the future of AI in cybersecurity is poised for exponential growth and innovation. The synergy between AI and human expertise will also evolve, with AI taking on a more collaborative role, offering insights and recommendations to human security analysts. By embracing AI, we can unlock new efficiency, accuracy, and innovation levels. Yet, the journey towards AI-powered cybersecurity is collaborative, involving the ongoing development of technologies and human skills with the promise of a more secure digital world, safeguarded by AI technology. The proliferation of AI in cybersecurity brings immense potential but also challenges related to security and dual-use scenarios. Striking the right balance is crucial and hopefully we will be gained the advantages as we navigate this rapidly evolving landscape.

26. The recommendations to enhance cybersecurity are:
    a. The establishment of a legal framework on cyber security is a crucial element in providing a solid foundation and guiding principles to develop a national strategy on cyber security in alignment with national and international laws. The objective of establishing a legal framework is to ensure that cyber activities in all forms which present threats to national security can be prevented and tackled effectively.

    b. Even with the rapid advancement of technology application, human resources cannot be overlooked, the people still stand as the core element in the development of cyber security. With that, capability development, knowledges, and capacity building has become the top priorities for Cambodia.

    c. Cybersecurity is a "team sport" which requires practical cooperation amongst all stakeholders, both national and regional. Furthermore, it is also crucial for Cambodia to expand cooperation internationally with partners nations who have more advanced technology and extensive experiences in cybersecurity.

Presentation by BG. Ly Meng, Deputy Director Department of Policy Planning, GDPFA, Ministry of National Defence, Cambodia

27. In his presentation, BG. Ly Meng highlighted the use of AI and Cybersecurity in military domain. As AI is considered as general-purpose technology, it breaks the paradigm of traditional impact on civilian and military domain. It is emphatically dual-use. It spreads easily, meaning that governments have difficulty controlling the technology. Finally, AI applications have substantial destructive potential. There are some challenges in managing the proliferation of AI and cybersecurity including, (i) rapid technological advancements, (ii) sophistication of cyber threats, (iii) data privacy and ethical concerns, (iv) skill gaps and workforce shortages, (v) regulatory and compliance issues, (vi) adversarial attacks, (vii) integration and interoperability, (viii) resource allocation, (ix) trust and transparency, and (x) global collaboration.

28. Therefore, the following points were recommended:

    a. ASEAN should prioritize capacity building and training programs for military personnel on AI and cybersecurity to ensure that they are well-prepared to handle these technologies. Developing joint training programs and military exercises can improve regional readiness and interoperability. Promoting educational initiatives in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields can build a future workforce adept in these areas. Effective management requires collaboration among ASEAN member states. Sharing information about technological advancements and potential threats can help mitigate risks.

b. ASEAN member states should develop comprehensive defence strategies that integrate AI and cybersecurity while considering the dual-use nature of these technologies. Conducting regular assessments and updates to these strategies can help address emerging threats and technological advancements. Ensuring compliance with international norms and agreements on technology proliferation is crucial.

Republic of Indonesia (RIDU)
Presentation Major General Dr. Oktaheroe Ramsi, S.I.P., M.Sc., Republic of Indonesia Defence University (RIDU)

29. MG. Dr. Oktaheroe Ramsi underlined the ASEAN's rapid digital growth which has led to increased cyber threats, making regional cooperation essential. By working together, member states can develop stronger cybersecurity defences and create a more resilient digital landscape. Partnerships across borders are key to building the necessary capabilities to counter these growing threats effectively.

30. Additionally, collaboration in AI research and development is vital for fostering innovation in the region. Public-private partnerships play a crucial role in accelerating technological advancements, but ASEAN must also prioritize the establishment of AI governance and ethical frameworks. This ensures that new technologies are developed and applied responsibly, benefiting the region while minimizing potential risks.

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)

31. Dr. Adam Leong Kok Wey stated that numerous technologies have been developed initially for military use and have later found dual usage for civilian applications. Some of these technologies can be harnessed to build platforms for building and sustaining regional peace. ASEAN, in particular ADMM, can facilitate joint and cohesive development of cyber tools to manage potential future security risks in particular future viral pandemics (what scientists have labelled as Disease X).

32. CDISS, NDUM proposes the utilization of cyber-enabled technologies to support three military strategies, which are information warfare, sabotage, and intelligence operations, to build platforms or arrangements for cooperation among ASEAN members and dialogue partners to defeat future pandemics. Using this model, a proposed Cyber Pandemic Security Program (CPSP) can be developed under the auspices of ASEAN Cyber Defence Network (ACDN) as a platform to build cooperation and preventive measures to deal with potential future pandemics.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Presentation by Brigadier General Kyaw Mya Win, Assistant Chief of Armed Forces Training (Strategic Studies), Office of the Chief of Armed Forces Training (OCAFT)

33. BG. Kyaw Mya Win stated that great power rivalry and the rise of emerging minilateral security alliances are reshaping the security architecture of the Asia-Pacific region. He argued that, while frameworks such as the Quad and AUKUS promote joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and technological collaboration, they also raise concerns about regional stability. He pointed out that critics fear these alliances may foster an 'us versus them' mentality, heightening tensions and alienating non-member states. Additionally, he noted that increased military cooperation could trigger an arms race, with nations escalating their defence capabilities in response. He warned that smaller countries participating in these partnerships might become overly dependent on larger powers, complicating their foreign policy and sovereignty. Although these alliances offer security and technological advantages,

their exclusivity could strain regional dynamics. He emphasized that balancing military cooperation with diplomatic inclusivity will be crucial to maintaining long-term stability. Ultimately, the region's security will hinge on the responsible management of these partnerships. Furthermore, he cautioned that emerging minilateral security alliances could undermine ASEAN Centrality and Unity, potentially creating divisions and eroding trust among member states. To preserve regional cohesion, AMS must carefully assess the impacts of these alliances and remain committed to upholding ASEAN Centrality and Unity.

34. He explained that emerging technologies, such as AI and cybersecurity, are transforming the defence and security sectors by automating processes, enhancing surveillance capabilities, and protecting sensitive data. However, their dual-use nature presents significant risks, as they can be weaponized or misused. The growing sophistication of cyber threats underscores the urgent need for robust cybersecurity frameworks. ASEAN is proactively addressing these challenges through various initiatives, including the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025, which integrates AI into regional economies with an emphasis on ethical use and security. Initiatives like the ASEAN Smart Cities Network and the ASEAN Framework on Digital Data Governance further promote responsible AI management. He highlighted that ASEAN is also advancing AI standards through partnerships, such as the ASEAN-Australia Digital Trade Standards Cooperation, which seeks to standardize AI practices. The ASEAN Guide to AI Governance and Ethics, introduced in 2024, recommends the establishment of a working group dedicated to AI governance. ASEAN's cybersecurity efforts are being strengthened through the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy and initiatives like the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre. These efforts enhance collaboration across the region, with proposals such as an ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) and improved coordination through the ASEAN Cybercrime Operations Desk. Despite these advancements, he noted that ASEAN continues to face challenges in achieving regulatory convergence, particularly in managing AI's implications for regional security.

Republic of the Philippines (OSSSM)
Presented by Mr. Erick Nielson C Javier, Defence Research Officer II National Defence College of the Philippines

35. Mr. Javier discussed the importance of dual-use technologies and how they can contribute to strengthened national security and sustainable economic growth. Artificial intelligence was identified as among the defining dual-use technologies of the modern era. In the context of defence and security, AI can be used in autonomous weapons, target identification and prioritization, and dual-use media applications. This latter application, which allows the creation of photographs, audio and video, poses a particular military challenge due to their ubiquity and combination of data manipulation and data collection capabilities. They can be used to enhance military deception and propaganda efforts. Mass proliferation of AI-altered media can lead to possible "data poisoning" that could slow down military operations and delay decision-making at critical moments, as well as lead militaries to distrust their own chains of command, leading to negative outcomes for military effectiveness.

36. To protect against the negative effects of such applications, it is recommended that defence establishments of ASEAN member states (AMS) enforce or institute good cyber hygiene practices, adopt personality rights for military officials, enhance media literacy and AI content recognition skills, and strengthen professional military education. The ASEAN Cyber Defence Meeting should flag the possible security concerns posed by AI media apps in future discussions, while AMS militaries should be willing to share best practices on AI content recognition. The ADMM should also consider starting discussions on the development of region-wide defence specific guidelines for use of AI in the military domain.

Republic of Singapore
Presentation by Mr. Muhammad Faizal Bin Abdul Rahman, Research Fellow RSIS, NTU, Singapore

37. In his presentation, Mr Faizal elaborated that cyber threat actors have already invested in AI to launch large-scale, targeted cyber-attacks. Commercially available generative AI is placing more information power in their hands. Cyber defence analysts need to use AI to level the playing field. However, the duality of AI technology also empowers cyber threat actors, raises ethical issues, and challenges the governance of cyberspace. In the military domain, AI can make cyber warfare capabilities more powerful but raises the risks of escalation in the physical world and misuse.

38. Mr Faizal highlighted that findings by the UN research on the responsible use of AI in the military domain can guide analysis of risks. He also made recommendations for ASEAN militaries to address the challenges. First, ASEAN can conduct more cross-sectoral conversations to raise awareness and understanding of the duality of AI and Cyber Security such as between ADMM and ADGMIN, ADSOM and ADGSOM. Second, ASEAN can leverage existing ADMM-related initiatives such as ACICE and ACDN to exchange policy views on military AI in cyberspace including with civilian and industry stakeholders covering legal, technical and ethical matters, and cyber norms. Finally, ASEAN can leverage ADMM-Plus EWG on Cyber Security to workshop how ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics can apply in military/defence policy context.

Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Presentation by Senior Colonel Ngoc Thanh Pham, Director of International Studies IDS, MOD

39. Senior Col. Ngoc Thanh Pham asserted that the benefits that AI brings are undeniable; however, the quick development and increasingly widespread application of AI also pose many challenges to stability and security of each country, region and all over the world. Therefore, cooperation in managing the proliferation and application of AI is an urgent issue that ASEAN and each member states have paid special attention to. Nevertheless, ASEAN and its member states are coping up with difficulties and challenges in successfully and effectively managing AI, namely: (i) The limits and gaps in levels of technology; (ii) The cultural diversity; (iii) The difference in levels of development and political institutions; (iv) The impact of major powers competition and (v) The conflicts of interests.

40. In order to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of AI, the management of AI proliferation and application should be based on the following guidelines: (i) Taking people and public interests as the centre; (ii) Maintaining autonomy, protecting the privacy and security of personal data; (iii) Complying with the basic principles of the UN Charter and international law; (iv) Not hindering but facilitating research, development, and application of AI to serve human interests; (v) AI management must be carried out through equal, fair and transparent cooperation.

41. Some suggestions to enhance ASEAN Defence cooperation in management of AI proliferation and application may include: (i) Bolster cooperation in training AI human resources for ASEAN member states; (ii) Enhance cooperation in sharing technology and experience; (iii) Push up military-civilian cooperation in research, development, application and management of AI; (iv) Develop a common guide lines on the development, proliferation and application of AI in the defence and military area; (v) Closely coordinate the three pillars of the ASEAN Community, specially between ADMM and ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN); (vi) More discussion on AI management in the agenda of ADMM, ADMM+; establish an ADMM+ Experts' Working Group on AI management.

Discussion

42. The ASEAN needs to strategize how to enhance its relations with major powers and other dialogue partners regarding AI and cyber security.

43. The ASEAN faces a significant challenge in the form of the strategic competition between the U.S. and China. It is essential to address this competition and explore innovative solutions, ideas, and proposals, including the potential integration of AI and security considerations.

44. To facilitate ASEAN's progress, it is imperative to devise practical and viable solutions. NADI should endeavor to conduct more in-depth discussions on specific topics, or alternatively, reevaluate the issues at hand and the available expertise to effectively address them.

45. It is crucial for ASEAN to remain united and central, with a shared understanding and stance on the prevailing threats or issues. However, it's important to note that this common understanding does not imply having the same perspectives or stances on the issues at hand.

46. It is essential to prioritize the identification and resolution of key issues that ADMM and ADMM Plus are currently facing. The aim is to effectively manage these issues and drive progress for the development and prosperity of ASEAN.

Recommendations

47. ASEAN should uphold its centrality as the foundation for regional cooperation, ensuring its mechanisms remain relevant and adaptable to new geopolitical realities. Foster intra-ASEAN cooperation and consensus-building on security and defence issues.

48. ASEAN should expand and deepen partnerships with major powers through dialogue, while maintaining ASEAN's principles. Engage with emerging groupings like Quad and AUKUS, ensuring they respect regional commitments.

49. ASEAN should strengthen its defence mechanisms, enhance defence diplomacy, and increase cooperation through multilateral platforms like ADMM-Plus. Develop collective responses to non-traditional security threats and improve internal defence coordination.

50. ASEAN should remain flexible in its engagement, leveraging innovative approaches and mini-lateral collaborations. Encourage external partners, including non-plus countries, to contribute to ASEAN-led security mechanisms.

51. ASEAN should focus on developing human resources through training, education, and capacity-building in areas like cybersecurity and AI. Moreover, ASEAN should establish programs like the ASEAN Cyber Security Academy and enhance collaboration across sectors.

52. ASEAN should improve its cybersecurity infrastructure, develop responsible AI governance, and foster public-private partnerships. Initiatives like the Cyber Pandemic Security Program (CPSP) can help address cross-border challenges in AI and cybersecurity.

53. ASEAN should promote cross-border collaboration in AI, cybersecurity, and R&D. Share best practices, enhance cooperation in research and technology, and ensure cohesive R&D for addressing future security threats, such as pandemics.

54. ASEAN should develop comprehensive defence strategies integrating AI. Also establish guidelines for military AI use, promote military-civilian cooperation, and strengthen discussions on AI's dual-use applications. Additionally, ASEAN should leverage its platforms to coordinate policy and enhance defence capabilities.

Other Matters

55. Forthcoming NADI activities

Date	Activities	Country	Via
4 – 7 November 2024	NADI Meeting on Conflicts Affecting the Region, and the ADMM/ ADMM-Plus'	Singapore	Physical

	Role in Conflict Prevention and Management		
End of April 2025	Annual General Meeting	Malaysia	Physical
17 – 20 June 2025	Meeting	Philippines	Physical
25 – 28 August 2025	Meeting	Chiang Mai, Thailand	Physical
November 2025	Meeting	Brunei Darussalam	Physical

Consideration of NADI Meeting Chairman's Report

56. The meeting considered the draft Chairman's Report of the NADI meeting on "The Emerging Security Architecture in Asia-Pacific, Assessment of Implications, and Recommendations for ASEAN". After inspecting the Chairman's Report carefully, the meeting endorsed the report.

57. The Chairman of the NADI meeting will submit the report to the ADSOM Chairman for consideration at the ADMM Track.

Closing Remarks by Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey, Deputy Director-General of Policy and Foreign Affairs (GDPFA), Director of Sena Techo Unit. Ministry of National Defence, Cambodia.

58. LTG. Nem Sowathey expressed her heartfelt appreciation to the delegates for their dedication and contributions, which exemplified a strong spirit of solidarity. She acknowledged the value of ASEAN members' understandings and recommendations in addressing the key topics.