

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF
THE TRACK II NETWORK OF ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS
(NADI) 13TH ANNUAL MEETING
2-6 March 2020
Da Nang, Viet Nam**

1. The Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) 13th Annual Meeting on **“Defence Cooperation for a Cohesive and Resilient ASEAN in Response to Regional Geopolitical Change”** was organised by the Institute for Defence Strategy (IDS), Ministry of National Defence of Viet Nam, at DLG Hotel, Da Nang City, Viet Nam, from 2 to 6 March 2020.
2. Representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, and Viet Nam attended the Annual Meeting. The list of participants is attached in Annex I. Major General Dr Dang Quang Minh, Acting Director General, IDS, chaired the Meeting.

OPENING REMARKS AND BRIEF ON PRIORITIES OF ASEAN DEFENCE COOPERATION IN 2020 BY SENIOR LIEUTENANT GENERAL NGUYEN CHI VINH, DEPUTY MINISTER, MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENCE, VIET NAM, ADSOM LEADER

3. Welcoming all NADI delegations to the 13th NADI Annual Meeting and 5th Retreat, Senior Lieutenant General Nguyen Chi Vinh highly valued NADI's contributions to ASEAN defence cooperation since its inception. He affirmed that, facing the shifts in geopolitical and geo-strategic landscape in the region, ASEAN should strengthen solidarity, internal strength and resilience. In that context, the theme of “Defence Cooperation for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN” is selected for ASEAN 2020 defence sector. Accordingly, ASEAN needs to take initiative in responding to geopolitical changes in the region and the world, to the evolving political and security environment, and to advances in science and technology with the aim to consolidate and enhance ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture and promote cooperation on the settlement of common security challenges.
4. He reiterated that, priorities for Viet Nam's Chairmanship in 2020 include the ADMM's Joint Declaration on Defence Cooperation for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN, the ADMM-Plus's Joint Declaration on Strategic Security Vision for the Asia-Pacific Region on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of founding of the ADMM-Plus, Guest of Chair Programme in celebrating the 10th anniversary of ADMM-Plus with the participation of some non- Plus Ministers

of Defence, and a revitalised ASEAN Regional Forum Security Policy Conference (ASPC). Viet Nam aims to ensure full participation of Deputy Ministers of Defence or equivalent.

WELCOME REMARKS BY MAJOR GENERAL DANG QUANG MINH, ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL, INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STRATEGY, CHAIRMAN OF THE NADI ANNUAL MEETING

5. Major General Dang Quang Minh warmly welcomed all delegates to the 13th NADI Annual Meeting. He appreciated the participation of all delegations for attending this Annual Meeting and highlighted the role and contributions of NADI to the ASEAN defence cooperation over the years.
6. He noted that Southeast Asia remains one of the most dynamic regions in recent years and ASEAN has become the nucleus of regional cooperation. Peace, stability, cooperation and development are the main trends but the region still faces a range of traditional and non-traditional security challenges, most notably COVID-19 epidemic, which underscores the need for deeper defence cooperation for a cohesive, resilient, responsive ASEAN, especially amid greater powers' competition. On that note, he stressed that ASEAN Member States (AMS) should enhance cooperation to deal with common security threats and build the Southeast Asia into a region of peace, stability and prosperity.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

SESSION I: STRATEGIC RIVALRY AMONG MAJOR POWERS AND REGIONAL GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ASEAN CENTRALITY

Keynote speaker: Associate Professor, Dr Tran Viet Thai, Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam

8. Presented on the topic entitled "Strategic rivalry among major powers and regional geo-political shift: Opportunities and challenges for ASEAN Centrality", Associate Professor, Dr Tran Viet Thai assessed that there have been power shifts in the region in a comprehensive manner, notably economics and geopolitics, leading to changes in strategic thinking of regional countries, including AMS. Four major trends that are emerging now in the

regional strategic landscape include: peace, cooperation and development; globalisation and increased anti-globalisation sentiment; democratisation and increased roles of developing/newly-emerging economies and the return of power politics; emergence of non-traditional security threats with more negative impacts on the region.

9. Against this backdrop, the China-US strategic rivalry in Asia – Indo-Pacific region becomes more and more prominent. ASEAN is located at the centre of power shift and strategic rivalry. In that context, major powers, including the US, China and Japan, adjust their policies to expand and/or secure their influence. These adjustments open up both opportunities and challenges to ASEAN centrality. In order to take advantage of opportunities and effectively respond to challenges, he recommended a “3C1B” formula as a way forward (namely, Consensus and unity building; Capacity building; Centrality maintaining; and Balancing).

Discussion

10. NADI delegates exchanged and interacted with Associate Professor Dr Tran Viet Thai on a number of security developments and issues, namely the termination of Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and US; peace agreement reached recently between Taliban and the US; impacts by COVID-19 on major powers’ strategy implementation; and the need for ASEAN to enhance inner strength in response to regional security challenges.

SESSION II: THE WORLD AND REGIONAL SECURITY SITUATION AND EMERGING SECURITY ISSUES

Brunei Darussalam

Presentation by Mrs. Ampuan Yura Kasumawati Mohd Adnan, Senior Research Officer, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence

11. Mrs. Ampuan Yura Kasumawati in her presentation highlighted the global and regional security environment is becoming increasingly uncertain at a fast-changing rate against intense geopolitical shifts. Here, she stated that the increasing cooperation and intensity in competition in the region reflects security and economic interests of nations are closely intertwined. Coupled with the advent and rapid advancements in new technology, it has made it ever challenging for policymakers to address complex layers in the security

challenges as it brings wider security challenges. This saw terrorism, violence and extremism and maritime security continue to evolve and become more transnational in nature as well as the impacts of climate change that could potentially aggravate tense competition over resources in the maritime domain. The spread of COVID-19 also represents imminent threats to human security with unprecedented challenges. In this regard, she noted the ADMM pledge to play its role to manage COVID-19 with its adoption of a Joint Statement on Defence Cooperation against Disease Outbreaks, co-sponsored by Viet Nam, Cambodia and Singapore. She stressed that non-traditional security challenges remains important as it contributes to build greater understanding and create positive environment conducive for peaceful resolutions to traditional security concerns.

12. The future security challenges present ASEAN both opportunities and challenges in managing the major power dynamics and safeguarding ASEAN's interests. As a way forward to build a cohesive and resilient ASEAN and to ensure ASEAN's centrality, ASEAN member states needs to (1) internally enhance ASEAN unity and solidarity through deepening understanding and enhancing trust and sharing of perspectives among ASEAN member states through track 1.5 and 2 engagements, focus on ASEAN only cooperative activities in key cross-cutting issues and encourage mini-lateral cooperation to address security challenges; and (2) externally to have closer cooperate with other influential regional powers including the UK, Japan, ROK, Australia and New Zealand, to have flexibility of engagements as an option to encourage cooperation as underlined in various ASEAN cooperation and framework and guidance provided in the ASEAN Outlook for the Indo-Pacific, and to seriously consider the expression of interests by Canada, the UK, France and others in ADMM Plus or its EWGs as well as cooperative practical measures in line with the respective ASEAN and dialogue partners' strategic plan of action and cooperation framework.

Cambodia

Presentation by Brigadier General Ngor Sopheap, Deputy Director of ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of National Defence. Brig. Gen. Ngor Sopheap

13. BG Ngor Sopheap stressed on the situation in the Middle East characterised by the conflict between the U.S and Iran. This is the lesson learnt for ASEAN to uphold peace resolution through win-win approach and monitoring and

sharing information about the situation that exists to prevent any potential threats to our region. Climate change is a complex issue for all nations of the world which will also suffer crisis, such as rising heat and wildfires in the southeast of Australia as well as the flood in Jakarta. COVID-19 outbreak, which has spread from Wuhan, China is rapidly moving into Southeast Asia, prompting our governments to pay attention and prevent this new problem. For Cambodia, COVID-19 epidemic has impacted two key sectors: tourism and garments due to the lack of raw materials.

14. The views on strengthening peace, security and human development for the following meetings:

- a. Promoting multilateralism and international order based on regulations aimed at strengthening and expanding cooperation to ensure peace, security, safety and stability in the region by fostering dialogue, building trust and peacefully resolving regional issues in accordance with international law principles;
- b. Fostering an interfaith dialogue culture to build mutual understanding and respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and support for the dynamic ASEAN centrality;
- c. Strengthening global cooperation to ensure an open spirit and support multilateral mechanisms, especially among the three ASEAN pillars, in order to obtain sustainable development;
- d. Promoting human resource development, especially improve the quality of education, health of living, poverty reduction and narrowing the development gap in line with the rapid development of the ASEAN structure.

Indonesia (CSS, TNI)

Presentation by Brig. Gen. Totok Imam Santoso, Head of Center for Strategic Studies, Indonesian Armed Forces (CSS-TNI)

15. Brig. Gen. Totok Imam Santoso pointed out that the challenges of geopolitical change in Southeast Asia currently lead to rise in the traditional and non-traditional security issues. The SCS can be said to be the geopolitical dynamics field of dominant power, in this case the US and China. On the other hand, the threat of COVID-19 epidemic is a multidimensional threat to security. The challenges to defence cooperation in this regard require attention to be paid

to the concept of smart diplomacy and community-based disaster management. Both of the approaches could be done by building and increasing ASEAN common interests towards regional stability and ASEAN Centrality.

16. He recommended that:

- a. It is necessary to increase cohesive and resilient cooperation among AMS, in order to be able to address both traditional and non-traditional threats.
- b. ASEAN should continue to improve and expand “One ASEAN One Response” to deal with the COVID-19 epidemic, by utilising the role of the AHA Centre as an institution in ASEAN that handles disasters. The handling of the COVID-19 epidemic must be seen as a disaster mitigation effort.

Malaysia (MiDAS)

Presentation by Ms Nor Aini Binti Mohd Nordin, Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS)

17. Ms Nor Aini Binti Mohd Nordin informed that Malaysia is facing emerging security environment on a more serious scale and scope that it has never experienced before. Cognisant of this reality, Malaysia has published its first Defence White Paper (DWP) in December 2019. Malaysia’s security stability is tied to an uncertain and ever-changing security environment in this region. AMS with its geo-strategic location, between the Pacific and Indian Oceans that is, situated at the heart of a dynamic Asia region plays a crucial role in the regional geopolitics. Currently, an increasingly volatile security environment has caused a wide range of uncertainties, therefore posing growing risks towards AMS security. Any changes toward the existing security environment in this region will directly impact AMS’s security and stability.

18. She highlighted three main security challenges have been identified including uncertain big power relations, complex Southeast Asian neighbourhood and non-traditional security threats. Regionally, the intensifying power competitions concentrated more in Southeast Asia. China’s presence in the South China Sea, along with the US Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) and other powers’ similar actions have turned the overlapping sovereign claims issue into a big-power game. The complex Southeast Asian neighbourhood issues include: (1) conflicting interests extended from territorial disputes; (2) contentious spill-over from internal conflicts of

neighbouring countries; and (3) refugee crises sparked by regional states' domestic issues. Such problems encompass both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including extremism, sea robbery, piracy and cross-boundary environmental issues such as haze problems resulting from forest fires in neighbouring countries as well as cross-boundary infectious disease outbreaks such as COVID-19. Furthermore, she highlighted that non-traditional security issues involve non-state actors and trans-border crime with an asymmetric character, which have direct as well as indirect impacts to social, political, economic and environmental sectors. Threats such as extremism, radicalism, hijacking, and cyber-attack as well as disease outbreak might disrupt internal stability. Other threats such as sea robbery, kidnapping and illegal fishing might disrupt Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and affect the safety of navigation, thus resulting in economic losses to the nation.

19. However, current security challenges may also offer opportunities for Malaysia to cooperate closely with other regional countries. Being a small nation has put Malaysia sovereignty, economy and social spheres interdependent with our regional neighbours. Therefore, it requires a paradigm shift in the way AMS think and approach to overcome challenges amidst the need to retain as well as enhance ASEAN centrality. Areas of opportunities that have been identified by Malaysia are in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, cyber security, maritime security and linkage between ASEAN Chief Defence Force Meeting (ACDFM) and ADMM. These four opportunities for cooperation that have been identified are integral in enhancing ASEAN Centrality.

Myanmar

Presentation by Brigadier General Myint Kyaw Tun, Deputy Chief of Armed Forces Training, Department of Strategic Studies, Office of the Chief of Armed Forces Training, Myanmar Armed Forces

20. BG Myint Kyaw Tun extended his deepest sympathies to the countries, communities and individuals impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19. He stressed that climate change could become a catastrophic threat to global security and ASEAN should review effectiveness of the current mechanisms and frameworks for dealing with climate change. He mentioned that international terrorism, production of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), arms smuggling, transnational organized crimes, illegal drugs producing and

smuggling, human trafficking, natural disasters, epidemic of infectious diseases, and illegal migration are the most important security issues we have to deal with.

21. He argued that power rivalries and complexities of interests continue to pose big challenges to regional stability, which also impacts ASEAN Centrality and Unity. He highlighted the importance of developing a treaty of the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects in order to safeguard enduring peace and security in outer space. He expressed his concern over rising unilateralism and protectionism and urged to oppose them. And finally, BG Myint Kyaw Tun mentioned that AMS have to focus ensuring of ASEAN Centrality in the regional security architecture, regional order, and the power dynamics between and among external powers that have interested in the region.

Philippines (NDCP)

Presentation by Dr Archimedes H. Viaje, President of National Defense College of the Philippines

22. Dr Archimedes H. Viaje noted that with the rapid development of the Information Age and the realisation of what is now known as “knowledge economy”, the global security environment has evolved into a fast-paced, multi-layered complex system which permeates every level of human interaction from the state to the individual. There are trends, undercurrents and micro-changes in power dynamics, both intra-state and inter-state, in all dimensions of national security, which have significant potential to alter our strategic environment. Understanding these trends is essential in equipping and capacitating our own defence establishments to address current and emerging security concerns.
23. In the global and regional security milieu, four trends carry significant implications for each and every country: strategic competition, power diffusion, the technological leap, and the focus on human security. Smaller states in the midst of great powers have a significant role to play in maintaining the delicate security balance in the region as net contributors to security, economic development, and in maintaining a rules-based order. International cooperation then has become invaluable in order to address the challenges and opportunities brought about by the diffusion of power to different security actors, the rapid technological leap which has altered

strategic and operational realities, and the rise of transnational security concerns which transcend political and geographical borders.

24. Five major strategic imperatives will continue to shape regional defence and security priorities: sustained economic development, human security and socio-cultural cohesion, territorial integrity and sovereignty, upholding the rule of law, and the regional commitment to peace and stability. Considering this, greater cooperation between AMS can be pursued through providing avenues for free-flowing discussions to manage differences; promoting functional cooperative initiatives on shared security concerns; strengthening the free exchange of information and collaborative research related to our common security concerns, and institutionalising policy priorities and engagements through the review and evaluation of existing protocols and the development of new ones as more threats to regional security emerge.

Singapore

Presentation by Mr. Henrick Z Tsjeng, Associate Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, on behalf of Mr. Tan Seng Chye, Senior Fellow, RSIS and Head of NADI Secretariat

25. Mr Henrick Tsjeng presented the paper on "The world and regional security situation and emerging security issues" on behalf of Mr Tan Seng Chye. Mr Tsjeng highlighted that US President Trump's new approach in US foreign, security and economic policies have resulted in a change in the global environment and geopolitical, economic and security dynamics in the East Asia region and the world. The US perception of China as a strategic competitor, which can challenge US dominance in the world especially in the Asia Pacific region, has increased the rivalry between the two countries. President Trump's view of a rising China as a strategic competitor has dominated his Administration's preoccupations and policies. The US-China trade war is in fact more of a strategic competition. The trade war has affected the Chinese economy, as well as the supply chains and economies of Southeast Asian countries. The US-China Trade Agreement Phase I was seen as an interim one due to the US Presidential Election at the end of 2020 and no further negotiations will take place till after the election. The major issues are yet to be negotiated. China has welcomed the Trade Agreement Phase I as a "truce" to calm the global trade and economic situation.

26. On regional architecture, the US viewed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) as a challenge to its dominance not only in East Asia but also globally.
27. The US-proposed Indo-Pacific Concept is viewed as a counter to the BRI and the AIIB. These developments have affected the global environment and geostrategic situation in the region and generated uncertainties in the economic and security situation in East Asia. The more frequent US military Freedom of Navigations Operations, sea and air, in the South and East China Seas, are of concern to regional countries as any unexpected incidents could possibly lead to war which no one wants. On the US-China rivalry, ASEAN does not wish to take sides, but it wants to maintain its centrality in any emerging regional architecture.
28. The COVID-19 outbreak has significantly affected not only the Chinese economy but also those of East Asian and Southeast Asian countries. Recovery will take time until the COVID-19 outbreak is brought under control.

SESSION III: DEFENCE COOPERATION FOR A COHESIVE, RESILIENT ASEAN IN RESPONSE TO REGIONAL GEOPOLITICAL CHANGE

Lao PDR

Presentation by Colonel Sulivanh Sengchanh, Deputy Director General, Military Science and History Department, Ministry of National Defence

29. Colonel Sulivanh Sengchanh highlighted that the jointing of operational planning leads to a higher level of mutual dependence, a legal basis in the form of an intergovernmental agreement is generally considered as a prerequisite. ASEAN defence cooperation, which only refers to peacetime conditions, is organised around six areas: policy, capabilities, equipment, personnel/education, training/exercises and operations. A key question for every country is how integrated the cooperation is to be, i.e. what dependencies and restrictions the cooperation creates for the national freedom of action. Particularly with regard to the acquisition of equipment and use of capabilities, the advantages must be weighed against the disadvantages. It is possible, for example, to cooperate on development, purchases and maintenance, or education and training, or to coordinate or share capabilities. The deeper integration, the more military capabilities it provides access to, but by the same token, the more national freedom of action is also limited.

30. He also mentioned about a peaceful, secure and stable regional environment, ASEAN countries have been making efforts to promote dialogue, strengthen cooperation, build trust in accordance with international law, and form and share the common values and norms recognised in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), the ASEAN Charter, the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea. In addition, ASEAN has firmly demonstrated its bravery and ability to maintain solidarity and unity in issues affecting regional peace and security, such as the cooperation to address non-traditional security challenges continues to be promoted. ASEAN has also accelerated cooperation in dealing with non-traditional security threats.

Indonesia (IDU)

Presentation by Rear Admiral Suhirwan, Indonesia Defense University (IDU)

31. RADM Suhirwan affirmed that ASEAN must become the primary driving force in the Southeast Asian region, which has a central role in all dynamics in various sectors of life. As a diplomatic community, ASEAN must demonstrate its ability in solving problems in the Southeast Asia region in particular and in the wider Asia Pacific region. ASEAN must be sensitive to social phenomena that arise as global interactions between countries in the region. Peace and security stability is an important agenda in the development of ASEAN which must also be examined more closely. Inviting foreign investment into ASEAN must be carried out more intensively, but it must follow the mechanism prevailing in ASEAN. ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) needs to be functioned maximally and transparently so that the investment distribution can be more evenly distributed across ASEAN countries. ASEAN needs operational units in order to face the threat of natural disasters. These units are under the direct control of the ASEAN Secretary General. Budget support and operational status of these units need to be prepared jointly by AMS.

32. In realising the mission of “One Vision, One Identity, One Community” of ASEAN, RADM Suhirwan recommended that AMS must commit to balancing common interests over those of individual states. As an expression of the unity of the ASEAN spirit, he suggested the need for a common currency in ASEAN and the establishment of the ASEAN Central Bank.

33. RADM Suhirwan also suggested that twofold settlements of SCS conflicts must be dealt with more comprehensively with stages agreed to by ASEAN internal politics. After internal conflict settlement process as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter has been addressed, ASEAN will have a united perspective in facing external threats which may cause its security instability.

Philippines (OSSSM)

Presentation by Colonel Haroun-Al-Rashid I Jaji PA (GSC), Assistant Chief, Office for Strategic Studies and Strategy Management, Armed Forces of the Philippines (OSSSM, AFP)

34. Colonel Haroun-Al-Rashid I Jaji PA (GSC) emphasised that the changing geopolitical landscape of the region characterized by the complex powerplay and strategic competition between the US and China has put Southeast Asia in a crucial battle ground which will either be a passive middle ground or a regional grouping which will play an active role in shaping the regional agenda. America's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) Strategy and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have competing strategic interests, and in the middle of this geopolitical competition is the US-China trade conflict.

35. ASEAN's defence sector can utilize the following existing treaties and regional documents as platforms of cooperation: the Ten Principles adopted at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung (1955), Declaration on Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (1971), TAC (1976), Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (1995), ASEAN Political Security Blueprint for 2025 and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (2019). Ultimately, AMS must have a strategic flexibility and be adaptive in their approaches. It is important to strengthen a regional security identity that is illustrative of AMS shared security interest. ASEAN market's economic competitiveness must also be enhanced. Lastly, ASEAN can build on regional resilience and coherence from individual AMS' national resilience.

Singapore

Presentation by Mr Henrick Z Tsjeng, Associate Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

36. Mr Tsjeng highlighted how defence cooperation is a major instrument for building confidence among AMS, and how this can lead to better habits of

cooperation and understanding. This will also promote ASEAN cohesion and centrality, which are needed at the ADMM, and especially when AMS negotiate with the dialogue partner countries. As such, AMS should continue to uphold the consensus principle, and focus on non-traditional security issues that are less sensitive. AMS should also be responsive to emerging threats, such as the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, as well as increased and more intense natural disasters as a result of climate change.

37. In view of the foregoing, Mr Tsjeng suggested the following recommendations:

- a. ADMM and ADMM-Plus should continue focusing on non-traditional security, as per the Experts' Working Groups. These issues are less controversial and do not involve questions over demarcations of territorial boundaries and sovereignty. ADMM should respect the ongoing negotiations over the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, which is being negotiated at the Foreign Ministers level.
- b. Where defence cooperation is concerned, AMS should foster greater information-sharing and coordination among themselves, though the ADMM, building on efforts such as the EWGs, Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME), Direct Communications Infrastructure, and other mechanisms.
- c. ADMM should continue its engagement with the Plus countries. However, in the context of the heightening major power rivalry, ADMM must focus on presenting a cohesive position when negotiating with the Plus countries on any issue.
- d. In the spirit of responsiveness, one major area of future opportunity for military-to-military cooperation is in Military Medicine, especially in view of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. HADR is also another important area.
- e. ADMM should also promote efforts to enhance human resource development, including with assistance of Plus countries in developing human resources and sharing experiences.

Viet Nam

Presentation by Major General, Dr Nguyen Van Than, Deputy Director General, Institute for Defence Strategy, Ministry of National Defence of Viet Nam

- 38.MG, Dr Nguyen Van Than stressed that defence cooperation is one of the most important aspects in building ASEAN Political – Security Community (APSC). Defence cooperation has made a vital contribution to promoting ASEAN centrality, consolidating its solidarity, enhancing cohesiveness, resilience, and responsiveness to common security challenges, especially the non-traditional ones.
- 39.He emphasised that, in order to improve the effectiveness of defence cooperation, it is necessary to maintain ADMM's centrality and momentum in current defence cooperation mechanisms of ASEAN; enhance the interoperability effectiveness among ASEAN militaries; promote information sharing and experience exchange in dealing to common security challenges; and intensify cooperation in human resources.
- 40.He highlighted that as an active and responsible AMS, Viet Nam so far has taken a significant role in promoting ASEAN defence cooperation, through its initiatives aimed at consolidating solidarity, friendship, and mutual understanding among ASEAN militaries, working towards a successful ASEAN Community.

DISCUSSION

- 41.NADI delegates exchanged views and discussed the following:
- a. recognising the increasing intensity in geopolitical shifts, and that AMS in the midst of great power competition have a significant role to play in maintaining the delicate security balance in the region, especially in upholding a rules-based order;
 - b. recognising that ASEAN is in the centre of the geopolitical dynamics and therefore stressed the importance in maintaining ASEAN Centrality in managing the strategic shifts and safeguarding ASEAN's interests;
 - c. recognising the complex, multi-dimensional, multifaceted nature of security, and that there are several cross-cutting issues that could potentially change how we understand, appreciate, and address security concerns in the region;
 - d. exchanging views on security challenges on impacts of climate change, disruptive emerging technologies, the 4th Industrial Revolution, and COVID-19. The experience of COVID-19 reinforces the need to address cross-cutting issues. In this regard, NADI also acknowledged the ADMM's

effort to work together to manage COVID-19, as stated in the Joint Statement by the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Defence Cooperation against Disease Outbreaks;

- e. stressing the importance of non-traditional security cooperation, which contributes to building resilience, fostering closer relations, enhancing capability. This in turn contributes to building confidence and creating positive environment conducive for peaceful management on traditional concerns; and
- f. highlighting that ASEAN should work towards strengthening ASEAN mechanisms that can address inter-state issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

42. In view of the foregoing discussions, the following recommendations are proposed for the consideration of the ADMM to enhance ASEAN cohesiveness and resilience:

- a. to work further to deepen mutual understanding, enhance sharing of perspectives, and continue to build trust amongst all AMS including through Track 1.5 and Track 2 engagements on issues and challenges of concern;
- b. to encourage greater linkages across sectors pertaining to cross-cutting issues such as between ADMM and ACDFM as well as high-level interactions between civilian and military counterparts;
- c. to improve existing mechanisms such as AMRG on HADR to include on emerging security issues as seen with COVID-19;
- d. to consider offering assistance to the ASEAN Dialogue Partners in times of natural and man-made disasters including disease outbreak;
- e. to further strengthen existing cooperation with Plus countries in building human resource capacity and expertise, information exchange and coordination; and
- f. to consider engagements with other non-Plus partners only subject to ADMM's agreement and requirements.

OTHER MATTERS

FORTHCOMING NADI ACTIVITIES

43. The Meeting noted the updates on upcoming NADI activities:

- a. NADI Workshop in May 2020 in Thailand (TBC).
- b. NADI Workshop on “ASEAN defence cooperation in dealing with human trafficking and illegal migration” from 29 June to 2 July 2020 in Ha Noi.
- c. NADI Workshop on Cyber Security from 7 – 11 September 2020 in Malacca, Malaysia.
- d. NADI Workshop in November 2020 in Malang, Indonesia.
- e. NADI Workshop in April 2021 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

44. The Chairman of the 13th NADI Annual Meeting extended his sincere appreciation to all the delegates for their participation in and constructive contribution to the Annual Meeting.
45. The NADI delegates expressed their appreciation to the IDS for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the 13th NADI Annual Meeting.