

Practical Cooperation for the Future of ASEAN Security

We are all aware that the wide array of security challenges remains to be a threat to the peace and prosperity of ASEAN. We are currently confronted with several security challenges as a region and as individual countries. It has become imperative for us to engage our neighbors and partners across the region to find collective solutions to address these challenges. ASEAN Member States (AMSs) must deal with security challenges in partnership with each other. Indeed, the need to deal with these challenges is the foremost driver for cooperation.

Mechanisms including the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and the ADMM-Plus enable regional countries to cooperate in addressing the various security challenges. Through these mechanisms, we are able to discuss how security challenges could affect our region and our respective states and how we could collaborate to address our common concerns. Today, the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus not only facilitate dialogue but also promote practical cooperation as well through the conduct of activities and exercises.

The promotion of practical cooperation indeed enables regional states to address security challenges and at the same time contribute in the building of a security community in Southeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific. Cooperation in dealing with some of security challenges might become difficult because of some fundamental differences of views. But I think those domains, namely HADR, counter-terrorism, military medicine and cyber security, might be easier for states to cooperate.

Cyber security issue would be main security challenges for our region near future and each country has to prepare for it. Meanwhile, we also need to cooperate and coordinate with other countries in dealing with cyber security threats and challenges.

In order to secure ASEAN security, practical cooperation among AMSs is very important. At the same time, increasing mutual trust and understanding are important as well. We need to mind the fundamental principles of ASEAN like non-interference in the internal affairs of one another, mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, and national identity of others.