

ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF)

ARF Membership: 27 States – Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, United States, and Vietnam.

History: [The Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#) was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok by the five original member countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined on 8 January 1984, Vietnam on 28 July 1995, Laos and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999.

In 1992, the ASEAN Heads of State and Government declared that ASEAN should intensify its external dialogues in political and security matters as a means of building cooperative ties with States in the Asia-Pacific region. Two years later, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was established on the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and Post Ministerial Conference.

The ARF was designed to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern and make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. Through political dialogue and confidence-building, no tension has escalated into armed confrontation among ASEAN members since its establishment more than three decades ago.

Developments:

2015: On 3 February, the Initial Planning Conference (IPC) for the ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism Exercise was held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam. During the conference, participants were [briefed](#) on the general overview of exercise and events in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore. The exercise is scheduled in May 2016.

On 14-15 May, the 13th ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime was [held](#) in China. Participants exchanged views on anti-

terrorism, cybercrime and other issues. They also discussed the draft of a 2015-2016 working plan.

2014: On 17-18 February, ARF held its 8th Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) meeting in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting [focused](#) on the ARF Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan and [discussed](#) issues related to East China Sea, South China Sea, and Korean Peninsula.

On 8-9 April, [EU hosted](#) a Defense Officials Dialogue (DOD)/ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy in Brussels. This meeting was co-chaired by EU and Myanmar. Participants discussed various security cooperation topics, including counter-terrorism, cyber security, and non-proliferation.

On 14-16 April, the 12th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime was held in Bali, Indonesia. In the meeting, participants [discussed](#) issues related to illicit drugs, counter-terrorism and previous ARF work plan.

On 7 June, the ARF Defense Officials’ Dialogue was held in Yangon, Myanmar. The Dialogue [highlighted](#) the roles of the armed forces.

On 8-9 July, the 6th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament was held in Tokyo, Japan. The adopted [agenda](#) included discussions on regional TCBMs, the report of WMD study groups, promotion of the CTBT, and other relevant security and disarmament issues. Participating states emphasized the importance of the three pillars of the NPT and the impending NPT Review Conference in 2015. The United States [stressed](#) that several states were still in non-compliance, which challenged the global nonproliferation regime. Japan [addressed](#) the importance of the ARF and of confidence-building on reducing nuclear risks. The United States and other several states supported dialogue in the area of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.

On 10 August, under the chairmanship of H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the 21st ASEAN Regional Forum took place in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. In the Chairman’s [statement](#), regional and international issues were highlighted.

On 26-28 August, the ARF Cross-Sectoral Security Cooperation on Bio-Preparedness Workshop took

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place in Manila, Philippines. This project was [led](#) by the US and the Philippines, aiming to develop participants' respective national guidelines and enhance regional capacity for preparedness and collective response to a biological event.

On 9-10 October, the 2nd ARF Space Security Workshop was held in Tokyo, Japan. State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan delivered the [opening statement](#).

2013: On 4-5 March, the ARF hosted its 11th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC) in Hanoi.

On 27-28 April, the ARF hosted an Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and preventative Diplomacy in Beijing.

On 14-15 May, the ARF hosted the 2nd CBM Seminar on Implementation of UNSCR 1540. The Seminar reminded States of the requirements under [UNSCR 1540](#) and gave them the opportunity to share information about their implementation statuses. The seminar took place in Bangkok.

On 4-5 June, the ARF hosted its 5th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in Manila.

On 2 July, the 20th Meeting of the ARF took place in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam. Prince Mohamed Bolkia, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam, chaired the meeting. The Chair's [statement](#) underscored the importance of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, international efforts in nonproliferation, and the importance of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

The United States is also [collaborating](#) with New Zealand, Brunei and China to develop training in the region on preventive diplomacy. The United States also tries to address counter-terrorism and transnational crime, disaster relief, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament and space security.

On 3-5 September, the ARF Cross-Sectoral Security Cooperation on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response: Inception Planning Workshop took place in Manila.

On 10-12 September, the 2nd ARF Workshop on Nonproliferation Nuclear Forensics [took place](#) in Bangkok.

On 9 December, the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue (DOD) was held in Yangon, Myanmar.

On 10 December, the ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures

and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD) was held in Myanmar.

2012: On 8-9 March, ARF hosted its [4th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Nonproliferation and Disarmament \(ISM on NPD\) in Sydney](#). The government of Australia and the Philippines organized the event.

On 16-17 March, ARF hosted its [10th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime](#)

On 7-9 May, the ARF Defense Officials' Dialogue and the ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group held a [meeting](#) on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy.

On 24-26 May, the ARF held the 9th ARF Security Policy [Conference](#), which included the Defense Officials' Dialogue and the Senior Officials' Meeting.

On 12 July, the 19th ASEAN Regional Forum was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Chairman's [statement](#) noted the continued need for states pursuing nuclear energy to thoroughly cooperate with the IAEA. He also emphasized the need for Southeast Asia to remain a NWFZ under the SEANWFZ Treaty. The officials in attendance also adopted the ARF Work Plan on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

On 5-7 September, the ARF conducted the ARF Workshop on Preparedness and Response to a Biological Event in Manila. It was co-chaired by the Philippines, United States, and Australia and was the fourth and final workshop in an ARF series on biosafety.

2011: On 23-24 February in Las Vegas, ARF hosted its 3rd Inter-Sessional Meeting on Nonproliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD) with a focus on disarmament. U.S. Assistant Secretary [Rose Gottemoeller](#) from the Department of State's Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance called for the commencement of negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty ([FMCT](#)) at the Conference on Disarmament ([CD](#)). She encouraged ARF members to contribute to starting the talks and stated that the United States is increasing its bilateral and multilateral engagement with technical aspects of the proposed treaty. Gottemoeller also hoped to make progress on the U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty ([CTBT](#)).

On 16 March, the ARF [held](#) a Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) focused on conducting mock relief exercises combining over 3,000 participants from 23 nations and the EU. The event, planned prior to the situation at Japan's Fukushima nuclear plant, was viewed as timely and integral to enhancing ARF co-

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operation and effectiveness in responding to disasters.

On 6-8 April, the ARF [held](#) a Defense Officials' Dialogue/ARF Intersessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventative Diplomacy.

On 29-31 May, the ARF held the 9th Intersessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime. The meetings focused on assessing the trends of terrorism and transnational crime within the region, a review of ARF decisions aimed to counter the trends, as well as discussion on future plans to meet again in the future.

On 6-11 June, the ARF held its 8th Security Policy Conference, which included the Defense Officials' Dialogue and Senior Officials' Meeting. During the meetings, officials exchanged views on current regional and international issues, the future of the ARF, and activities for confidence building measures and preventative diplomacy.

On 13-15 September, the ARF held a three day workshop called [Disease Detection and Surveillance: Enhancing Public and Veterinary Health Networks to Combat Infectious Diseases and Bioterrorism](#) in Manila, Philippines. The workshop was designed to promote cooperation between relevant agencies in combating disease outbreaks and addressing the threat of bioterrorism.

On 29 November-2 December, the [15th ARF Heads of Defense Universities/Colleges/Institutions](#) took place in Kuta, Indonesia. Talks centered on enhancing the ability of professional military education institutions abilities to observe educational "best practice" through multinational dialogue and support. On 7-9 December, the ARF held a workshop on [Non-Proliferation Nuclear Forensics](#) in Bangkok, Thailand.

2010: On 5-7 July, the 2nd ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Nonproliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD) focusing on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, was held in Singapore. The meeting was co-hosted by the United States and China. All ARF member states participated along with experts from the [IAEA](#), the Malaysian Nuclear Agency (MNA), Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency of Indonesia (BAPETEN), Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES), Preparatory Commission to the Comprehensive Test-Ban-Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and French Atomic Energy Agency (FAE) who briefed the participants. The [Co-Chair's summary report](#) noted that many states in the region are considering the expansion of current nuclear power infrastructure and that it is the

responsibility of each state to develop strong legal and regulatory frameworks, robust safety cultures, and public acceptance and international cooperation. The summary reiterated the importance of nuclear safety, security and nonproliferation when considering nuclear power programs and reminded participants of the role played by the IAEA.

On 23 July, in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, the 17th ARF meeting convened, chaired by H.E. Pham Gia Khiem, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The Chairman's [statement](#) reaffirmed support for complete and verifiable denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, called on Iran to take all the necessary steps to comply with international obligations, and underscored the importance of securing nuclear materials from terrorist groups.

The statement also welcomed the adoption of the second resolution by the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly on the [SEANWFZ](#) Treaty and the submission of the Memorandum on Activities related to the Treaty at the [2010 NPT Review Conference](#). The statement also noted the continuing consultations between ASEAN and nuclear-weapon states regarding the protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty.

2009: On July 1-3, The ARF held its 1st Intersessional Meeting on Nonproliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD) in Beijing, China, co-hosted by Singapore and the United States. Plans to introduce this meeting to the forum began in 2007. Participants discussed arms control, disarmament, nonproliferation, and ARF's role in these areas while specifically focusing on issues related to nonproliferation.

The 16th Meeting of the ARF was convened in Phuket, Thailand, on 23 July. The [Chairman's Statement](#) noted that the Ministers of several countries condemned the recent nuclear test and missile launches by the DPRK. The Ministers also urged all member countries to fully implement the provisions of [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874](#).

The Ministers also took note of efforts towards nuclear disarmament, welcoming both the Joint Understanding for the START Follow-on Treaty between American and Russian Presidents and the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

2008: The 15th Meeting of the ARF convened on 24 July in Singapore. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. George Yeo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore.

The Chairman's [statement](#) emphasized disaster management more than in previous years. The only sec-

tions regarding WMD were statements of support for the Six Party Talks toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and for the meetings of the EU3+3 in pursuit of a comprehensive solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.

2007: The 14th Meeting of the ARF was convened on 2 August in Manila, the Philippines. The Meeting was chaired by Dr. Alberto Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines. Sri Lanka was welcomed as the 27th Participating State in the ARF.

The Chairman's [statement](#) contained the usual expressions of support from the foreign ministers for multilateral security regimes including the ARF; the IAEA; the Six-Party Talks; the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea; the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons; the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, UNSC resolution 1540; the NPT; the CTBT; the Conference on Disarmament and its efforts to negotiate an FMCT; and nuclear-weapons-free zones, particularly the zone in South-east Asia.

2006: The 13th ARF convened at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 28 July. Bangladesh formally joined the ARF, bringing its membership to 26 states. Ministers welcomed the signing of the ASEAN-Canada Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, as well as the decision of France to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation of Southeast Asia. They reiterated their continued support for the important roles of the NPT and the IAEA in preventing nuclear proliferation, and promoting both nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Ministers called for the maintenance of existing moratoria on nuclear testing as well as on the production of fissile material for use in weapons. They reaffirmed the importance of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones and emphasized the need for continued consultations on the Protocol of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, among nuclear weapons states and parties to the treaty.

Ministers strongly condemned the terrorist bombings in Mumbai on 11 July and stressed the need to bring about a greater understanding between civilizations to prevent terrorism from being associated with a specific religion or ethnic group. They further urged all states to sign and ratify the two most recent universal instruments concerning nuclear terrorism—the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts

of Nuclear Terrorism, and the Amendment to the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Ministers expressed their support for the work of the 1540 Committee and called on states to bring about full and effective implementation of the resolution. They welcomed the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1673 in this regard, which strengthened the resolve of the international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly to non-state actors.

Most ministers expressed concern over the test-firing of missiles by the DPRK on 5 July, stating that such tests would have adverse effects on regional peace and stability. They noted the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1695 on 15 July, as well as DPRK's rejection of this resolution. They urged the DPRK to re-establish the moratorium on missile testing, and called on all parties to resume the Six-Party talks without preconditions. Other prominent agenda items included the situation in the Middle East—particularly the “indiscriminate and excessive use of force” in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Lebanon; the recent developments in Myanmar; and political processes and security conditions in Iraq.

2005: The 12th ARF was held in Vientiane, Laos on 29 July. Timor Leste was inducted as the 25th member of the ARF and parties reached a consensus decision to admit Bangladesh to the ARF at its 13th Ministerial Meeting in Malaysia in 2006. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of ARF as the main multilateral political and security forum in the region. They further expressed their commitment to counter terrorism and transnational crime by endorsing the statement on Information Sharing and Intelligence Exchange and Document Integrity and Security in Enhancing Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Other Transnational Crimes. Ministers expressed strong condemnation of the terrorist attacks in London and Sharm-el-Sheikh, concern at the pace of democratization in Myanmar, and approval of the reassertion of a sovereign Iraq. They welcomed the resumption of both the Six-Party talks and the inter-Korea dialogue. They declared that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their vehicles of delivery continued to pose a serious security challenge. To this end, they urged all states to sign and conclude the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and to adopt the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism to provide for their early entry into force. They reiterated their continued support for the NPT in promoting nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation as well as the peaceful use of nuclear energy. To this end, they

agreed to undertake further efforts to strengthen compliance with all provisions of the treaty. They also urged maintenance of the existing moratorium on nuclear testing and reaffirmed their support for internationally recognized nuclear-weapons-free zones.

2004: The 11th ARF convened in Jakarta, Indonesia on 2 July, and was chaired by H.E. Dr. N. Hassan Wirajuda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and attended by the Foreign Ministers of all ARF countries as well as the ASEAN Secretary-General. The ministers welcomed Pakistan's accession to the TAC and its formal joining of the ARF, which brought its total membership to 24, and discussed the Bali Concord II issued at the Ninth ASEAN Summit. They discussed the various security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region, specifically addressing issues such as the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the need to take steps towards its denuclearization there, and commenting positively on the 23-26 June Six Party Talks in Beijing. Other regional concerns addressed included the transfer of sovereignty and continued violence in Iraq.

The Ministers also addressed nonproliferation and disarmament issues, adopting a Statement on Nonproliferation that was originally proposed by the U.S. In it, they urged member States to work to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and related materials, largely through increased technical cooperation. The statement also encouraged participating countries to strengthen their export control capabilities, and to engage in collaboration and increased efforts to prevent the illicit transport of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.

Ministers representing NPT member states also expressed commitment to a successful 2005 NPT Review Conference, encouraged the maintenance of the current moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons, and reiterated support for international NWFZs, particularly noting the necessity of accession of the NWS to the Protocol of the SEANWFZ Treaty. Regarding small arms and light weapons, the Ministers encouraged all states in the region to work to prevent their illicit trafficking to non-state actors.

The Ministers also adopted a Statement on Strengthening Transport Security Against International Terrorism, an action recommended at the Intersessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, which was held on 30-31 March in Manila.

2003: The 1st Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime was held from

21-22 March in Karambunai, Sabah, Malaysia. The meeting was attended by representatives from Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam. The agenda focused on recent terrorist activities and counter-terrorism efforts, as well as border security to manage the movement of people, goods and documents. Representatives provided updates on measures taken to curb terrorism in their countries, stressing the importance of cooperation and intelligence sharing, and the need to assist developing countries in capacity building and acquiring the necessary technology to prevent the movement of terrorists and their resources. The creation of the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) was noted.

The 10th ARF was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 18 June. Regarding the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, the Ministers urged the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) to resume its cooperation with the IAEA and to reverse its decision to withdraw from the NPT. They supported the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner for the sake of durable peace and security in the region. They were of the view that the ARF has played a useful and constructive role and agreed to support further efforts by the ARF Chair to help ease tensions on the Peninsula.

The Ministers reiterated their condemnation of terrorism and expressed their determination to take all necessary steps in order to raise public awareness and take effective action against terrorism. At the same time, they rejected any attempt to associate terrorism with any religion, race, nationality, or ethnic group. They stressed the importance of capacity building to counter terrorism effectively. In this regard, they reaffirmed the importance of cooperation and coordination within the framework established by the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1373.

The Ministers recognized the growing danger posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. They reaffirmed that the NPT remained the cornerstone of the nuclear nonproliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. They also stressed the need to promote the universalization of nonproliferation and disarmament agreements, including the IAEA Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In this regard, they expressed concerns about actions which damage global nonproliferation efforts and undermine mutual trust and confidence. They welcomed the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and encouraged increased adherence by ARF countries.

2002: The 9th Meeting of the ARF was held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam on 31 July, and was chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam. At the meeting, the Ministers expressed satisfaction with the ARF's progress and addressed administrative concerns before turning to security-related issues. They discussed the impact of 11 September on the security environment and encouraged accession to or ratification of relevant Conventions and Protocols relating to terrorism, committing to "strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation in combating terrorism." The Ministers also noted consultations between ASEAN and the Nuclear Weapons States regarding the Protocol of the [Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone \(SEANWFZ\)](#), and reaffirmed their support for the P5 Joint Statement regarding Mongolia's security and nuclear-free status.

Regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Ministers recognized their threat to regional security interests and stressed the importance of multilateral cooperation in achieving arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation. The Ministers also addressed the preparations for the 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), agreeing that the NPT is the "cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime". In addition, they reiterated the importance of the existing moratorium on nuclear testing and addressed the status of the [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty](#), and noted their hope that both the November 2002 [Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention](#) Review Conference and the April/May 2003 Review Conference of the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) would see progress. Concerning conventional weapons, the Ministers affirmed the importance of efforts to implement the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

The Ministers also addressed regional issues, such as the tension between India and Pakistan, the situation in Korea, and the current reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

2001: At the 8th Meeting of the ARF, held on 25 July at Ha Noi, Vietnam and hosted by H.E. Mr. Nguyen Dy Nien, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist

Republic of Vietnam, the Ministers noted that the situation in Southeast Asia on the whole had been peaceful and stable. They exchanged views on the recent developments in the South China Sea and welcomed the progress in the consultations between ASEAN and China to develop a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. The Ministers encouraged self-restraint by all countries concerned and the promotion of CBMs in this area, and welcomed the commitment of the countries concerned to resolve disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as well as to ensure the freedom of navigation in the area.

The Ministers welcomed the progress toward the implementation of the SEANWFZ as a contribution to global efforts to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons and noted with satisfaction the continued progress made in the consultation between the State Parties to the SEANWFZ Treaty and the NWS regarding the latter's accession to the Protocol to the Treaty. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the progress made at the recent direct dialogue between the State Parties and the NWS held in Ha Noi in May and welcomed the P5 Joint Statement concerning security assurances for Mongolia and support for the nuclear-weapon free status of Mongolia.

The Ministers discussed issues relating to proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery as well as the implications of the missile defense systems. They noted expressions of support for the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nonproliferation regime and called on all States to sign and ratify the CTBT and to accede to the NPT, as well as urged all States to maintain existing moratoria on nuclear testing. They also took note of the call made in the NPT Review Conference Final Document for the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a program of work, to include the immediate commencement of negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). The Ministers further emphasized the importance of systematic and progressive efforts by NWS on nuclear disarmament and called on all States to work towards the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons. They also expressed their hope that the Protocol strengthening the BTWC would be finalized before the Fifth BTWC Review Conference and urged all countries to speedily conclude their negotiations on the Protocol.

The Ministers welcomed the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols and encouraged ARF participating countries to sign and

ratify them soon. The Ministers expressed their supports for results of the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in New York from 9 to 20 July and believed ARF participants, would promote the regional cooperation pursuant to the UN Program of Action on that illicit trade. In this context, the Ministers noted the Australian proposal for an ARF Declaration on small arms.

2000: The 7th Meeting of the ARF was held in Bangkok on 27 July. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand. The Ministers welcomed the participation for the first time of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) at the Seventh ARF Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok. With regard to the issue of membership, the Ministers reaffirmed the decision taken at the Fifth ARF Meeting and agreed that with the current 23 participants, the focus should now be on consolidating the process of dialogue and cooperation among the present participants of the ARF.

The Ministers noted with satisfaction the significant progress that the ARF had made in terms of enhancing political and security dialogue and cooperation within the Asia-Pacific region. In the context of the circumstances prevailing in the region, they noted that the ARF participants were able not only to engage in a free-flowing and productive exchange of views with a greater comfort level, but also to address, in a constructive manner, key political and security issues with bearing on regional peace and stability, including new issues that have emerged as a result of globalization.

The Ministers emphasized the importance of CBMs to the overall ARF process and agreed that such efforts be intensified. They also welcomed the progress in the implementation of the proposals in the overlap between CBMs and PD as well as the continued efforts to develop concepts and principles of PD applicable to the ARF context. In this regard, the Ministers agreed that these developments had enhanced the continuity and relevance of the ARF process.

The Ministers discussed matters related to the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, as well as the implications of ballistic missile defense systems. They supported the NPT and in this regard, they noted the outcome of the NPT Review Conference, convened in New York on 24 April - 19 May. The Ministers also noted the call for all States to sign and ratify the CTBT and to accede to the NPT. They also mentioned the NPT Review Conference Final Document's call on the Conference on Disarmament

to agree on a program of work including the immediate commencement of negotiations on the FMCT. The Ministers further emphasized the importance of systematic and progressive efforts by NWS on nuclear disarmament and called on them to work towards total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Meeting noted further the recent adoption by the Mongolian Parliament of a Law on its Nuclear-Weapon-Free Status as an important unilateral measure undertaken by Mongolia in pursuance of the UN General Assembly resolution A/53/77D on "Mongolia's international security and nuclear weapon-free status." The Ministers reiterated their support for the work of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the BTWC on the negotiations on a verification protocol for the BTWC and their call for a speedy conclusion of the negotiations.

The Ministers discussed issues pertaining to transnational crime, especially issues of piracy, illegal migration, including trafficking in human persons, particularly women and children, and illicit trafficking in small arms. They recognized that these transnational issues not only could pose challenges to regional peace and stability, but also impair individual countries' efforts in promoting national economic development and improving people's livelihood. Hence, cooperative approaches were necessary to deal with these problems. They also noted the seriousness of the implications of drug production and trafficking as well as the need to address other issues such as money laundering, corruption, and computer crimes. The Ministers underlined the importance of greater bilateral, regional, and international cooperative efforts in this regard and expressed support for the on-going negotiations on the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, as well as the convening of the International Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001. They nonetheless noted that the extent of the impact of transnational crime problems differs across regions and, in this context, the Ministers agreed that the ARF should continue to address transnational crime issues, which affected security of the Asia-Pacific region, and explore how the ARF could increase regional awareness and complement the work undertaken in other existing fora.

1999: The 6th Meeting of the ARF was held in Singapore on 26 July. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Professor S. Jayakumar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

The Ministers expressed support for the continuing consultations between the State Parties of the SEANWFZ Treaty and the NWS regarding the lat-

ters' accession to the Protocol of the Treaty. The Ministers noted that nuclear-weapon-free zones would contribute to the goal of comprehensive nuclear disarmament and, in this regard, the Ministers also welcomed the UNGA Resolution 53/77D of 4 December 1998 on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status.

The Ministers called on all States to accede to the NPT and CTBT, urged the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to immediately begin and swiftly conclude FMCT negotiations, to require States to exercise restraint in the development, testing, and export of ballistic missiles and other WMD delivery means, and called for a speedy and successful conclusion to the negotiations on a verification protocol for the BTWC. The Ministers noted with appreciation the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction, and the convening of the First Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention held in Maputo on 3-7 May 1999. They also noted the early entry into force of the amended mines protocol (Protocol II) of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), and efforts being made in other bodies, including the CD, to complement the Ottawa Convention by engaging key non-signatories. The Ministers agreed to support initiatives to enhance international cooperation on demining, the removal of unexploded ordnance and rehabilitation of victims, and commended efforts by some ARF countries to provide training and assistance on mine clearance.

1998: The 5th Meeting of the ARF was convened in Manila on 27 July. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Domingo L. Siazon, Jr., Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

The Ministers noted with appreciation the conclusion of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction and welcomed the decision of the CD to re-appoint a Special Coordinator on landmines and efforts to bring into force the CCW amended mines protocol (Protocol II). The Ministers called on all States to accede to the NPT, CTBT, and CWC and urged the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the BTWC to intensify and complete its work as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference. They asked the countries concerned to refrain from undertaking weaponization or deploying missiles to deliver nuclear weapons, and to prevent any transfer of nuclear weapon-related materials, technology, and equipment to third countries. In the interest of peace and security

in the region, the Ministers called on the countries concerned to resolve their dispute and security concerns through peaceful dialogue.

The Ministers noted the signing of the Second Protocol to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia by the High Contracting Parties at the 31st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Manila on 25 July 1998 and agreed to consider the call of the TAC High Contracting Parties for non-Southeast Asian States, particularly the major powers, to accede to the Treaty after the Second Protocol enters into force.

1997: The 4th Meeting of the ARF was held in Subang Jaya, Malaysia on 27 July. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

The Ministers welcomed the entry into force, on 27 March, of the SEANWFZ Treaty, which represented an important effort of Southeast Asian States towards strengthening the security in the region and towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones globally. In this connection, the Ministers welcomed the ongoing consultations between State Parties to the Treaty and the NWS to facilitate accession by the latter to the Protocol of the SEANWFZ Treaty. The Ministers emphasized that an approach to nonproliferation, which is universal, comprehensive, and non-discriminatory, was urgently needed if the international community was to achieve the objective of comprehensive nuclear nonproliferation. The Ministers reiterated their determination to continue to contribute to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and urged the NWS to pursue vigorously negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament with the ultimate objective of eliminating nuclear weapons.

1996: In July, the ASEAN Regional Forum adopted the following criteria for participation:

1. Commitment — All new participants, which must be sovereign States, must subscribe to, and work cooperatively to help achieve the ARF key goals. Prior to their admission, all new participants should agree to abide by and respect fully the decisions and statements already made by the ARF. All ASEAN members are automatically participants of ARF.
2. Relevance — A State should be admitted only if it can be demonstrated that it has an impact on the peace and security of the “geographical footprint” of key ARF activities (i.e., Northeast and Southeast Asia as well as Oceania).

3. Gradual expansion — Efforts must be made to keep the number of participants at a manageable level to ensure the effectiveness of the ARF.
4. Consultations — All applications for participation should be submitted to the Chairman of the ARF, who will consult all the other ARF participants at the Senior Official Meeting and ascertain whether a consensus exists for the admission of the new participant. Actual decisions on participation will be approved by the Ministers.

1995: The 2nd ARF was held in Bandar Seri Begawan (Brunei) on 1 August, and it identified the following areas for further study: confidence-and security-building, nuclear nonproliferation, cooperation in peacekeeping, exchanges of unclassified military information, maritime security issues, and preventive diplomacy. It discussed regional security issues such as the South China Sea, the situation on the Korean Peninsula, and resumed French and Chinese nuclear weapons testing. On 8-10 May, the ARF sponsored the third “Preventive Diplomacy Seminar,” which was held in Seoul.

1994: During the 27th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, the first meeting of ARF was held on 25 July. This was ASEAN’s initiative that brought together the six foreign ministers of ASEAN Member Countries and their counterparts from ASEAN’s seven “Dialogue Partners” (Australia, Canada, the EU, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, and the United States), two “Consultative Partners” (China and Russia), two observers (Laos and Vietnam), and one special observer (Papua New Guinea) to discuss regional security issues in an informal setting. The participants agreed to convene ARF on an annual basis.

ASEAN Secretary-General Rodolfo Severino (Philippines) was elected by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers to a five-year term, beginning on 1 January 1998.

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