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## CSS STRATEGIC BACKGROUND PAPER – 11 / 2013

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### AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND/ASEAN TRILATERAL

Kuala Lumpur 27-29 November 2013

#### MODALITIES TO DEEPEN AUSTRALIA'S AND NEW ZEALAND'S SECURITY COOPERATION WITH ASEAN

##### A History of Commitment to Regional Security:

New Zealand's first substantive links with South-east Asia were in the defence field. A strong commitment to the security of the region is in New Zealand's defence policy DNA. For more than six decades, New Zealand has been actively engaged in contributing to regional security arrangements, with the first act being a decision to join ANZAM in 1949. Originally formed to ensure the protection of sea communications, its scope was soon extended to tackle the communist insurgency in Malaya. That led to the basing of the front-line New Zealand army battalion in Malaysia and then Singapore, for more than three decades until 1989, and to the stationing for many years of RNZN ships and RNZAF aircraft in the region.

I should note that one other substantive link with the region was formed in 1950 when New Zealand decided to support the Colombo Plan. This was seen at the time as an important commitment to economic and social development, but there was also a security motive at play, as the Plan was seen as an important step in halting the spread of communism in the region. When Malaya gained its independence in 1957, New Zealand implicitly accepted a formal responsibility for the external defence of the region covered by the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement known as AMDA.

New Zealand's regional security interests did not stop at the territorial boundaries of Malaysia and Singapore. In 1954 New Zealand became a signatory to the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) known as the

Manila Pact. New Zealand took an active part in the work of SEATO's Headquarters in Bangkok until it was dissolved in 1977.

#### Five Power Defence Arrangements:

In 1971, New Zealand joined Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Kingdom in forming the Five Power Defence Arrangements, which replaced AMDA. The FPDA reflected the new realities of the region as the British chose to focus their defence effort closer to home, which raised concerns about a regional power vacuum.

It had been intended that the FPDA would only be a temporary security fix until Malaysia and Singapore had developed their military capabilities to the point of being able to provide for their own defence needs. In the meantime, emphasis was given to training assistance through collective exercises and training programmes. But the FPDA did not wither on the vine as had been expected. The strategic environment had become increasingly uncertain. Two years ago the FPDA turned 40. It is now the oldest multilateral security arrangement in South-east Asia, and remains the only one with an operational arm.

Throughout its 40 year, history the FPDA has been careful to ensure that it does not compete with other regional security structures and that it is a net contributor to the security of the wider region. The provision now made for other ASEAN members to observe aspects of FPDA exercises reflects this approach.

The FPDA occupies a special place in our defence settings. For more than two decades, the FPDA provided the only opportunity for our Defence Force to take part in multilateral exercises at a time when the United States cold shoulder over our non-nuclear policy, had firmly closed the door on participation in any exercises in which US forces took part. The professional benefits and the psychological reassurance these exercises provided cannot be over-stated. The FPDA have not been a static set of arrangements. They have evolved over the years to reflect and respond to the contemporary security environment. For instance, exercises now include a range of scenarios for non-conventional security challenges.

## The Evolution of Bilateral Defence Relationships:

Just as the FPDA have evolved over this period, so have New Zealand's bilateral defence relationships with Malaysia and Singapore. The previous donor/client relationship is now a partnership of equals. Over the course of the last decade, both countries have become important partners in peacekeeping and related missions. Singapore's contribution of a 70-strong infantry company group to our battalion in Timor Leste signalled the growing maturity of that relationship characterised by an ability to work together in an operational setting. Singapore subsequently replaced our helicopter squadron in Timor, and in conjunction with Thailand, replaced our battalion, enabling us to exit after three years of continuous operations in Timor.

Singapore subsequently attached engineers and medical personnel to our Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Afghanistan province of Bamiyan, and the two Navies have worked together on counter-piracy patrols in the Indian Ocean. Malaysia, too, has worked with us in Bamiyan, providing a 40-strong medical contingent. This was a welcome and substantive contribution as it included a number of female Muslim doctors who were better placed than our own personnel to interact with and provide healthcare for Bamiyan women.

During the last three decades, our defence relationships with other ASEAN countries have also evolved. There are bilateral training programmes with Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei and now Viet Nam. We have regular defence dialogues with each. And although our current bilateral connections with Cambodia and Laos take place in multilateral settings, we made a significant contribution to the UN peacekeeping mission in Cambodia and subsequently for several years to the Cambodian Mine Action Centre and to its Lao counterpart.

In more recent years, New Zealand has supported the capacity building programmes conducted by the South-east Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism in such areas as rule of law, criminal justice, counter radicalisation, and counter terrorism financing, and will continue to contribute to these programmes.

## A Growing Relationship with ASEAN:

Over the past 15 years, the New Zealand Defence Force has played an increasingly active role with ASEAN. This was initially through our support for giving substance to the defence dialogue process in the ASEAN Regional Forum when that process was still in its infancy. We supported efforts to establish the senior defence officials meeting as an integral part of the ARF SOM, and twice co-chaired the defence dialogue process with Lao and subsequently Cambodian counterparts during New Zealand's two tenures as co-chairs of the ARF ISG on CBM's and PD.

In the three years prior to the establishment in October 2010 of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus Forum, New Zealand and Australian senior defence officials hosted afternoon teas during the ARF SOM for their ASEAN defence counterparts to put the case for inclusion in the ADMM+ forum. We each set out our track record on commitment to regional security and our intention to participate actively in that forum if we were invited to join.

New Zealand was therefore very pleased to be invited by ASEAN to take part in ADMM+. At the senior defence officials meeting that followed the inaugural meeting of ADMM+, we signalled our interest in taking up a co-chairing role of one of the five Expert Working Groups established to give substance to ADMM+. That led to an invitation from the Philippines to co-chair with them the Peacekeeping Operations Working Group for a three year period.

The Group has subsequently held several meetings on issues such as the legal issues in peacekeeping, building capability for peacekeeping operations, and force generation. For one of those meetings we took up Indonesia's invitation to hold the event at their new peacekeeping centre at Bogor, and invited the International Committee of the Red Cross to participate. Our term as co-chair concludes with a desk-top exercise focussing on force generation issues to be held in the Philippines early in 2014.

Recognising that the Expert Working Groups are the fulcrum of ADMM+, New Zealand signalled its wish to continue active engagement in moving the process forward, and will in April join Brunei in co-chairing the Maritime Security Expert Working Group.

For the Future a Greater Emphasis on Defence Links with ASEAN:

New Zealand welcomes the progress made by all of the Expert Working Groups in their first three years. We particularly welcome the opportunities that are being developed for exercises activities. The HA/DR and Military Medicine exercise held in Brunei in June in which more than 3,000 personnel from the 18 member countries took part, was the first major exercise to take place under ADMM+ auspices.

Typhoon Haiyan was a regrettable but timely reminder of the region's susceptibility to a range of natural disasters. New Zealand shares the geological volatility of much of the Western Pacific and can offer assistance in early warning mechanisms, disaster risk mitigation and disaster management aftermath as well as the logistic support currently being provided by the New Zealand Defence Force in the Philippines.

By the time the co-chairmanship of all five Expert Working Groups changes early in 2014, all five Groups will have held exercises at various levels. This demonstrates that ADMM+ promotes practical cooperation and the building of operational links, rather than focussing on dialogue important as that is.

The Brunei meeting concluded with a joint declaration in which Ministers reiterated the strategic importance of ADMM+ and the need to continue to give emphasis to capacity building through more regular engagement including in training and joint exercises. Ministers agreed to establish a sixth Expert Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action.

They also agreed to work towards reducing vulnerability to miscalculations and avoiding undesirable incidents at sea. As a maritime nation with a strong interest in a secure maritime environment, New Zealand is keen to work with ASEAN to address the many trans-national challenges facing that environment, and to assist in the development of confidence building measures and crisis management mechanisms to reduce the risk of such incidents and mitigate the impact of incidents that do occur. We would also be keen to contribute to the outcomes of the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum.

We consider that ADMM+ is an important building block in the region's evolving security architecture. We fully support its primary objective of building and sustaining confidence between the region's military and civilian

defence officials and developing the habit of working together. We agree that ASEAN is and must remain central to the process of building this institution, and we want to work with ASEAN to increase the effectiveness and utility of ADMM+.

One suggestion I would like to offer is the idea of setting aside an hour or two during the annual ADMM+ senior defence officials meeting for the Australian and New Zealand representatives to discuss with their ASEAN counterparts how we can work together to further strengthen ADMM+ outcomes.

From New Zealand's perspective, one unstated but very important ADMM+ objective is the space the forum has already been able to create for China and the United States to work together. That United States Defense Secretary Hagel went to Brunei despite the pressing preoccupations at that time of Syria, demonstrates the significance Washington attaches to ADMM+. While in Beijing, ADMM+ is seen as a forum that in the words of Teng Jianqun, Director of the Department for American Studies at the China Institute of International Studies, "engages and reassures China, rather than isolates and threatens it".

If we can continue to encourage China and the United States to fully engage in the ADMM+ and to take advantage of opportunities for their military personnel to develop the habit of working together and to better understand each other, ADMM+ will make an important contribution to regional security.

Paul Sinclair  
Regional Security Fellow  
Victoria University of Wellington  
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