



PRESS RELEASE

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ASEAN Defense Ministers Adopt PH Paper on Cybersecurity

Given the increasing cyber security challenges, Philippines Secretary of National Defense Voltaire T. Gazmin's proposal to establish a cyber security working group in the ADMM-Plus was approved by the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM). The concept paper on the establishment of the cyber security working group was adopted by the ASEAN defense ministers when they met in Vientiane, Laos last May 25, 2016.

By leveraging individual ASEAN-Plus capabilities, the working group will promote practical cooperation in addressing cyber security challenges. The proposal, first made last year by Secretary Gazmin during the ADMM Retreat in Malaysia, was thoroughly processed within the ASEAN, culminating in the adoption of the concept paper. The Philippines and New Zealand will co-chair the working group from 2017-2020.

Meanwhile, the Philippines forwarded another proposal which hopefully would once more be positively considered by the ADMM: the inclusion of coastguards and other maritime forces in the Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) which currently covers only naval forces. Relatedly, the ministers agreed as indicated in their issued Joint Declaration that they shall commence work on crafting protocols of interaction to avoid misunderstanding and prevent undesirable incidents in the West Philippine Sea. The ministers also reiterated the importance of expeditiously working towards an early conclusion of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

Secretary Gazmin thanked his fellow defense ministers for welcoming him into the ADMM process when he assumed his post as Secretary of National Defense in 2010. He urged his fellow defense ministers to extend the same warm welcome to the next PH Secretary of National Defense. He is confident that the same professional interaction and personal ties will likewise be developed with the next defense minister. #####