



ASEAN defense ministers launch regional hotline

The defense ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) formally launched the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI) today, 24 October 2017, at the 4th ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus held in Clark, Pampanga.

Formerly known as the ASEAN Direct Communications Link, the ADI is designed to allow the defense ministers to communicate instantly through a secure hotline, further fostering cooperation and diffusing possible misunderstandings among ASEAN member states.

Minister of Energy and Industry, Pehin Dato Mohammad Yasmin of Brunei Darussalam, presented the key management system of the ADI to 2017 ADMM Chair, Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana.

“One of the main characteristics of the ADMM and ADMM-Plus that we are proud of is that they go beyond the ministerial platforms for dialogue, and actually serve as mechanisms for practical cooperation,” Secretary Lorenzana said.

Adopted during the 8th ADMM in Myanmar in May 2014, the ADI is a hotline designed to provide quick response cooperation in emergency situations, especially in maritime operations.

This new defense cooperation mechanism is a product of combined efforts of the ADMM since 2014, which culminated with the signing of the contract in November 2015 and endorsement of the standard operating procedures in 2016. Every ASEAN member state deliberated to ensure that the ADI system is safe and secure.

In 2013, His Majesty Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam, who initiated the idea of the ADI during his chairmanship of the 22nd ASEAN Summit, said: “It is important to have in place practical procedures, which could assist in avoiding undesired incidents at sea.”

“For instance, if there is a major storm, fishermen may need to take temporary shelter in [a] disputed area. Such [an] innocent incident may be misinterpreted. Therefore, it would be appropriate to establish procedures [such as] having a hotline to avoid misunderstanding,” the Sultan said.

The hotline is available to each ASEAN defense minister to directly contact his/her counterpart in another ASEAN member state, strengthening the ties forged through the ADMM. The ADMM, as the highest defense consultative and cooperative mechanism, promotes regional peace and stability through dialogue and cooperation. ###