

Section
6

Southeast Asia

1 General Situation

Southeast Asia occupies a strategic position for traffic, linking the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, such as the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. It is an important region for Japan, which relies on maritime transport for many of the supplies needed for economic activities and the lives of the Japanese people. The countries in Southeast Asia are making efforts to achieve political stability and steady economic growth, and lately have realized overall economic development to varying degrees. Such economic development has deepened interdependence within the region and with countries outside the region. In late 2015, the establishment of the ASEAN Community was declared as an outcome of the strides made in ASEAN cooperation towards its integration.

Meanwhile, this region still has destabilizing factors, including the territorial disputes over the South China Sea, ethnic minority issues, separatist and independence movements, and Islamic extremist groups. Moreover, there are incidents, such as piracy, by which the safe passage of ships is obstructed. In order to cope with these issues, the countries in Southeast Asia are working to build military forces for national defense and maintenance of domestic public security, as well as for addressing new security issues such as terrorism and piracy. Recently, against the backdrop of economic development, the countries have been modernizing their military forces, mainly their naval and air forces, as well as strengthening their maritime law enforcement capacities.

2 Security and Defense Policies of Each Country

1 Indonesia

Indonesia is a country of importance in Southeast Asia, with the world's largest Muslim population. At the same time, as it is the largest archipelago country in the world, it has vast land and territorial waters and strategic importance for maritime traffic. This unique geographical position, located between two oceans and two continents, places Indonesia centrally amongst its ten neighboring countries' sea and land borders. Because of this position, Indonesia sees itself as vulnerable to security threats, which requires the country to strategize its position carefully.

Under the banner of the maritime nation concept, President Joko Widodo, who first took office in October 2014 and was reelected in the presidential campaign in April 2019, strives to revive maritime culture, address territorial disputes through maritime diplomacy, and build maritime defense power supported by satellite technology and drone systems.

As part of its military force reform, Indonesia aims to meet the requirements for minimum defense capabilities—what it calls “Minimum Essential Force (MEF).” However, Indonesia has indicated that its maritime defense capabilities, in particular, are still very much inadequate. Accordingly,

Indonesia has announced a defense budget increase as well as a policy to bolster its deployment of assets to the Natuna Islands, in the South China Sea, and other locations.¹ Concerned about the “nine-dash line” claimed by China, which overlaps with Indonesia's EEZ in the vicinity of the Natuna Islands, Indonesia has enhanced its patrol activities in the area. In December 2018, it was reported that Indonesia deployed an army composite battalion, Indonesian National Air Defense Forces Command's radar squadron, and Indonesian Marines composite battalion on the Natuna Islands for an opening ceremony of a military base with piers which can also accommodate submarines, and hangars for unmanned vehicles.

Indonesia faces internal concerns, including the activities of Islamic extremists, such as supporters of ISIL and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), and secession and independence movements in Papua Province. In May 2018, there were a series of terrorist attacks that have been reported as linked to Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), a terrorist organization which supports ISIL. With increasing public demand for stronger counter-terrorism measures, Indonesia expanded its Police's investigatory powers and enhanced Indonesian National Armed Forces' counter-terrorism initiatives.

Indonesia emphasizes cooperation with other Southeast

¹ It is believed that in December 2015 Minister of Defense Ryamizard Ryacudu unveiled a plan to deploy a fighter squadron and small vessels to the Natuna Islands as well as increase the number of troops stationed there from the current 800 to around 2,000, including the special operations force of the Air Force, for the purpose of “being prepared for a range of threats such as illegal operations and illicit intrusion.”

Asian countries, and adopts a free and active foreign policy. In relation to this, President Joko Widodo advocates Indo-Pacific Cooperation Concept, which is focused on the centrality of ASEAN. With the United States, it is strengthening its cooperative relationship in such fields as military education and training and military equipment procurement, and is carrying out joint training, including “Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT)”² and the “Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism (SEACAT)”³ exercises.

Indonesia has broadly positive relations with China based on economic ties, although the territorial dispute in the waters near the Natuna Islands has long been an issue that could raise tension between the two countries.



See Chapter 2, Section 5-1-3 (4) (Relations with Southeast Asia and the Pacific Island Countries)

2 Malaysia

Malaysia, which is located at the center of Southeast Asia, perceives that its foreign policy is largely influenced by its strategic location in Southeast Asia, its attributes as a trading nation, and its unique demography. Moreover, while Malaysia is currently experiencing political stability and economic growth, it sees that current issues, particularly non-conventional security issues, are beginning to shape and influence the nature of threats to national defense and security. Malaysia places importance on “Independence,” “Total Defence,” “Commitment to the Rule of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA),”⁴ “Cooperation with the UN for World Peace,” “Measures against Terrorism,” and “Defence Diplomacy” in its defense policy. On the other hand, in connection with the recent continued anchoring of Chinese government vessels around South Luconia Shoal, over which Malaysia claims sovereignty, Malaysia has announced that its Navy and maritime law enforcement agencies would conduct around-the-clock monitoring, and that Malaysia would defend its sovereignty. Along with this strengthening of its maritime defense force, Malaysia also has striven to bolster its defense posture in eastern Malaysia, constructing a new naval base in April 2017 in Bintulu, close to James Shoal and South Luconia Shoal.

Malaysia and the United States hold joint exercises such as CARAT and SEACAT, and promote military cooperation including capacity-building in the maritime security field.

Despite competing claims over the sovereignty of the South China Sea and other matters, Malaysia and China have strong ties, especially their economic relationship, and mutual visits by dignitaries take place frequently. In November 2016, Prime Minister Najib visited China and reached an agreement on economic cooperation and the purchase of naval vessels. Furthermore, in November 2015, it is said that the two countries agreed on making use of the Port of Kota Kinabalu for port calls by Chinese Navy vessels. In January and September 2017, a Chinese submarine made a port call.

On the other hand, the Mahathir administration formed in May 2018 has been pushing forward reconsiderations of large-scale infrastructure projects as a part of fiscal reconsolidation efforts. During his visit to China in August 2018, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad expressed his support for the Belt and Road Initiative. However, he also informed China that Malaysia would cancel or postpone the long-distance railway project that started in August 2017 with China’s cooperation.⁵

As for North Korea, following the murder of Kim Jong-nam at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in February 2017, Malaysia virtually closed its embassy in North Korea, and the relations between the two countries have deteriorated. However, Prime Minister Mahathir expressed a flexible position by saying that Malaysia would reopen its embassy in Pyongyang.

3 Myanmar

Myanmar shares borders with China and India and is a gate to the Indian Ocean. In light of these factors, Myanmar is noted for its strategic significance. In Myanmar, the armed forces had control over the government following the collapse of the socialist regime in 1988. However, with an economic slowdown caused by the economic sanctions imposed by the West, coupled with isolation from the international community, transition to civilian rule based on the road map to democracy was completed.⁶

Including the release of political prisoners and ceasefire

² A general term that refers to a series of bilateral exercises that the United States conducts with Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Timor-Leste.

³ A general term that refers to counter-terrorism joint exercises that the United States conducts with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

⁴ Entered into force in 1971. This agreement states that Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom will discuss what response should be adopted in the event of aggression towards or the threat of an attack on Malaysia or Singapore. The five countries carry out various exercises based on these arrangements.

⁵ In April 2019, Malaysia and China agreed to resume the construction of a long-distance railway project, reducing the cost of the construction. Malaysian and Chinese companies also signed a supplementary agreement.

⁶ The National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi won the general election in November 2015. However, Aung San Suu Kyi was not eligible for the position of President according to the Constitution, as some of her family members have foreign citizenship. Therefore, she has led the administration as the newly created State Counselor and as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

agreements with ethnic minorities,⁷ the Government of Myanmar has actively taken steps toward democratization.⁸ The international community has shown some level of appreciation for these steps, with the West, including the United States, successively easing economic sanctions on Myanmar.

Meanwhile, regarding the situation in Rakhine State,⁹ Myanmar and Bangladesh agreed in October 2018 to commence the return of the refugees to Myanmar in November of the same year. However, their return has not been realized yet.

In terms of foreign policy, Myanmar continues to uphold a policy of neutrality and non-alignment, while for its national defense policy, continues to emphasize the three national causes of Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of National Solidarity, and Perpetuation of Sovereignty, as well as resolutely repelling foreign invasions and interference in domestic matters.

China is thought to be an important partner to Myanmar since its period of military rule. China is regarded as a major supplier of equipment.

Myanmar has maintained a cooperative relationship with Russia in the military field, including during the military regime, and Russia has been a destination for students from Myanmar and a supplier of major defense equipment. As for India, since the transition to civilian rule, Myanmar has deepened cooperative relations in the fields of the economy and military, which has developed into defense cooperation and exchanges such as the hosting of various seminars and friendly visits to Myanmar by Indian naval vessels.

Cooperative relations with North Korea, including weapons trades, were maintained under Myanmar's military regime. Following the transition to democracy, although Myanmar denies that it has military ties to North Korea, the report issued by the Panel of Experts of the United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee on North Korea in

March 2018 reported that the country has received a ballistic missile system and other conventional weapons from North Korea.

4 The Philippines

The Philippines considers that its archipelagic attributes and geographic location are a source of both strength and vulnerability. Moreover, the country sees that its strategic location and rich natural resources have also provided a strong temptation to expansionist powers. Based on this perception, although resolving internal armed conflicts remains its top security concern, rising tensions in the South China Sea have prompted the Philippines to give the same attention to territorial defense as it does to internal security threats. As regional security uncertainties evolve, the Philippines, strategically straddled between the bitterly contested South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, where competing interests of superpowers and other countries converge, is aware that it needs to chart its role in an increasingly multipolar global order.¹⁰

As regards domestic security issues, over the last approximately 40 years, armed conflicts have repeatedly broken out between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Following the progress of the peace process,¹¹ the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao was enacted in July 2018, making an important step towards the establishment of a new autonomous government in Mindanao. In January and February 2019, referendums on participation in the autonomous government were held. As a result, the participation of all but a few regions was decided.¹² It has been reported that there are some forces opposing the autonomous government led by the MILF, which may cause disturbance in the future peace process. There were bombings¹³ in Jolo, Sulu, soon after the announcement of the

⁷ About 30% of Myanmar's population is made up of ethnic minorities, some of whom demand secession or greater autonomy for their regions. In the 1960s, the Government of Myanmar implemented oppressive policies involving human rights violations such as forced labor and forced migration, which led to armed conflicts with armed groups of ethnic minorities.

⁸ The Myanmar government has been in peace talks with insurgent groups since 2011 for a ceasefire agreement. The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement was signed with eight groups in October 2015 and two more groups in February 2018. In December 2018, the Commander-in-Chief of the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) declared the cessation until the end of April 2019 of all military campaigns against the insurgent groups in northeastern Myanmar that have not yet signed the ceasefire agreement, in order to have talks with them towards ceasefire.

⁹ Following an attack on the police by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), the Tatmadaw and other forces launched a clearance operation in August 2017. This resulted in more than 600,000 citizens (mainly Muslims) fleeing to the neighboring country, Bangladesh, in two months. The international community denounced Myanmar for the purported massacre and human rights violation by the Tatmadaw. The Myanmar government denies the citizenship of Muslims residing in northern Rakhine State. The lack of citizenship of the refugees is making the matter even more complicated.

¹⁰ According to National Security Strategy 2018

¹¹ In October 2012, the Framework Agreement for the realization of a final agreement on the Mindanao peace process was signed. In January 2014, the Government of the Philippines and MILF signed the Annex on Normalization. The goal of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro signed in March 2014 was to launch an autonomous government in 2016 after formulating the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, holding a referendum in order to demarcate a jurisdictional domain, abolishing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and establishing the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA).

¹² The voting was held on January 21 and February 6. Based on the results of the referendum, five states, one city, and 63 villages decided to participate in the autonomous government. In Sulu, the state where Abu Sayyaf Group, who took an oath of loyalty to ISIL and is against the peace process, is based, the majority voted in opposition to participation in the autonomous government. However, since the majority of voters in the ARMM (which also includes Sulu) voted in favor of participation, it was decided that Sulu would also participate in the autonomous government.

¹³ On January 27, 2019, a bombing occurred at a cathedral in Jolo, Sulu, leaving more than 20 people dead and more than 100 people injured. Although ISIL claimed responsibility for this incident, the police believes it was conducted by Abu Sayyaf Group, who swore an oath of loyalty to ISIL.

results of the referendums, which killed more than 20 people, although their connection with the referendums has not been confirmed. In May 2017, security forces clashed with the Maute group, an Islamic extremist organization that pledges allegiance to ISIL and had occupied the city of Marawi by taking hostages. The enduring battle resulted in fatalities and injuries, causing public safety in the city to deteriorate. As a result, martial law was declared in Mindanao. The military operations resulted in the killing of core members and fighters of the Maute group, leading President Duterte to declare the liberation of Marawi City from terrorists in October of that same year. On the other hand, the declaration of martial law was extended until the end of 2019, to quell the continuing rebellion in the region. Moreover, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), an Islamic extremist group, has orchestrated a number of kidnappings for ransom in the Sulu Sea and Celebes Sea. Given this situation, in June 2017, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia announced that they had launched a trilateral maritime patrol in the region of the Sulu sea. Air patrols were also started by each country in October of that year.

The Philippines, with a historically close relationship with the United States, has maintained a cooperative relationship with the United States under their mutual defense treaty and military assistance agreement, even after the withdrawal of the U.S. Forces in 1992.¹⁴ The two countries are conducting joint exercises, including the large-scale military exercise Balikatan. In March 2016, the two countries agreed on five locations for carrying out defense cooperation under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA)¹⁵ they signed in April 2014 for strengthening their cooperation on such areas as the capacity enhancement of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and disaster relief.¹⁶ During his visit to the Philippines in March 2019, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made it clear that the South China Sea is part of the Pacific Ocean and thus any armed attack on Philippine forces, aircraft, or public vessels in the South China Sea would trigger mutual defense obligations under the Mutual Defense Treaty.

The Philippines and China have competing claims over the sovereignty of the Spratly Islands and Scarborough



A church damaged by bombing in Jolo in Sulu province in the Philippines on January 27, 2019 [AFP/Jiji]

Shoal in the South China Sea. Seeking a settlement under international law, in January 2013, the Philippines launched arbitral tribunal proceedings pursuant to UNCLOS against China. In July 2016, a final award was rendered, accepting nearly all of the Philippines' submissions. The Government of the Philippines released a statement that it welcomed the award by the arbitral tribunal and strongly affirms its respect for the decision. Also, President Duterte stated in his State of the Nation Address held in the same month that the Philippines would strongly affirm and uphold the award handed down for the arbitration case between the Philippines and China. However, when President Duterte visited China in October 2016, a joint statement was announced that included infrastructure investment, drug enforcement cooperation, coastal security cooperation and military cooperation but did not make reference to the tribunal's award in the case involving the Philippines and China.

Also, in May 2017, President Duterte visited a PLA Navy vessel that made its first port call at the port in Davao, where the president grew up, and received rifles and other defense counter-terrorism equipment from China in June for the combat with the Islamic extremists in Malawi. In November 2018, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Xi Jinping visited the Philippines to meet President Duterte. They signed a memorandum on energy resource development and agreed on maritime cooperation in resources exploration.

¹⁴ In 1947, a military base agreement was concluded that allows the U.S. Forces to use Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station for 99 years. A military assistance agreement was also concluded in 1947, followed by the mutual defense treaty in 1951. With the revision of the 1966 military base agreement, the time limit for the stationing of U.S. military bases in the Philippines was set for 1991. Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station were returned in 1991 and 1992, respectively. Subsequently, the two countries concluded the Visiting Forces Agreement in 1998, establishing the legal status of U.S. Forces personnel visiting for joint military exercises in the Philippines.

¹⁵ The EDCA is designed to enable the U.S. Forces to utilize and develop facilities in the Philippines, preposition equipment, among other activities. It was agreed that the bases in the Philippines to be utilized by the U.S. Forces would be decided through consultations after the EDCA was concluded and would be stated in an annex to the agreement. After the signing in 2014, the consultations regarding the annex had been suspended as litigation procedures were instituted in the Philippines on the grounds that the EDCA was unconstitutional. However, the Supreme Court of the Philippines handed down a ruling in January 2016 that the EDCA is indeed constitutional.

¹⁶ At the 2+2 talks held on January 12, 2016 (EST), the ministers welcomed the decision that the EDCA was constitutional, and reaffirmed their commitment to continue strengthening their alliance in terms of ensuring both countries' mutual defense and security as well as jointly contributing to regional peace, stability, and economic prosperity. On March 17-18, 2016 (EST), a strategic dialogue among foreign and defense authorities was held in Washington, D.C. The two sides agreed on the following five EDCA Agreed Locations: Antonio Bautista Air Base, Basa Air Base, Fort Magsaysay, Lumbia Air Base, and Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base.

On the other hand, in April 2019, the Philippines criticized China when it confirmed the presence of more than 200 Chinese vessels near and around Thitu Island (Filipino name: Pag-asa Island), which is occupied by the Philippines. Attention will be paid to further action by the two countries moving forward.

Q See Chapter 3, Section 5-1 (Trends Related to the “Principle of the Freedom of the High Seas”)

5 Singapore

Given its limited land area, population, and resources, Singapore’s existence and development depend on the peace and stability of the region in a globalized economy. Singapore gives high priority to national defense, with defense spending accounting for about one-fifth of its national budget.

Singapore identifies deterrence and diplomacy as twin pillars of its national defense policy. Because it is a very small country, Singapore’s armed forces make use of the training facilities of other countries, including the United States and Australia, while continually dispatching military personnel to take part in training exercises overseas.

Singapore emphasizes the importance of cooperative relations with ASEAN and the FPDA,¹⁷ and has concluded defense cooperation agreements with countries within and outside the region. With the aim of contributing to peace and stability in the region, Singapore supports U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific and permits it to use military facilities in Singapore. Since 2013, U.S. littoral combat ships (LCSs) began their rotational deployments. In December 2015, the P-8 patrol aircraft of the U.S. Forces were deployed to Singapore for around one week for the first time. The two countries have committed to continuing to carry out similar deployments routinely.¹⁸ In addition, Singapore conducted joint exercises with the United States, such as CARAT and SEACAT.

Singapore has strong economic ties with China. Both countries also conduct joint naval exercises. On the other hand, diplomatic relations with China have been strained partly due to Singapore’s belief in following the arbitration award when it comes to the resolution of the South China Sea disputes and partly due to Singapore’s defense relationship with Taiwan.

6 Thailand

Thailand’s defense policy includes: strengthening defense cooperation through ASEAN, international organizations, and other entities; defense that makes comprehensive use of political, economic, and other national strengths; and effective defense aimed at increasing the readiness of the Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTAF) and developing the defense industry. Attacks and bombing incidents by Islamic extremists seeking secession and independence have become a frequent occurrence in southern Thailand. The Government identifies the swift restoration of peace and security of the lives and property of the people in southern Thailand as an urgent task. In addition, undemarcated border issues exist between Thailand and neighboring countries, including Myanmar and Cambodia.

The submission of an amnesty bill intended to pave the way for the pardon and return of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra by ruling parties to the National Assembly in 2013 exacerbated domestic disorder. In May 2014, then Commander-in-Chief Prayut Chan-o-cha of the Royal Thai Army issued a declaration of martial law nationwide, and then seized power via the National Council for Peace and Order, which mostly comprises the Thai military. Subsequently, under the interim administration led by Prayut, who was selected as interim Prime Minister, the government worked towards a transition to a new administration based on the road map to civilian rule. The new constitution was promulgated and entered into force in April 2017. In March 2019, a general election was held for the first time in approximately 8 years.¹⁹

Under its flexible omnidirectional diplomatic policy, Thailand pursues cooperation with other Southeast Asian countries and coordination with major countries. The U.S.-Thailand joint exercise “Cobra Gold”, which has been implemented since 1982, is currently one of the largest multilateral exercises in the Southeast Asia.

Since the conclusion of the Military Assistance Agreement in 1950, Thailand and its ally the United States²⁰ have maintained a cooperative relationship. However, following the coup d’état in 2014, the U.S. suspended some military aid.

After the coup, the U.S. scaled down the size of the U.S. forces participating in Cobra Gold. However, this was restored under the Trump Administration. In addition,

¹⁷ See this Section, Footnote 4

¹⁸ In December 2015, Minister of Defence Ng Eng Hen of Singapore visited the United States. The two sides signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, and concurred that in accordance with this Agreement, they would strengthen their defense cooperation in the five areas of military, policy, strategy, technology, and the non-traditional security area of piracy and terrorism.

¹⁹ Neither the pro-military Palang Pracharat Party nor the pro-Thaksin Pheu Thai Party won a majority in the election.

²⁰ Thailand and the United States have an alliance based on the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, or Manila Pact, of 1954 and the Rusk-Thanasit communiqué of 1962.

the two countries have continued their bilateral naval training CARAT and counter-piracy and trafficking exercise SEACAT.

Thailand and China have also promoted military exchanges, conducting joint exercises such as Blue Strike among their marines and Falcon Strike among their air forces. It has been pointed out that Thailand's military relationship with China has become closer after the freezing of U.S. military assistance following the coup.

7 Vietnam

Vietnam perceives that it faces diverse and complex security challenges. It considers that the issues in the South China Sea have serious impacts on the maritime activities of Vietnam, and non-traditional threats, such as piracy and terrorism, are matters of concern. Based on its viewpoint that the sea is closely associated with the national construction and defense, Vietnam establishes an objective to become a strong marine country, particularly prioritizing the modernization of its military forces and law enforcement forces at sea as well as ensuring the capacity to properly handle sea situations, maritime independence, sovereignty, sovereign rights, jurisdiction and national interests at sea.

During the Cold War era, the former Soviet Union provided the most significant assistance to Vietnam. Until 2002, Russia had a naval base in Cam Ranh Bay. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Vietnam rapidly expanded its diplomatic relations with other countries, including establishing diplomatic ties with the United States. At present, Vietnam pursues an omnidirectional diplomatic policy and seeks to actively participate in international and regional cooperation in order to build friendly relations with all countries. In March 2016, an international port opened in the key strategic position of Cam Ranh Bay, and since then a number of navy vessels, including some from Japan, have made calls to the new port.

Vietnam and the United States have strengthened their military relations in recent years. This has taken such forms as joint exercises with the U.S. Navy and port calls by U.S. Navy vessels in Vietnam. In 2017, mutual visits were conducted by the leaders of both countries, and an agreement was reached on the deepening of defense cooperation. March 2018 marked the first port call by a U.S. aircraft carrier to Vietnam since the end of the Vietnam war.

Vietnam depends mostly on Russia for its defense equipment, and the two countries continue to strengthen cooperation in the area of national defense. In March 2013, Minister of Defence Sergey Shoygu visited Vietnam, and the two sides agreed to jointly construct vessel replenishment facilities along Cam Ranh Bay. In 2014, Russian IL-78 aerial refueling tankers landed at Cam Ranh International Airport for the first time for the refueling flights for Russia's Tu-95MS strategic bombers.²¹ As these examples demonstrate, the two countries have been carrying out new military cooperation. In recent years, the two countries have also promoted cooperation in the energy sector, such as nuclear power generation.

Q See Chapter 2, Section 4-6-2 (Relations with Asian Countries)

Vietnam and China, under their comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership relations, proactively conduct exchanges among their senior government officials. However, the two countries have competing claims concerning issues such as sovereignty over the South China Sea. In summits and many other occasions, the two countries have agreed to process the differences in their opinions on maritime issues and to refrain from activities that would complicate the matters. However, they have disputes regarding resources development and the operation of fishing boats.

Vietnam and India have been deepening their cooperative relationship in a broad range of areas, including security and economy. In the area of defense cooperation, it is noted that the Indian Armed Forces support the training of Vietnam's Navy submarine personnel and Air Force pilots, and Indian Navy vessels make friendly visits to Vietnam. Furthermore, when then Minister of National Defense Phung Quang Thanh visited India in May 2015, the two sides signed the Joint Vision Statement on Defence Cooperation for the period 2015-2020.²² In September 2016, Prime Minister Modi became the first Indian prime minister to visit Vietnam in 15 years. During the visit an agreement was reached on raising the status of the bilateral relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership, while an announcement was made concerning a loan of US\$500 million for deepening defense cooperation. Cooperation in the area of energy between India and Vietnam is also deepening, with a joint development program for oil and natural gas in the South China Sea.

Q See Chapter 3, Section 5-1 (Trends Related to the "Principle of the Freedom of the High Seas")

²¹ In March 2015, it was reported that U.S. DoD authorities, while stating the relevant facts, requested Vietnam to prevent the recurrence of this activity. In addition, a senior official of the U.S. Pacific Command allegedly stated that the Russian military aircraft that received refueling from the aerial refueling tankers arriving from the Cam Ranh base conducted provocative flights. In January 2015, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that Russian aerial refueling tankers (IL-78) used Cam Ranh Bay in 2014, enabling the refueling of strategic fighters.

²² The statement was agreed upon in May 2015, when Minister of National Defense Phung Quang Thanh of Vietnam visited India and held talks with Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar. While the content of the Joint Vision Statement has not been disclosed, it is said to cover the period 2015-2020, with maritime security cooperation constituting the main pillar. On the same day, the two sides also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on strengthening the cooperation between their coast guards.

3 Military Modernization in the Region

In recent years, Southeast Asian countries have increased their defense spending against the backdrop of economic development and other reasons, and are modernizing their military forces, focusing on inducting equipment such as submarines and fighters, including fourth-generation modern fighters. The underlying factors noted are increases in defense spending, the relationship between Southeast Asian countries in the sense that they react to neighboring states' development of military capabilities, response to the expansion of China's influence, and the inadequate role of regional security organizations to nurture relationships of trust.²³ Many Southeast Asian countries procure much of their defense equipment from a wide range of countries. As such, there are perceived difficulties in achieving consistent operations and maintenance in the respective countries.

Indonesia had introduced a total of 16 Russian Su-27 fighters and Su-30 fighters by 2013. In 2011, an agreement was reached regarding the U.S. provision of 24 F-16 fighters, and these have been successively delivered since July 2014. In addition, in February 2018, Indonesia concluded an agreement to purchase an additional 11 Su-35 fighters from Russia. With the ROK, Indonesia concluded an agreement in December 2011 to purchase three ROK-made 209-class submarines, of which one was delivered in August 2017, and another was delivered in April 2018. The two countries also discussed joint development of the 4.5 generation KF-X/IF-X fighter, and they concluded an agreement which sets forth the details of their cost sharing and bilateral cooperation in January 2016. In addition, Indonesia is domestically building two frigates based on the Dutch Sigma-class Frigate 10514 vessel. The first of these vessels was delivered in April 2017, and the second was delivered January 2018.

As of 2011, Malaysia had purchased 18 Su-30 fighter jets from Russia. In addition, that same year, Malaysia introduced two Scorpène-class submarines (jointly developed by France and Spain) as its first submarines. In November 2014, Malaysia reportedly concluded an agreement to purchase six corvettes from the ROK. Malaysia announced a plan to build six indigenous LCSs. The first of these vessels was launched in August 2017. Furthermore, in November 2016, Malaysia concluded an agreement with China to purchase four littoral mission ships (LMS).

The Philippines has taken steps in recent years to

modernize its defense equipment against the backdrop of conflicts over territorial rights in the South China Sea.

After the F-5 fighters were decommissioned in 2005, the Philippines did not have any fighters for some length of time. However, between November 2015 and May 2017, the Philippines successively introduced 12 FA-50PH light fighters purchased from the ROK.

As for naval forces, the Philippines received three Hamilton-class frigates from the United States by 2016. The Philippines introduced two Indonesian-made landing dock vessels by 2017. In October 2016, the Philippines concluded an agreement to purchase two frigates from the ROK.

Singapore is actively striving to modernize its forces. Today, it is one of the largest arms importers in the world.

It introduced 24 U.S.-made F-15 fighters by 2012 and also participates in the F-35 JSF Program.

As for naval forces, Singapore had introduced two Archer-class (Västergötland-class) submarines from Sweden by 2012. Also, in December 2013, Singapore concluded an agreement to purchase two German 218SG-class submarines (with plans to introduce them from 2021). By May 2017, Singapore ordered additional two units of the same submarine from Germany. With regard to Singapore's current plans to build eight indigenous patrol vessels, five such vessels came into service as of September 2018, and the country aims to have all vessels in operation by 2020.

As for Thailand, in July 2014, the country established the Submarine Squadron Headquarters, and started evaluation work to procure submarines. In April 2017, the Royal Thai Navy drew up a plan to purchase three Yuan-class submarines from China over the next 11 years, and the Thai Cabinet approved the purchase of one vessel.²⁴ In addition, the Cabinet approved in September 2012 a plan to introduce two frigates. The first frigate was received from the ROK in December 2018. In addition, by 2013, Thailand has introduced 12 Swedish-made JAS-39 Gripen fighters.

By January 2017, Vietnam successively introduced six Russian-made Kilo-class submarines. By February 2018, Vietnam started the operation of four Russian-made Gepard-class frigates. As for its air force capabilities, Vietnam started to successively introduce Russian-made Su-30 fighters in 2004, and to date, the total number of delivered Su-30 fighters came to 36.

²³ Based on International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)'s "The Military Balance" and other sources.

²⁴ The plan to purchase Chinese-made submarines for the Royal Thai Navy approved by Thailand's cabinet on April 18, 2017, first calls for purchasing one vessel in installments appropriated over the budgets from 2017 to 2023, and then procuring a total of three vessels over the next 11-year period. On May 5, a contract was concluded on the purchase of one of these three submarines.

4 Intra-and Extra-Regional Cooperation

ASEAN member states utilize ASEAN as the multilateral security framework of the region. ASEAN holds mechanisms such as the ARF and ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM), which provide opportunities for dialogue on security issues. Furthermore, ASEAN has made efforts to improve the security environment in the region and promote mutual trust, for example, by holding the ASEAN Militaries' Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Table-Top Exercise (AHR). In addition, ASEAN attaches importance to expanding its relations with countries outside of the region. It holds the ADMM-Plus, a platform that adds eight non-ASEAN countries including Japan to ADMM, under which humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) exercises have been conducted. With China, ASEAN held the first naval table-top exercise in August 2018, and the first naval field training exercise in October 2018. In relation to this, it was reported that China requested during the meeting for the formulation of the COC of Parties in the South China Sea to include a clause on regular implementation of China-ASEAN joint military exercises and a clause stating that no military exercises shall be held jointly with countries from outside the region, unless the parties concerned are notified beforehand and express no objection. Meanwhile, ASEAN



Representatives from the navies of each country attending the closing ceremony of a naval field training exercise between ASEAN and China on October 27, 2018 [courtesy of the Ministry of Defense, Singapore]

has been working to achieve a balanced relationship with nations outside region, such as its intention to conduct the ASEAN-United States Maritime Exercise in 2019, which was announced at the ADMM in October 2018. Moving forward, ASEAN member states are expected to further develop initiatives to build trust with non-ASEAN countries, in accordance with the principle and concepts of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC).²⁵

²⁵ The ASEAN Community was established on December 31, 2015. It consists of the following three communities: Security Community, Economic Community, and Socio-Cultural Community. Among them, the APSC aims to build upon the political and security cooperation accumulated through the past ASEAN initiatives and to work to ensure the peaceful survival of the region in harmony and in accordance with the principle of democracy.