

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. 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. They are also pursuing cooperation with such countries as the United States, China, Russia, Australia, and India to this end. 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.

Chapter

2

Defense Policies of Countries

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.

Under the banner of the maritime nation concept, President Joko Widodo, who first took office in October 2014, strives to revive maritime culture, address territorial disputes through maritime diplomacy, and build maritime defense power supported by satellite technology and drone systems. President Joko was reelected in the April 2019 presidential elections and appointed Prabowo Subianto, who had stood against him, as Minister of Defence when forming the cabinet for his second administration in October. Defence Minister Prabowo firstly visited neighboring Malaysia in November 2019, and the following month he made visits to countries including Australia, China, and the ROK, where he held talks on bolstering bilateral defense cooperation.

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. 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. The Indonesian military established three Combined Defence Area Command (Pangkogabwilhan), in September 2019. Kogabwilhan is a representation of the concept of Indonesian Military's interoperability, which is currently a priority policy for Indonesian Military. Kogabwilhan serves as an initial action in the event of a conflict in its area for war military operations and military operations other than war and as a deterrent force in the event of external threats.

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 2019, Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a note of protest on the grounds that a China Coast Guard vessel had been found to have operated illegally in Indonesia's EEZ around the Natuna Islands by escorting their fishing fleet. The Indonesian military announced that it had tightened its monitoring of the surrounding waters and airspace, and President Joko visited the Natuna Islands later

that month.

Indonesia emphasizes cooperation with other Southeast Asian countries, and adopts a free and active foreign policy. In relation to this, at the June 2019 ASEAN Summit, President Joko Widodo played a leading role in the adoption of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which focuses on ASEAN Centrality. 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)”¹ and the “Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism (SEACAT)”² exercises.

2 Malaysia

Malaysia’s first defense white paper, which was published in December 2019, highlights the country’s geography as a nation with two territories—Peninsular Malaysia, and Sabah and Sarawak, on the island of Borneo—located between the vast Pacific and Indian Oceans. The document identifies Malaysia’s potential to serve as a bridging linchpin between the two oceans, and also demonstrates an awareness of the fact that, while Malaysia’s strategic location and natural resources are a blessing, they also pose a challenge. Given these attributes, Malaysia has historically been affected by the political dynamics of major powers. Even today, Malaysia sees in its defense white paper that uncertain big power relations, which refers to the U.S.-China, is the most important strategic factor for Malaysia. Moreover, the white paper also demonstrates an awareness that Malaysia faces increasing non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, cyberthreats, piracy, and natural disasters.

Based on this recognition, Malaysia’s defense policy aims to defend national interests in each of three concentric areas of interest, consisting of the Core Area, which includes both the country’s land masses and its territorial waters; the Extended Area, which encompasses the surrounding waters and airspace; and the Forward Area, which incorporates locations beyond the extended area where Malaysia’s national interests are affected. The policy consists of three key pillars: (1) “Concentric Deterrence,” which aims to deter all forms of external intrusion or conflicts by enhancing the capability of the nation’s armed forces; (2) “Comprehensive Defense,” which seeks to build resilience as a nation throughout society, including among the people; and (3) “Credible Partnerships,”

which focuses on the promotion of regional stability via the expansion and enhancement of defense cooperation with other countries as a highly credible partner.

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. In July 2019, the Air Force carried out live-fire missile exercises in Sabah state, on Borneo in eastern Malaysia. In December 2019, Malaysia made a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, aimed at setting the limits of its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

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.

The Mahathir administration formed in May 2018 has been pushing forward reconsiderations of large-scale infrastructure projects as a part of fiscal reconsolidation efforts. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad informed China that Malaysia would cancel or postpone the long-distance railway project that started in August 2017 with China’s cooperation. However, in April 2019, the two countries agreed to resume the long-distance railway project after making cost reductions, and the Malaysian and Chinese companies involved signed a supplementary agreement.

In February 2020, the Malaysian king appointed Muhyiddin Yassin as the country’s next prime minister, after receiving a letter of resignation from Prime Minister Mahathir. Muhyiddin was sworn in as prime minister that March.

3 Myanmar

Myanmar shares borders with China and India and is a gateway to the Indian Ocean for China and some ASEAN countries. 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

¹ 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.

² A general term that refers to counter-terrorism joint exercises that the United States conducts with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

the West, transition to civilian rule based on the road map to democracy was completed.³

Including the release of political prisoners and ceasefire agreements with ethnic minorities, the Government of Myanmar has actively taken steps toward democratization. The international community has shown some level of appreciation for these steps, with the West, including the United States, easing economic sanctions on Myanmar.

However, following an August 2017 attack on a police station by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), forces including Myanmar's military launched mop-up operations in Rakhine state and more than 600,000 refugees—primarily Muslims—fleeing to the neighboring country, Bangladesh, in two months. The international community denounced Myanmar for the purported massacre and human rights violation. Myanmar faced criticism from Western countries over the situation, with the United States announcing in August 2019 that it would tighten sanctions against the commanding officers of Myanmar's military forces. In addition, the Gambia brought a case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for breaching the Genocide Convention, with the aim of preventing all acts under Article 2 of the Convention. In January 2020, the ICJ issued provisional measures which indicated that Myanmar should use all means to prevent oppression.⁴

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 has maintained a good relationship with Myanmar since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1950 and is regarded as a major supplier of equipment. Myanmar has also received Chinese aid for pipeline construction and the development of Kyaukpyu Port. In January 2020, President Xi Jinping became the first Chinese leader to visit Myanmar for 19 years and affirmed China's policy of promoting economic cooperation through the BRI.

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 UN Security Council Sanctions Committee on North Korea in March 2018 reported that the country has received a ballistic missile system and other 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.

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. The two countries conduct a number of bilateral exercises, including Balikatan, KAMANDAG, and Maritime Training Activity Sama Sama. In March 2016, the two countries agreed on five locations for carrying out defense cooperation under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) they signed in April 2014 for strengthening cooperation in such areas as the capacity enhancement of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and disaster relief: Antonio Bautista Air Base, Basa Air Base, Fort Magsaysay, Lumbia Air Base, and Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base. 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. In September 2019, the

³ 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. The country's second general election since the restoration of democracy is due to take place in 2020.

⁴ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), 2020 I.C.J.

United States and the Philippines held the Mutual Defense Board and Security Engagement Board (MDB-SEB), at which they reaffirmed the importance of their defense cooperation. However, President Rodrigo Duterte hinted in January 2020 that he intended to terminate the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which prescribed the legal status of U.S. military personnel when U.S. Forces undertook joint military exercises or other activities in the Philippines, and notified the United States of its termination in February. Attention will be paid to further action by the two countries moving forward.

The Philippines and China have competing claims over the sovereignty of the Spratly Islands and Scarborough 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. In September 2019, the Office of the President of the Philippines revealed that China had vowed to adopt a 60-40 sharing scheme favoring the Philippines in the proposed joint development of resources in the South China Sea

in exchange for setting aside the arbitral court ruling. The Office of the President of the Philippines, however, made it clear that it would not abandon the ruling.

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. In June, in response to a claim that the Chinese aircraft carrier "Liaoning" and other ships had passed through the Sibutu Strait, Secretary of National Defense Lorenzana said that it was not innocent passage.

Q See Chapter 3, Section 6-1 (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,⁵ and has concluded

Column The South China Sea Arbitration Ruling

The South China Sea Arbitration Ruling is the decision made on July 12, 2016 by the Permanent Court of Arbitration adjudicating the Philippines' case against China in the South China Sea. As well as having occupied Mischief Reef in 1995, China took effective control of Scarborough Shoal in 2012, creating a tense relationship with the Philippines, which claims territorial rights over these reefs. Annex VII to Part XV of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea provides for an arbitral procedure, enabling disputes concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention to be submitted at the request of any party to the dispute to the court or tribunal with jurisdiction to seek a legally binding decision. In January 2013, the Philippines brought a case against China with the Permanent Court of Arbitration, in accordance with the arbitral procedure provided for under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In July 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration released its final ruling. Specifically, the Tribunal concluded that there was no legal basis to the "nine-dash line" claimed by China, that none of the features in the Scarborough Shoal and the Spratly Islands generates an EEZ or continental shelf, and that the obstruction of Philippine fishing boats' access to Scarborough Shoal by Chinese law enforcement vessels breached both the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Although the Philippines welcomed this ruling and issued a statement that it intended to abide by it, the day after the arbitral award, China issued a white paper on the South China Sea, in which it reasserted the legitimacy of its claim and complained of the unfairness of the arbitral award.

⁵ 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.



Singapore, Indian and Thai Navy Exercise Participants at the Opening Ceremony of the Singapore-India-Thailand Maritime Exercise (SITMEX) on September 6, 2019 [Ministry of Defence Singapore]

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. In addition, Singapore conducts joint exercises with the United States, such as CARAT and SEACAT. In September 2019, the two countries signed the Protocol of Amendment to the 1990 Memorandum of Understanding Regarding United States Use of Facilities in Singapore.

Singapore has strong economic ties with China. Both countries also conduct joint naval exercises. In October 2019, the two countries signed the enhanced Agreement on Defence Exchanges and Security Cooperation (ADESC). 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.

Singapore concluded the Bilateral Agreement for Navy Cooperation with India in November 2017 and the two countries undertake Exercise Bold Kurukshetra, a bilateral armor exercise, and the Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX). In addition, Singapore, India, and Thailand held their first trilateral joint exercise in September 2019, which took place near the Andaman Islands.

Q See Section 5-1-3 (4) of this Chapter (Relations with Southeast Asia and Pacific Island Countries)

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.

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. In June 2019, King Maha Vajiralongkorn approved the appointment of Prayut as prime minister and the following month granted approval for the new cabinet. Prime Minister Prayut concurrently serves as defense minister.

Under its flexible omni-directional diplomatic policy, Thailand pursues cooperation with other Southeast Asian countries and coordination with major countries. Exercise Cobra Gold, which is co-sponsored by the U.S and Thailand and 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 States have maintained a cooperative relationship. However, following the coup d'état in 2014, the U.S. suspended some military aid.

After the coup, the United States scaled down the size of U.S. forces participating in the Cobra Gold. However, this was restored under the Trump Administration. In addition, the two countries have continued their bilateral naval training CARAT and counter-piracy and trafficking exercise SEACAT.

Thailand and China have conducted 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.

In September 2019, Thailand and the ROK signed the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).

7 Vietnam

Vietnam recognizes that, while the Asia-Pacific region continues to be a center for dynamic economic development and occupies an increasingly important geo-economic, geo-political, and strategic location, the region still remains the ground for major powers' rivalry and influence intensification, harboring destabilizing elements. Based on its viewpoint that the sea is closely associated with the national construction and defense, Vietnam has established the objective of becoming a strong marine country, particularly prioritizing the modernization of its military forces and law enforcement forces at sea as well as ensuring the capability to properly handle sea situations, maritime independence, sovereignty, sovereign rights, jurisdiction and national interests at sea.

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. In addition, the U.S. aircraft carrier and cruiser made a call at Da Nang in March 2020.

Vietnam and Russia continue to strengthen cooperation in the area of national defense, with Vietnam dependent on Russia for the majority of its defense equipment. In April 2018, the two countries signed a military and technical cooperation roadmap, while in July 2019, a Vietnamese naval vessel visited the port of Vladivostok for the first time. In December 2019, a submarine rescue vessel from Russia's Pacific Fleet visited the port of Cam Ranh and participated in the first bilateral joint submarine rescue exercise.

 Section 4-6-5 (2) of this Chapter (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. The defense white paper published in November 2019 demonstrates an awareness that Vietnam and China need to be settled with precaution, avoiding negative impacts on general peace, friendship, and cooperation for development between the two countries. As such, it recognizes that the two countries should continue negotiations and consultations to find peaceful solutions on the basis of international law. Between July and October 2019, a standoff took place between Vietnamese and Chinese government ships over an oil development project that had been taking place off the coast of Vietnam since May.

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. 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.

 Chapter 3, Section 6-1 (Trends Related to the "Principle of the Freedom of the High Seas")

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.

In February 2018, Indonesia concluded an agreement to purchase an additional 11 Su-35 fighters from Russia. With the ROK, Indonesia concluded an agreement to purchase three ROK-made 209-class submarines, the third of which

was reportedly produced in Indonesia and completed diving trials in January 2020. In January 2016, the two countries also concluded a detailed agreement on cost sharing and bilateral cooperation in the joint development of the 4.5 generation KF-X/IF-X fighter. Indonesia plans to receive 14 ScanEagle UAVs from the United States by March 2022. As well as showcasing Chinese CH-4 UAVs at an October 2019 celebration for Indonesian National Armed Forces Day, in December 2019 Indonesia unveiled the prototype Black Eagle UAV, a domestically produced unmanned aerial vehicle

that has incorporated several aspects of China's CH-4 UAV.

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 (LMSs). In June 2019, Malaysia announced that it was to receive 12 ScanEagle UAVs from the United States by March 2022.

Myanmar's December 2019 procurement of its first submarine—a Kilo-class submarine received from India—is attracting attention from neighboring countries.

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.

In terms of air force capabilities, between November 2015 and May 2017, the Philippines successively introduced 12 FA-50PH light fighters purchased from the ROK. It is currently planning to initiate a multi-role fighter program. In addition, the Philippines plans to receive eight ScanEagle UAVs from the United States by March 2022.

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. The August 2019 commissioning of a Pohang-class corvette received from the ROK marked the restoration of the antisubmarine capability that the Philippines had long lacked. That September, the Philippines conducted the DAGIT-PA multi-service military exercise involving the Army, Navy, and Air Force, during which the four AAV-7 assault amphibious vehicles that it had commissioned the

previous June were operated.

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. In January 2020, the U.S. Government officially approved the sale of F-35B fighter jets to Singapore and delivered the required certification notifying Congress of the sale.

As for Thailand, in July 2014, the country established the Submarine Squadron Headquarters. 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. 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 September 2019, Thailand signed an agreement to purchase a Type 071 landing platform dock from China. In addition, by 2013, Thailand had introduced 12 Swedish-made JAS-39 Gripen fighters. In September 2019, it received the first 10 of 60 Stryker armored vehicles purchased from the United States.

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. In January 2020, it was reported that Vietnam had ordered 12 Yak-130 training aircraft from Russia. It is also due to receive six ScanEagle UAVs from the United States by March 2022.

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. ASEAN and the United

States held their first ASEAN-U.S. Maritime Exercise (AUMX) in September 2019. 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 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.

At the June 2019 ASEAN Summit, ASEAN announced the AOIP, which is based on such principles as ASEAN Centrality, openness, and transparency amid dynamism in

the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, and expresses the intention to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. 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).



Representatives of the U.S. Navy and ASEAN member state maritime forces gather for a photo during the ASEAN-U.S. Maritime Exercise in 2019 [U.S. Navy]