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Dr Margot Kerley
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Kerley

Margot

Please find attached the Defence submission to the Committee on Australia's relations with ASEAN.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss further.

Yours sincerely

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN

Introduction

1. This submission focuses on those aspects of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference that are relevant to the Department of Defence, specifically defence cooperation and regional security. It outlines the policy basis for Australia's defence relationship with ASEAN, in particular the ASEAN Regional Forum, current defence relationships with the countries of ASEAN, the benefits of Australia's engagement and provides an outlook for future defence engagement with ASEAN.

Policy basis for the defence relationship with ASEAN

2. The Department of Defence supports broader Australian Government foreign policy in its relations with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). In this respect, Defence, along with other agencies, follows the lead of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in both bilateral and multilateral engagement in South East Asia.

3. Australia has an inherent strategic interest in the security and territorial integrity of the nations of ASEAN, and in the South East Asian region more broadly. Geographically, these nations form the land bridge between North Asia and Australia and are centrally positioned in relation to Australia's northern air and maritime approaches. The nations of South East Asia are also situated alongside critical sea lanes of communication for Australia.

4. Defence has strong long-standing bilateral relationships with most ASEAN nations. Our defence relationships are based on regular dialogue and senior level contact, joint exercises and a host of training and education opportunities offered under the Defence Cooperation Program.

5. Defence's multi-lateral relationship with the countries of ASEAN is conducted through the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Five Power Defence Arrangements and the annual International Institute for Strategic Studies Asia Security Conference, also known as the 'Shangri-La dialogue'.

Current bilateral relationships with the countries of ASEAN

Brunei

6. Australia's modest defence relationship with Brunei centres on Special Forces training and exercises. Other activities include working level dialogue, senior visits, biennial land exercises, and regular assistance in developing the air capability of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

Burma

7. Australia does not have a bilateral defence relationship with Burma, and does not participate in bilateral training or exercises with the Burmese Armed Forces.

Cambodia

8. Australia's defence relationship with Cambodia is aimed at supporting reform and enhancing professionalism in the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces. Australia provides training to approximately 30 candidates from Cambodia each year, with an annual Defence Cooperation budget of \$995 000. Major initiatives include support for the development of Cambodia's counter-terrorist capability, and assistance in the development of a national maritime security concept.

Indonesia

9. The Australia-Indonesia defence relationship has matured and gained confidence over recent years through a practical and effective defence engagement program focusing on counter-terrorism, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping, governance, and most recently, defence industry engagement. For example, Defence supports Indonesia's newly established military peacekeeping centre and also continues to support humanitarian aid and disaster management cooperation through, amongst other things, the May 2008 ARF Indonesia-Australia Disaster Relief desk-top exercise.

10. In February 2008 the Australia-Indonesia Agreement on the Framework for Security Cooperation (Lombok Treaty) came into force, which represented an opportunity to further strengthen the bilateral defence relationship and explore new areas for cooperation. The annual Defence Cooperation Program budget is \$5.105 million.

11. Last financial year, approximately 100 Indonesian military and Department of Defence personnel were trained and educated in Australia, and Defence conducted in-country training for around 650 Indonesian personnel. Subjects include English language, defence management, civil-military cooperation, maritime law and security, operations law, peacekeeping, and emergency and disaster management.

Laos

12. Australia has a modest defence relationship with Laos, aimed at assisting the Lao Defence Force to engage more broadly in the region. Activities are focused primarily on English language assistance and training in Australia, with an annual Defence Cooperation budget of \$192 000.

Malaysia

13. Australia has a strong bilateral defence relationship with Malaysia, sustained under the \$4.446 million Malaysia Australia Joint Defence Program (MAJDP) by a variety of activities including training, strategic dialogue, personnel exchanges, and exercises. From 2009, the mature relationship will enter a new era of cooperation, with joint Australia-Malaysia peacekeeping training workshops offered to regional countries interested in developing their capability to contribute to UN peacekeeping operations.

14. Both countries strongly support the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), an important security framework that continues to evolve to meet regional strategic needs. For half a century, Australia has maintained a permanent ADF presence at Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth, which remains a key element of the bilateral relationship. Access to RMAF Butterworth enables close engagement with the Malaysian Armed Forces, support of FPDA exercises, and assists with deployments in times of emergency. The ADF's presence at RMAF Butterworth contributes to its capability to conduct maritime patrol activities in the region, in particular through RAAF AP-3C flights under Operation Gateway. A recent \$23.6m facilities upgrade project highlights Australia's commitment to RMAF Butterworth and the bilateral relationship with Malaysia.

Philippines

15. Australia has a long standing defence relationship with the Philippines, which focuses on counter-terrorism, maritime security, and assistance to the Philippines Defence Reform Program. Australia-Philippines Defence Cooperation has grown in the last two years, and in 2008-09 the Defence Cooperation Program will be \$10.140 million. Around 120 Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel receive training each year in Australia, including postgraduate studies at Australian Universities. Mobile Training Teams are also run periodically in-country each year, and provide training in diverse areas ranging from aviation security and financial management and accountability, to combat medic training. Australia is working with the Armed Forces of the Philippines to develop an army watercraft capability suitable for patrolling the riverine and marshland areas of the southern Philippines, where terrorist groups have an established presence. Over the past three years Australia has also been assisting the Philippines in developing its Coast Watch of the South initiative which aims to enhance interagency cooperation on maritime security in the Sulu and Celebes Seas.

16. A Status of Visiting Forces Agreement between Australia and the Philippines is before the Philippines Senate for ratification. This agreement will lay the foundation for greater defence cooperation in the future.

Singapore

17. Australia's close defence relationship with Singapore – spanning a broad range of activities, including exercises and training – will be strengthened by the proposed signing of a Defence Cooperation Arrangement (DCA) later this year. The DCA is intended to strengthen cooperation in areas including operations and training, joint development of additional training areas, and Defence technology.

18. A significant feature of the relationship is the access Australia provides to Singapore for unilateral use of training facilities for land and air exercises and training including Exercise Wallaby at Shoalwater Bay Training Area near Rockhampton. In 2007/08 Australia provided training courses to over 100 Singaporean military personnel spanning a broad range of areas, including: submarine escape training, marine engineering, aero medical evacuation, aviation safety, peacekeeping operations, maritime air surveillance, joint warfare and generic management and officer training. Australia has welcomed Singapore's announcement that it would deploy a medical capability to support operations in Afghanistan in late 2008.

Thailand

19. Australia has a strong defence relationship with Thailand, aimed at building capacity in areas such as counter-terrorism, peacekeeping and governance. Australia provides training to approximately 90 candidates from the Royal Thai Armed Forces each year, with an annual Defence Cooperation budget of \$2.922 million. Australia and Thailand also participate in an ongoing program of bilateral exercises to enhance skills and build interoperability. Defence cooperation is underpinned by an English language program in Thailand, which is essential in supporting training provided in Australia.

Vietnam

20. Australia's defence relationship with Vietnam is relatively new, and is aimed at building mutual understanding and trust between our two militaries. Australia provides training to approximately 60 candidates from Vietnam each year, with an annual Defence Cooperation budget of \$1.928 million. A bilateral military medical research project into malaria commenced in 1999, and was extended until 2010 to include dengue fever. Growing areas of defence cooperation include peacekeeping and counter-terrorism.

Current defence relationship with ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum

21. Australia's current defence relationship with ASEAN as a multilateral body is moderate but recently Defence has been involved, in an observer capacity, in ASEAN workshops and seminars. The defence relationship in the broader ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has seen solid growth over the past 15 years and the outlook for deeper defence engagement is strong. Australia continues to engage actively in a range of regional fora to promote effective regional responses to shared security challenges.

22. Through the Shangri-La Dialogue, regional defence ministers, chiefs of defence and senior security officials are brought together to discuss strategic challenges in the Asia-Pacific. The meeting provides valuable opportunities for bilateral counterpart meetings and to progress bilateral and multilateral security initiatives.

23. The Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), comprising Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the ASEAN members; Singapore and Malaysia, remains a valuable component of the region's security architecture. Recent initiatives have focused on promoting greater levels of interoperability and increasing capacity to respond to non-conventional threats, including maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

24. The ARF, partially an Australian diplomatic initiative with ASEAN, commenced in 1994 with a mandate to promote regional dialogue on political and security matters. The ARF remains the region's primary multilateral security forum and uniquely for the region, regularly brings together senior foreign affairs and defence officials.

25. Defence participation in the ARF has expanded over the past 15 years. In the first decade of the forum, Defence provided support to representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs, attended relevant Confidence Building Measure (CBM) workshops, and participated in the informal defence official luncheons.
26. From 2002, defence participation was formalised with an official half day Defence Officials' Dialogue, which is now held four times per year; prior to the Ministerial Meeting, the Senior Officials' Meeting and prior to the two Inter-sessional Group Meetings on Confidence Building Measures and Preventative Diplomacy.
27. In 2004, the Security Policy Conference (SPC) was established with the view to further strengthening confidence building measures in the military sphere within the framework of the ARF; to open new channels of dialogue and exchanges among defence officials, diplomats and military academics. The SPC also aimed to increase mutual trust and understanding among the defence officials. The SPC is held annually prior to the Senior Officials' Meeting and Defence has attended each SPC since its inception.
28. The longest defence track in the ARF is the annual meeting of the Heads of Defense Universities/Colleges/Institutions (ARF HDUCIM). The ARF HDUCIM was first held in 1997. The Australian Defence College has attended a number of these meetings and hosted the 11th meeting in Canberra in October 2007.
29. Along with representation at the defence officials' dialogues throughout the year, Defence also attends relevant defence-focused CBM workshops and seminars, with regular attendance at the Inter-sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief. ADF and civilian defence personnel have attended CBM workshops over the past 15 years and representation is based on subject matter expertise.
30. Australia has co-hosted a number of CBM seminars with an ASEAN partner, some of which have been Defence-led. A representative list of Defence hosted seminars are outlined below:

1998	Development of Defence Policy Documents (co-host Malaysia)
1999	Seminar on the Laws of Armed Conflict
2000	Defence Language Schools
2005	Workshop on Civil-Military Operations (co-host Philippines)
2006	Seminar on 'The Role of Military and Civil Cooperation in the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases such as SARS and Avian Influenza' (co-host Vietnam)

2006	Workshop on stockpile, security and management of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) and Small Arms (co-host Thailand)
2007	1 st ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting (co-host Malaysia)
2007	11 th ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting
2008	ARF Disaster Relief desk-top exercise (co-host Indonesia)

31. In recent years Australia, along with other likeminded countries, has encouraged the ARF to focus on practical cooperation in areas such as peacekeeping, disaster relief, counter terrorism and maritime security. Defence has also led practical cooperative activities in disaster relief and peacekeeping.

32. After the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004, ASEAN and ARF began to concentrate on improving regional coordination and response to natural disasters in the Asia-Pacific. In response to the 2006 ARF Statement on Disaster Relief and Emergency Response, and strong calls for cooperative training, joint exercises and standard operating procedures on disaster relief, Indonesia and Australia received endorsement from ARF Foreign Ministers to co-host a disaster relief desk-top exercise.

33. The desk-top exercise was held in Jakarta in May 2008, following an Initial Planning Conference in Darwin in September 2007 and both were well attended. The desk-top exercise, designed by both Australian and Indonesian military planners with input from civilian agencies such as AusAID, DFAT and Emergency Management Australia, focused on building regional military-military and civil-military cooperation in responding to a fictional disaster relief scenario. The exercise also evaluated the draft ARF Strategic Guidance for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief initially drafted by Indonesia and Australia. This Strategic Guidance aims to enhance coordination between military and civilian actors involved in disaster relief operations and will be regularly updated and reviewed by the ARF.

34. Building on the success of the desk-top exercise and the continued focus on the importance of practical regional cooperation on disaster relief in the region, the United States and the Philippines have indicated their intention to host a live disaster relief 'voluntary demonstration of response' activity involving military and civilian assets in 2009. Australia strongly supports this proposal and will continue to advocate for further practical initiatives which address regional disaster relief cooperation.

35. Australia is also a founding member of the 'ARF Shepherds' Group on Disaster Relief', an informal grouping of countries established in 2006 to better coordinate the various disaster relief initiatives in the ARF.

36. Another of Australia's priorities in the ARF is to promote closer regional cooperation on peacekeeping. In 2007, Australia, led by Defence, co-hosted with

Malaysia the inaugural ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting. The meeting produced an almanac listing contact details for regional peacekeeping experts, existing training centres and training course to promote regional training cooperation. Discussion also focused on identifying measures to improve regional peacekeeping coordination and interoperability, and on promoting greater awareness of UN peacekeeping standards and UN doctrine for peace operations. The success of this meeting created strong momentum for continued regional cooperation on peacekeeping with a second ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting held in Singapore in March 2008. Other countries have shown interest in hosting a third meeting in 2009.

37. Australia has also supported maritime security initiatives in the ARF, particularly the 2007 maritime security desk-top exercise held in Singapore and would welcome further practical cooperative activities in this area. The ARF has recently endorsed a new Inter-sessional Meeting on Maritime Security and Australia will advocate for its agenda to focus on pursuing practical initiatives which promote greater regional capacity and cooperation.

38. Australia's defence relationship with ASEAN has strengthened in recent years, and Australian Defence representatives have been invited, in an observer capacity, to recent ASEAN workshops and seminars, including:

February 2008	4 th ASEAN SASOP meeting (ASEAN Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations) and Exercise Planning meeting for ARDEX 2008
March 2008	ASEAN workshop on 'Multilateral cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief'

39. The inaugural ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) was held 9 May 2006 in Kuala Lumpur. The ADMM aims to facilitate dialogue between ASEAN Defence Ministers and pursue to defence and security cooperation in areas such as maritime security, counter-terrorism, infectious disease management, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and peacekeeping.

40. The 2nd ADMM, held in Singapore on 14 November 2007, adopted an ADMM-Plus Concept paper, which aims to engage regional friends and dialogue partners in the ADMM-Plus process. Australia is interested in the evolution of an ADMM-Plus framework but acknowledges that it may take some time to develop. Australia remains committed to engaging ASEAN on Defence matters and supports the emergence of the ADMM as an important contribution to the region's security architecture.

Benefit of the defence relationship with ASEAN

41. Australia continues to value both the bilateral defence relationship with ASEAN nations and our increasing multilateral engagement with ASEAN. Through our commitment to ASEAN Regional Forum CBM workshops and seminars, Australia has been afforded greater access to ASEAN events, increasing our understanding of regional decision making and multi-lateral capabilities, particularly in areas of strategic interest such as disaster relief response.

42. Increased practical defence cooperation in the ASEAN Regional Forum, and within ASEAN, will help promote preventative diplomacy measures in the region and foster greater coordination in responses to trans-national security issues such as terrorism, pandemic diseases, and trans-national crime. Close regional defence engagement is important for effective multi-national responses to these challenges. Recent military involvement in responding to regional natural disasters has further emphasised the importance of close civil-military coordination and cooperation.

Outlook for the defence relationship

43. Defence maintains an active interest in its engagement with ASEAN member states and supports the positive role ASEAN, the ARF, the FPDA and the Shangri-La dialogue play in the region in promoting confidence building and preventative diplomacy measures. Australia remains committed to promoting activities which focus on military to military and civil-military cooperation, particularly in the areas of peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, maritime security and counter-terrorism.

44. The Defence White Paper development process will make a far reaching and thorough assessment of Australia's strategic security environment and undertake a series of reviews across all aspects of the Defence enterprise. Ultimately, the White Paper will influence the future direction of Defence engagement with ASEAN.

45. Australia recognises the importance of consulting with key allies and partners and will engage extensively to discuss mutually shared interests such as regional security and the need for transparency in defence planning.