

Malaysia and Indonesia have exchanged information on some maritime security issues through an expanded framework set up under the joint boarder committee. Singapore and Indonesia have recently developed better relations and, as a result, the exchange of intelligence has increased. Moreover, Malaysia and Singapore have exchanged intelligence on a regular basis since the colonial era and continue to keep each other informed on common security issues. Brunei has also developed intelligence links with its immediate ASEAN neighbours.⁵⁶

The emphasis in joint military exercises among the ASEAN states has been on bilateral exercises. Due to the geographic situation of the ASEAN nations, emphasis has been on naval and air rather than land exercises. Agreements have been signed that will allow Singapore to train troops at Indonesian military facilities, conduct naval exercises in Indonesian waters, use the Siabu air weapons testing range in Sumatra for air to ground training, and, most recently, jointly develop a computerized air combat range near Pekanbaru in Riau province, Sumatra. Singapore has also been able to develop excellent training facilities in Brunei, and there have been reciprocal visits to discuss various security issues.⁵⁷

For Malaysia and Singapore, the recent revival of the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA), which ties the non-regional countries of Australia, Britain and New Zealand into the defence of Singapore and Malaysia, has provided the framework for co-operation. The Annual FPDA exercises have helped to cultivate greater co-operation between Malaysia and Singapore.

ASEAN, however, has so far not proceeded towards the establishment of a multilateral security forum. In a general sense ASEAN clearly is intended to increase the security of its members through its cooperative activities but the members have not until very recently, considered the creation of a multilateral security forum. This reflected the long time concern that an overt association between ASEAN and military security would alienate other powers such as Vietnam.

It appears however that this view may be changing. With the end of the Cold War, the negotiated settlement of the Cambodian problem and the demise of local insurgency groups, security issues are switching from internal to external concerns.

Of outmost concern is China whose land and sea frontiers border on the region. Its extensive claim to the South China Sea, which overlaps with those of many South-East Asian countries,

⁵⁶ Ibid., pg. 404.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pg. 405.