



KEYNOTE SPEECH
DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE MALAYSIA

DEFENCE COOPERATION WORKSHOP WITH
AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE STUDIES STRATEGIC GROUP

24th September 2024
Crowne Plaza Kuala Lumpur City Centre

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, Assalamualaikum WBT and good morning to everyone present today.

[SALUTATIONS]

1. I would like to take this opportunity, to thank Bait Al Amanah and the Defence Section of the Australian High Commission in Malaysia, for inviting me to deliver a keynote address today.
2. It is my great pleasure, to extend a warm welcome, to the esteemed members of the Australian Defence Studies Strategic Group to Malaysia. Your presence here today, signifies Malaysia and Australia's bilateral defence cooperation.
3. This long-standing relationship, rooted in shared values and mutual respect, has proven to be a cornerstone of regional security architecture, and adjusting to the changing dynamics of our strategic environment.
4. As we gather here today, we stand on the point of a significant milestone – the upcoming **70th anniversary** of our bilateral relations in 2025.
5. As we approach this momentous step, we must take this opportunity, to review and strengthen our partnership, to adapt to demands of the global security landscape.

Ladies and gentlemen,

6. The roots of our defence partnership run deep, connected with our histories.
7. Indeed, this partnership has progressed on many levels, involving both military and diplomatic cooperation, economic, and cultural ties.

8. We remember with gratitude, the involvement of Australian forces in Malaya during World War II, standing shoulder to shoulder with our people, in the face of adversity.
9. This spirit of cooperation, continued through the challenging years of the Malayan Emergency from 1948 to 1960, where our combined efforts were instrumental in countering insurgency.
10. The establishment of the Five Powers Defence Arrangements (FPDA) in 1971, marked a new chapter in our relationship, creating a framework of multilateral security cooperation, that has continued for over five decades.
11. The presence of the Royal Australian Air Force at RMAF Butterworth, portrays Australia's historical ties with Malaysia.

CURRENT SECURITY ISSUES

Distinguished participants,

12. As we navigate the complexities and evolving regional security landscape, we will continue to embrace new challenges and opportunities. In this context, I am proud to highlight that, Malaysia's Defence White Paper stands as one of our nation's biggest success stories.
13. This comprehensive document serves as our strategic guide, informing our bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as we navigate current challenges.
14. It reflects our commitment to transparency, strategic foresight, and adaptable defence planning in a transformative global landscape.

15. It also serves as a framework, for enhancing our bilateral and multilateral partnerships, ensuring that our cooperative efforts, are aligned with our strategic objectives and the evolving regional security needs.
16. The complex geopolitics such as the South China Sea situation, for example, united efforts and commitment are required, to maintain a **sea of peace, stability, and trade** so that economic activities can be conducted safely.
17. Malaysia is committed to **protecting our sovereignty in the maritime areas** in the South China Sea. We will use every bilateral and multilateral platform, to explore solutions, and hope to finalise the negotiation process of the COC during Malaysia chairmanship next year.
18. The future will be driven by emerging technology. Given this, cybersecurity now stands at the forefront of our defence strategies.
19. I was informed that Australia has invested MYR44 billion in cyber capabilities. Similarly, Malaysia is advancing its plans to develop robust cyber electromagnetic capabilities. These efforts show the urgency of this threat.
20. Our challenges are not confined to the digital transformation. Non-traditional security threats, and the impact of big power competition on regional stability, **require more regional collaboration and coordination**, to tackle the interconnected threats.
21. Looking beyond ASEAN, sub-regional cooperation initiatives among like-minded countries, can be formed, for wider security cooperation. In this regard, strengthening Malaysia-Australia defence cooperation is essential.

EXISTING MALAYSIA – AUSTRALIA COOPERATION

Ladies and gentlemen,

22. Our current initiatives, including joint military exercises, exchange of military officers, and intelligence sharing, form the foundation of our cooperation.
23. These programs not only enhance our military cooperation, but also foster a deep understanding between our defence forces, creating a network of military personnel, who share common experiences and a shared commitment to regional security.
24. The Malaysia-Australia Joint Defence Programme (MAJDP), continues to be a vital platform for our bilateral cooperation, and we look forward to its continued growth, to meet the demands of our changing security landscape.

Distinguished participants,

25. The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) signed in 2021, signalled a new era in Malaysia-Australia relations.
26. This partnership, is underpinned by an action plan for cooperation across various fields, such as Maritime Governance and Security, Cybersecurity and Critical Technology, and Science and Technology. The CSP has provided us with a roadmap for the future.
27. These areas of cooperation, are not isolated but interconnected domains, that, when addressed inclusively, can significantly enhance our collective security posture, and contribute to regional stability.

28. Building on this foundation, I'm pleased to report that, the recently concluded CyberDSA has been an outstanding success. This achievement underscores our commitment to staying ahead in the rapidly evolving cyber landscape.
29. I must commend the great work of our Defence Cyber and Electromagnetic Division within the Ministry of Defence. They work hard to manage current and emerging cybersecurity threats, ensuring the robustness of our digital defences.
30. This enhanced cooperation is mutually beneficial. For Australia, it aligns with its forward defence strategy within the region. For Malaysia, it strengthens our defence capabilities, while enhancing our ability to monitor and safeguard our territorial waters and EEZ.

FUTURE COOPERATION

Ladies and gentlemen,

31. As we discuss strategies and policies, let us not forget the human element, that forms the heart of our defence cooperation. The bonds between our personnel during joint exercises and exchanges, form the foundation of our partnership.
32. As we look to the future, we must nurture these people-to-people connections, especially among our youth. We are committed to cultivating our future defence leaders through continuous education exchange programs.
33. These initiatives will be further enhanced, through constant dialogue and targeted knowledge-sharing programs, ensuring that the next generation of leaders in both nations, will be prepared to carry forward our unique friendship.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

34. As I conclude, let me reaffirm Malaysia's commitment to our bilateral defence relationship with Australia. Our vision for the future is clear – we strive to be a developed, safe, and digitally resilient nation, standing together in the face of regional and global challenges.
35. To the esteemed members, of the Australian Defence Studies Strategic Group, and all participants here today, I call upon you to engage fully in the discussions. Your insights, experiences, and ideas are important in shaping the future of our defence cooperation.
36. Together, let us move forward, guided by shared values and common goals, building a partnership that serves our bilateral interests, and contributes significantly to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region.
37. As we embark on this next chapter of our defence cooperation, let us remember that, our strength lies not only in our military capabilities, but also in the depth of our friendship and our shared vision for a secure and prosperous region.
38. Wabillahi Taufiq Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Thank you.