



DEFENCE WHITE PAPER

**A Secure, Sovereign and
Prosperous Malaysia**



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prosperous Malaysia**



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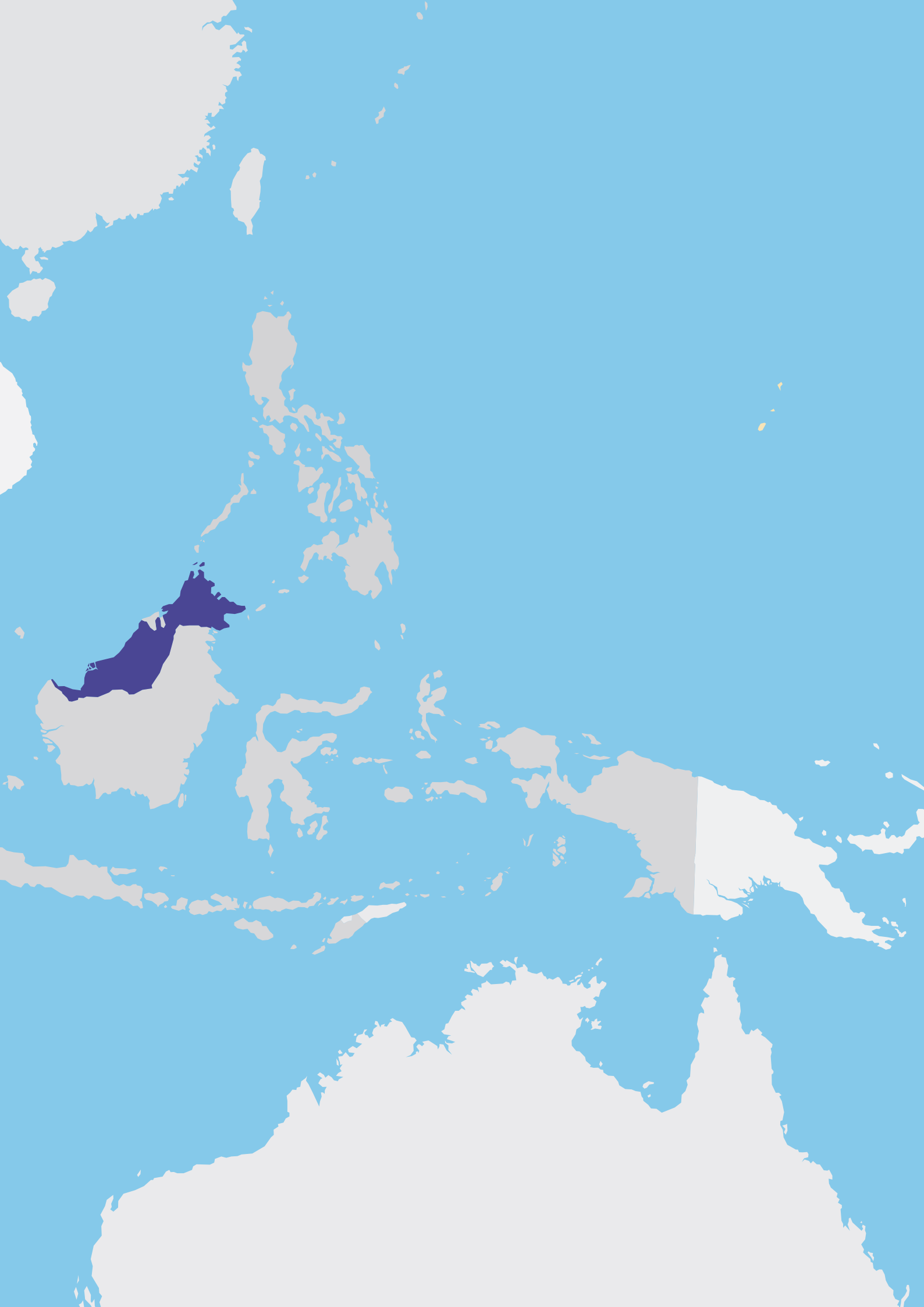


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FOREWORD BY THE PRIME MINISTER

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

I am pleased to introduce Malaysia's first Defence White Paper (DWP). The purpose and objectives of the DWP are aimed to embody the Government of Malaysia's aspiration in strengthening our national defence and formulating directions, as well as strategic priorities for the nation's security.

As a statement of both intent and capability, this historical document takes into account the presence and position of the defence sector, within the whole-of-government frameworks to ensure that the DWP continues to be in harmony with the agenda and aspiration of the Government.

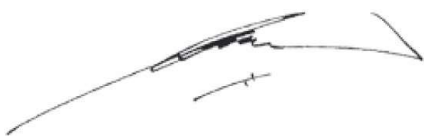
The DWP is a manifestation of a higher level of transparency in the government's administration, its commitment to the principles of democracy and the importance of the whole-of-nation approach. The development process illustrated an unprecedented collaboration effort involving multiple stakeholders cutting across government agencies, academics and think tanks, defence industry players, private sectors and non-governmental organisations.

The Government views defence and security as all-encompassing. It calls for a wholesome effort that includes the involvement from the society at large. Apart from promoting a transparent administration whilst embracing openness, inclusivity and accountability, the DWP concept will ultimately form an integrated commitment for the society to equally assume responsibility to defend the nation.

Malaysia has notably profiled its presence in the regional and global arena of defence and security through active participation under the auspices of the United Nations since 1960, and as one of the founding states of ASEAN in 1967. The DWP will function as yet another element which will enhance Malaysia's geopolitical profile, within today's global security and defence landscape.

This White Paper recognises the consequential role of economic sustainability in providing vital support towards an integrated defence industry sector. It also presents a new approach to the nation's defence science, technology and industry sphere by acting as a catalyst for the nation's defence ecosystem and economic growth.

I acknowledge the strategic significance of the DWP as a blueprint in the formulation of a national policy on defence and security, as well as the role of the Ministry of Defence as a transformative organisation. I am confident that each detail outlined in this White paper will be materialised through the Government's concerted efforts to embrace the national aspirations in pursuing the vision of Malaysia as a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation.



YAB TUN MAHATHIR MOHAMED
Prime Minister, Malaysia

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Alhamdulillah, the greatest gratitude to Allah as due to His benevolence, the Defence White Paper (DWP) has now been issued.

Malaysia, located at the centre of Southeast Asia, is a maritime country, flanked by the South China Sea and Pacific Ocean on one side and the Straits of Malacca and Indian Ocean on the other.

Malaysia is also a nation with continental roots connected to mainland Southeast Asia and Eurasia by land. This unique location allows Malaysia to assume a crucial role of connecting both the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions for shared prosperity.

During these times of uncertainty, it is imperative that we take serious efforts to protect our national interests and defend our sovereignty as well as territorial integrity.

Cognisant of this reality, the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) has produced the DWP with the vision of “Malaysia is a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation.”

The DWP details Malaysia’s plan to develop our Armed Forces into a force of the future comprising of five main characteristics which are jointness, interoperability, technology-based, able to operate simultaneously in two theatres and mission-orientated.

This defensive-postured force of the future will be integrated, agile and focused, as well as able to respond to all threats that Malaysia may have to face. This initiative will be further enhanced through robust participation of the Government together with the *rakyat* in ensuring the nation’s security, sovereignty and prosperity.

As a neutral and peace-loving nation that seeks to befriend all nations, Malaysia is committed to enhancing credible partnerships through inclusive international diplomatic initiatives. Through defence diplomacy, Malaysia and other countries that share the same aspirations can collaborate and combine our collective strengths and resources to achieve national security as well as regional and global stability.

The Government is committed to reforming the defence sector and ensuring stable and sustainable funding so that our defence capabilities, planning and procurement are executed efficiently.

God willing, all the plans outlined in the DWP can be successfully implemented with integrity, transparency and good governance.

Finally, I would like to record my sincere appreciation to everyone involved in the drafting and successful issuance of this DWP.



YB TUAN HAJI MOHAMAD BIN SABU
Minister of Defence, Malaysia



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Defence White Paper (DWP) represents the Government's firm commitment to Malaysia's defence and resilience to protect national interests, particularly to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. As Malaysia's inaugural DWP, it details the Government's stance on national defence, presents its outlook for strategic trends and outlines the National Defence Framework to pursue the vision of Malaysia as a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation.

This DWP underscores three key messages: (1) do not take the national security for granted; (2) the Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approaches are central to national defence; and (3) non-alignment and shared security are the basis of Malaysia's Credible Partnerships.

The DWP is developed based on the National Security Policy, Malaysia's main national security document. The DWP recognises the important roles played by the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) in leading the nation's defence, as well as the participation of other stakeholders and the *rakyat*, the Malaysian people, in the national defence ecosystem.

The DWP is structured into three parts: (1) Vision; (2) Strategy; and (3) Implementation. They cover the ends, ways and means to protect Malaysia's national interests. The first part, which consists of Introduction (Chapter 1) and Strategic Outlook (Chapter 2), sets the direction of the national defence. The second part covers Defence Strategy (Chapter 3), The Future Force (Chapter 4), People in Defence (Chapter 5) and International Defence Engagement (Chapter 6), and discusses methods and approaches to galvanise the internal and external resources available to Malaysia to pursue the three pillars of the National Defence Strategy. The third part, which comprises of Defence Science, Technology and Industry (Chapter 7) and Transformation, Governance and Funding (Chapter 8), details the Government's initiatives to ensure the successful implementation of the DWP.

Chapter 1 introduces the DWP by answering the questions: What is a Defence White Paper? Why is the Government issuing the DWP? and How will the DWP set forth the direction to pursue the national defence vision. The DWP serves three purposes: (1) engaging the *rakyat* and stakeholders; (2) evaluating the ever-changing security environment; and (3) exploring approaches to enhance Malaysia's defence capability and preparedness. Malaysia's geographical location in the middle of Southeast Asia with the Pacific Ocean and South China Sea on one side, and the Indian Ocean and Straits of Malacca on the other side, positions Malaysia as a maritime nation with continental roots, the bridging linchpin between the two ocean regions.

Chapter 2 analyses the increasingly complex security environment at the global and regional levels. This uncertainty has presented both challenges and opportunities to the nation, the region and the international community. Malaysia is not beset by military conflict with other countries. However, the nation still faces three main security challenges, namely: (1) uncertain big power relations; (2) complex Southeast Asian neighbourhood; and (3) increasing non-traditional security threats.

Chapter 3 discusses the National Defence Strategy based on the National Defence Framework, divided into three parts: (1) National Defence Vision; (2) National Defence Interests; and (3) National Defence Objectives. The National Defence Vision envisages Malaysia as a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation. This, in turn, defines Malaysia's defence interests: (1) security; (2) sovereignty; and (3) prosperity. This Framework identifies five National Defence Objectives. This chapter then introduces three Concentric Areas of Interests consisting of (1) Core Area; (2) Extended

Area; and (3) Forward Area that contains national interests that have to be protected at all times. Subsequently, this chapter outlines the three pillars of the National Defence Strategy: (1) Concentric Deterrence; (2) Comprehensive Defence; and (3) Credible Partnerships.

Chapter 4 explains the Government's plan to develop the Future Force to pursue the strategy of Concentric Deterrence. The Future Force adopts a defensive posture, in line with Malaysia's position that is against the use of force to solve any dispute or conflict. The development of the Future Force is based on five characteristics: (1) Jointness; (2) Interoperability; (3) Technology-Based; (4) Able to Operate Simultaneously in Two Theatres; and (5) Mission-Orientated. It identifies ten capability requirements to transform the MAF into an integrated, agile and focused force, and to effectively perform the tasks of Detect, Deter and Deny along the Concentric Areas.

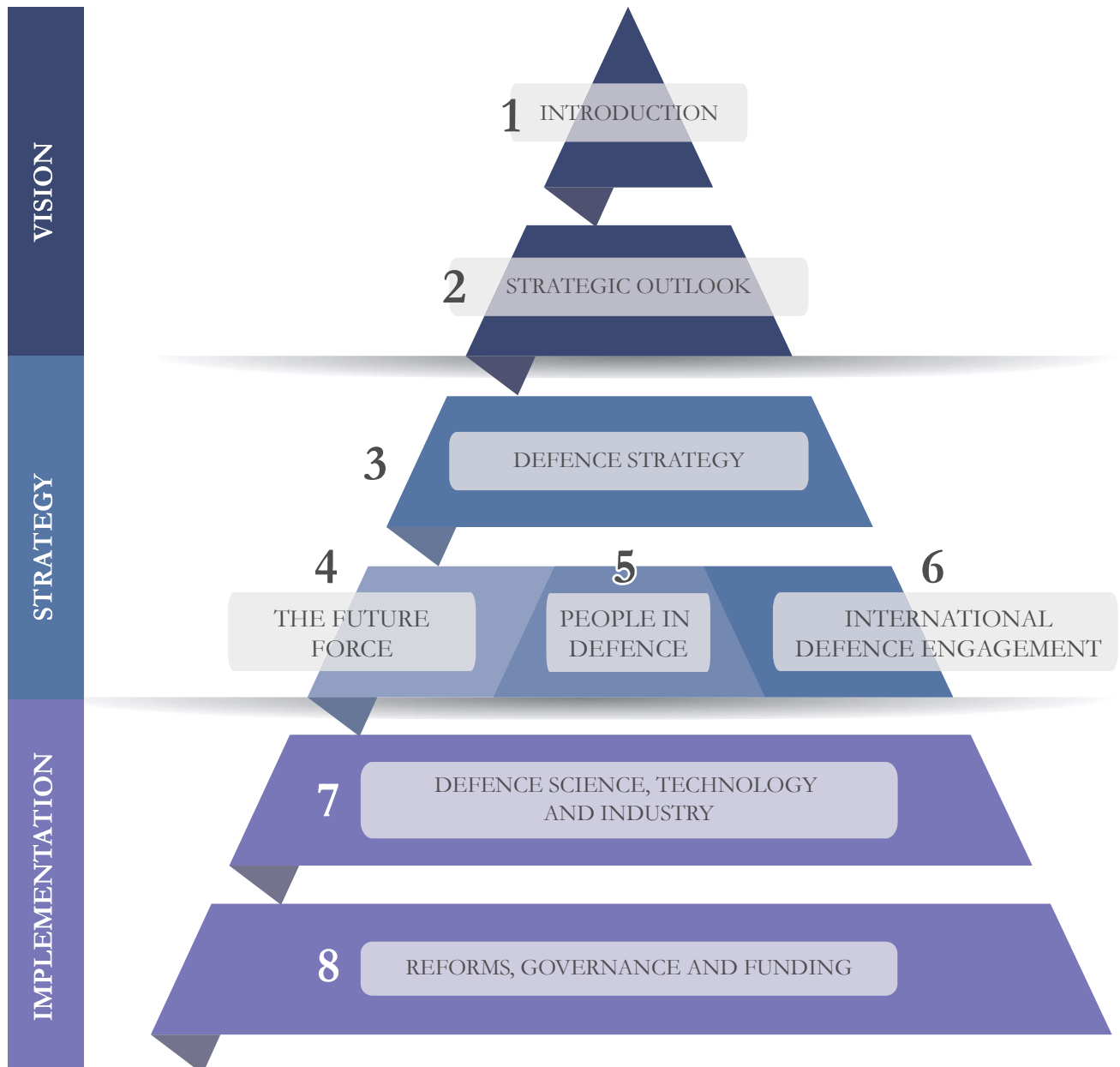
Chapter 5 highlights the roles of both the defence workforce and the *rakyat* in implementing the strategy of Comprehensive Defence. The defence workforce consists of the Regular Forces, Volunteer Forces, MAF Veterans and civil servants working in the defence and security sector. This chapter lists out the fundamentals that require attention and actions for each category of the defence workforce. It also discusses the participation of and by the *rakyat* in defending the country, in line with the concept of *Pertahanan Menyeluruh* (HANRUH). Instilling patriotism and security culture among the people is emphasised to ensure their active participation in the national defence ecosystem.

Chapter 6 focuses on international defence relations in pursuing the strategy of Credible Partnerships. It describes Malaysia's engagements with neighbouring countries, as well as countries of interest at the bilateral and multilateral levels. The Credible Partnerships are vital to achieve five defence relations goals: (1) Shaping Malaysia's defence relations with other countries; (2) Managing shared security challenges; (3) Fostering regional stability in accordance with international laws, conventions, rules and norms; (4) Enhancing the MAF's capabilities and defence readiness; and (5) Promoting Malaysia's position and interests in the international arena. This chapter also sets forth the directions for Malaysia's future defence engagements.

Chapter 7 discusses the role of defence science, technology and industry as a catalyst for enhancing the nation's defence ecosystem and economic growth. It identifies three core initiatives: (1) Stimulating research and development; (2) Encouraging economic spillover contributions to the nation; and (3) Fulfilling the nation's defence needs. This chapter puts forward the framework for the National Defence Industry Policy (NDIP) that sets the direction based on five key thrusts: (1) Human Capital Development; (2) Technology Development; (3) Industrial Development; (4) Towards Self-reliance; and (5) Penetrating the Global Market.

Chapter 8 identifies three building blocks for the implementation of the DWP: (1) Pursuing defence transformation; (2) Institutionalising good governance; and (3) Securing stable defence funding. A National Defence Investment Plan (*Pelan Pelaburan Pertahanan Negara*, 3PN) will be developed to register the requirements and steps to be taken to implement defence transformation. To oversee the implementation of the DWP and ensure good governance, the Government will establish: (1) Defence Investment Committee chaired by the Prime Minister; (2) Policy Committee chaired by the Minister of Defence; and (3) Defence Transformation Committee co-chaired by the Secretary General of MINDEF and Chief of Defence Forces. The expected outcome includes structured defence fundings for the development of the Future Force and expansion of the local defence industry, all of which aims to maximise legitimacy, acceptability and reliability.

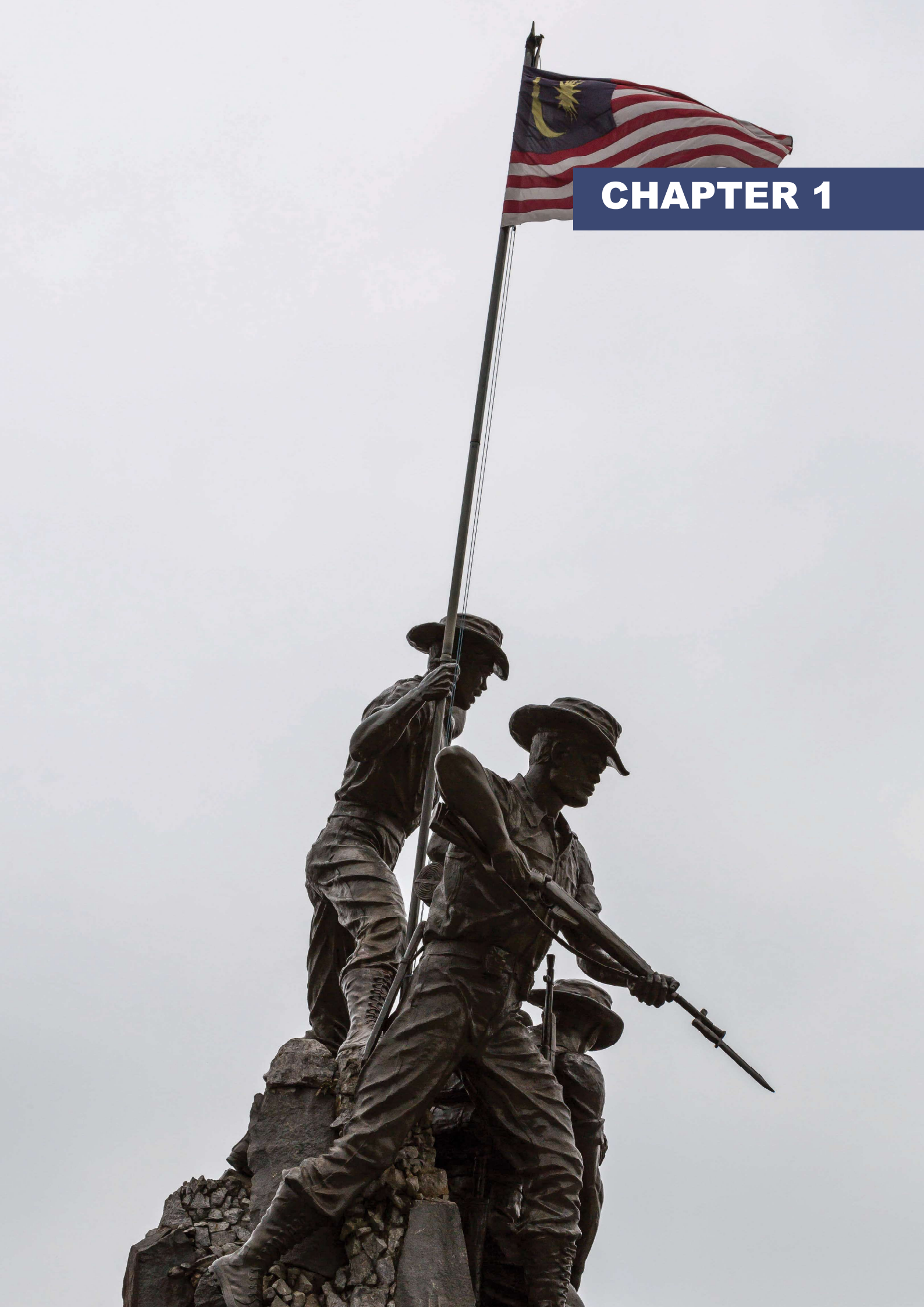
DEFENCE WHITE PAPER STRUCTURE





SECTION 1

VISION

A low-angle photograph of a bronze statue depicting three soldiers in military uniforms. The soldier in the foreground is holding a rifle, while the soldier behind him is holding a flagpole with the Malaysian flag. The statue is set against a cloudy sky. A dark blue banner with the text "CHAPTER 1" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. This Defence White Paper (DWP), the first by Malaysia, embodies the Government's firm commitment to strengthen national defence. It presents the Government's strategic outlook for the coming decade, sets forth the direction for the defence sector and formulates a long-term strategy for defending national sovereignty and territorial integrity from all forms of external threats and security challenges.
2. As a Government paper, this DWP outlines a national defence framework to safeguard Malaysia's interests. It recognises the important role played by the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) and other relevant agencies, in ensuring Malaysia is secure, sovereign and prosperous.
3. The MAF, with the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* (the King) as its Supreme Commander as enshrined under Article 41 of the Federal Constitution, serves as the nation's protective shield. The Armed Forces Act 1972 governs the roles and functions of its three Services, i.e. the Malaysian Army, the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF), alongside the Volunteer Forces.

NINTH SCHEDULE [Articles 74, 77] FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

Legislative Lists

List 1 - Federal List

"2. Defence of the Federation or any part thereof, including -"

(a) naval, military and air forces and other armed forces;	(b) any armed forces attached to or operating with any of the armed forces of the Federation; visiting forces;	
(c) defence works; military and protected areas; naval, military and air force bases; barracks aerodromes and other works;	(d) manoeuvres;	
(e) war and peace; alien enemies and enemy aliens; enemy property; trading with an enemy; war damage; war risk insurance;		
(f) arms, fire-arms, ammunition and explosives;	(g) national service; and	(h) civil defence.

4. The DWP aligns defence policy with the Government's national security policy, foreign policy and other related policies in accordance with the whole-of-government approach. This inaugural DWP presents a Malaysian national defence vision, which balances the near and long-term national interests, strategic needs and fiscal considerations. It affirms the Government's commitment to invest in Malaysia's defence capabilities and resilience in a sustainable manner.

5. This introductory chapter provides an overview of what a DWP is, why the Government is issuing the country's first DWP and how the direction set forth in the DWP will strengthen the nation's defence and security. It presents a vision to advance Malaysia's current interests and future aspirations as **a maritime nation with continental roots**, exploring the nation's unique role as **a bridging linchpin** between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

What is a Defence White Paper (DWP)?

6. A Defence White Paper is a government document about the country's strategic direction and defence planning. It is different from classified defence policy papers in that a DWP is an open document accessible by the public, with no confidential material. Both documents present a country's security assessment, defence posture and military capability development, but with different purposes and emphasis.
7. As a public document, this DWP conveys a key message to all Malaysians that security should not be taken for granted. While the Government is determined to pursue Malaysia's right to defend its national sovereignty and other interests, this pursuit is constantly subject to the multifaceted risks, threats and uncertainties stemming from the ever-evolving security environment. For these realities, MINDEF and the MAF have constantly collaborated with other government agencies at home, as well as with external partners, to address challenges at multiple levels. This DWP emphasises national security is the responsibility of ALL in the government and ALL in the society, including the people, whose awareness and participation form the backbone of national resilience. These are all crucial matters, because internal resilience and external partnerships are, respectively, the foundation and the extended line of defence for Malaysia's security.

Why Malaysia's First DWP?

8. The DWP serves three purposes: (1) engaging the public and relevant stakeholders; (2) evaluating the ever-changing strategic environment; as well as (3) exploring approaches towards enhancing Malaysia's defence capability and readiness.
9. **Engaging the public and relevant stakeholders.** National defence is a process requiring the active participation of and by the people. The Government is committed to engaging the public on defence and other related matters. This DWP offers an opportunity to reach out and inform the *rakyat*, comprising of individual citizens, groups, as well as all stakeholders in and out of the public sector, about the Government's present priorities and future plans for bolstering Malaysia's defence.
10. For this purpose, the DWP describes the sources of security risks, the Government's plan to develop a more integrated, agile and focused force, as well as the roles and responsibilities of all Malaysians in national defence. It also emphasises the Government's commitment to a more regular cycle of defence policy updates.
11. Each of these efforts is a manifestation of democratic values and practices of good governance through integrity, transparency and accountability. By enhancing the peoples' understanding of the roles of the defence force and why these roles are important to them, the DWP helps to build public support for the MAF, and assists them in understanding the need for sustainable defence funding.

12. This is important not only for democratic procedural reasons, but also because it helps to consolidate the societal base of national security. The MAF needs the support of the *rakyat* to win any armed conflict either internal or external as proven during the First and Second Emergency (1948-1960 and 1968-1989 respectively) and the *Konfrontasi* (1963-1966).
13. Engaging the *rakyat* and all stakeholders is a component of Total Defence or *Pertahanan Menyeluruh* (HANRUH), where everybody plays a role in defending the nation. Introduced in 1986, HANRUH is an approach that emphasises the involvement of every level of society, government agencies, private sector, non-governmental organizations and the people in national defence and security. Educating the *rakyat* about the emerging security issues is an essential move to involve them to do their part to defend Malaysia.
14. Engaging the *rakyat* in defence and security issues provides a better understanding of the responsibilities of the Minister of Defence, Secretary General (Sec-Gen) of MINDEF and the Chief of Defence Force (CDF), as well as the roles and contributions of the MAF.
15. The Minister of Defence advises the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the Parliament on defence matters and provides strategic guidance to ensure successful and effective implementation of MINDEF's policies. The Sec-Gen serves as the Chief Executive of the Ministry, Controlling Officer and the Ministry's Chief of Public Accounts as well as the main advisor to the Minister. The Sec-Gen is the primary lead in formulating the Ministry's policies and development plans to achieve MINDEF's objectives and policy goals. On the other hand, the CDF is the Minister's most senior advisor on military affairs under the ambit of defence. The CDF, together with the three Service Chiefs advise the Armed Forces Council which is responsible for the MAF's command, disciplinary actions, administration and related matters, except on the operational use of the armed forces. The CDF is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the decisions by the Council.
16. **The primary role of the MAF** is to maintain peace and be prepared for any armed conflict, in order to effectively defend Malaysia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and other national interests against external threats. The Latin proverb "*Si vis pacem, para bellum*" means "If you want peace, prepare for war". Thus, defence preparedness is the best guarantee for peace. As a peace-loving and compassionate nation, Malaysia places greater emphasis on diplomacy in dealing with other countries. MINDEF and the MAF have actively conducted defence diplomacy and other international engagement activities with regional and global partners. The MAF has participated in a number of the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) around the world and has also assisted civil authorities in addressing security challenges whilst supporting nation building.
17. The National Defence Policy (NDP) is a classified document produced by the Government prior to the DWP in 1971, 1979 and 1981. In 1986, a comprehensive NDP was produced and had undergone revisions in 1993 and 2006. In 2010, an open version of the NDP was published in line with the spirit of HANRUH.
18. This DWP builds upon the engagement efforts with key stakeholders. The main reference is the National Security Policy (NSP) by the National Security Council (NSC) published in 2017. The NSP serves as an overarching capstone document for all subsequent security-related agencies and policies, including this DWP, alongside the parallel documents, such as the Foreign Policy Framework of the New Malaysia: Change in Continuity produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Security and Public Order Policy (*Dasar Keselamatan dan Ketenteraman Awam*, DKKA) produced by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2019. These key documents represent the Government's emphasis on inter-agency coordination among the constituent components of Malaysia's security cluster.

19. **Evaluating the ever-changing strategic environment.** The current and ongoing changes at the global and regional levels call for a new round of strategic reassessment. Chapter 2: Strategic Outlook performs this task.
20. A continuous assessment of external conditions is crucial, as change is a constant reality in the international security ecosystem. Geographical circumstances, complex neighbourhood and relative military capabilities all have direct and indirect bearings on Malaysia's national interests.
21. **Geography is destiny.** As a relatively small nation with two territories: Peninsular Malaysia, and Sabah and Sarawak, between the vast Pacific and Indian Oceans, Malaysia's strategic location and natural resources have been both a blessing and a challenge.
22. Indeed, Malaysia's history is, in many ways, a history of big power politics. It is a history of how the big powers of the day impacted the fate and fortune of the country. While bringing about opportunities for commercial and civilisational development, geography also drew unsolicited attention and exploitation from powerful actors for domination in the Malay Archipelago.
23. This recurring theme is well illustrated by the country's historical timeline: the rise and fall of the Malacca Sultanate, the successive colonial rule by the Portuguese (1511-1641), the Dutch (1641-1795, 1818-1825) and then the British (1795-1818, 1826-1957), the changing shape of colonial Malaya after the 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty, the Japanese occupation (December 1941-August 1945), the birth of the Federation of Malaya as a sovereign state (31 August 1957), followed by the creation of a larger federation when Malaya (*Tanah Melayu*) merged with other former British colonies of Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak formed an independent Malaysia (16 September 1963) at the height of the Cold War.
24. While different big powers have come and gone, the geopolitical challenges of the country remain. Although the present-day Malaysia is not directly threatened by any militarily stronger powers the same way as its predecessor polities experienced during the age of European colonisation and World War II, its interests have continued to be affected by the actions and interactions of the big powers of the contemporary era.
25. As a country with two separate territories, Malaysia currently faces not only the challenges of big power politics, but also a range of non-traditional security threats, as elaborated in Chapter 2: Strategic Outlook.
26. Due to the nation's relative limitations in size and capacity, the Government has recognised the need to be proactive and pragmatic in coping with strategic risks. Continuous assessment of the security environment is a central part of this process.
27. The Government's assessment on the security environment had at times resulted in adjustments or changes in its strategic planning. A reassessment in the 1980s had led to the transformation of the MAF from a counter-insurgency force to a more conventional one. It also contributed to a shift from a threat-based to a capability-based defence policy. A more recent evaluation has further recalibrated the policy into an **interest-based** approach. This is elaborated in Chapter 3: Defence Strategy and Chapter 4: Future Force.

28. The reassessment of changing realities at the international level has occasionally resulted in Malaysia changing the forms of its **defence engagement**. Malaysia used to anchor on a military alliance, the Anglo-Malayan/Malaysian Defence Agreement (AMDA) with the United Kingdom. The alliance-centric approach was later replaced by a more balanced external posture, when AMDA was succeeded by the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) in 1971. It was around the same time that Malaysia started to embrace non-alignment and the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) regionalism in its external outlook. The Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) declaration was signed by Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN member states in 1971 in Kuala Lumpur. The creation of various ASEAN-led mechanisms since the 1990s has deepened the role of ASEAN as the cornerstone of Malaysia's foreign policy.
29. Parallel to these changing external postures is the changing foundations of Malaysia's **internal resilience**. "Resilience" means a nation's overall capacity to withstand challenges through inter-agency coordination, as well as national capability and cohesion across the society to tackle national problems. It encompasses national unity, government coherence, development and societal participation in security preparedness. From a Malaysian perspective, defence and development always go hand-in-hand, as stressed by KESBAN (*Keselamatan dan Pembangunan*, or "Security and Development"), a concept adopted during the Second Emergency.
30. The whole-of-government and the whole-of-society approaches are the key pathways to enhance Malaysia's national resilience. The Government's approach to resilience is highlighted in Chapter 5: People in Defence. Efforts to build internal resilience go in tandem with the endeavour to forge external partnerships, the focus of Chapter 6: International Defence Engagement. Together, they form the foundation of Malaysia's pursuit of security.
31. **Enhancing Malaysia's defence capability and readiness.** The third and the most important purpose of the DWP is to identify ways and means to enhance the country's defence capability and military preparedness. This task is performed by Chapters 3 to 8, on the basis of the vision and strategic outlook analysis presented in Chapters 1 and 2.
32. Chapter 3: Defence Strategy translates the vision into directions by describing the three pillars of Malaysia's defence strategy as a roadmap to enhancing Malaysia's defence readiness. These pillars are: Concentric Deterrence, Comprehensive Defence and Credible Partnerships. Each of the pillars is elaborated in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, respectively.
33. Chapter 7: Defence Science, Technology and Industry and Chapter 8: Transformation, Governance and Funding concentrate on the implementation of the DWP. Both chapters explain how the Government plans to operationalise the three pillars into enhanced national defence by consolidating the defence capability development plan, pursuing defence transformations, reinvigorating Malaysia's defence industry as an economic catalyst and securing a stable defence funding. All of these are aimed at transforming the MAF into an integrated, agile and focused force.
34. It is important to understand the development of the MAF and related agencies as the nation's security custodian. When Malaya attained independence from the British on 31 August 1957, the then Malayan Armed Forces consisted of an Army and a Navy that were 24 and 23 years old respectively. The Malayan Army, which included the Malay Regiment, the Federation Regiment and the Federation Armoured Car

Squadron, was developed and equipped to carry out counter-insurgency operations against the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The Royal Malayan Navy was then still a rudimentary naval force. The Royal Federation Air Force was created on 2 June 1958, after independence.

35. Following the formation of the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963 when Malaya merged with Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore (Singapore separated from the Federation in August 1965), the Malayan Armed Forces became the Malaysian Armed Forces. Given the nature of threats posed by the insurgency and *Konfrontasi*, the development of the MAF in the earliest decades was focused largely on land-based operations.
36. The MAF's capability development efforts are well articulated in several key documents, primarily the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF)'s Capability Development Plan known as the Fourth Dimension Malaysian Armed Forces, 4D MAF.
37. Over the subsequent decades, each of the three Services of the MAF has grown in size and functions. Each has continuously sought to enhance its defence capacity through effective use of land, sea and air power. Efforts to develop a Joint Forces Command (JFC) started when the Malaysian Armed Forces Headquarters (MAF HQ) was established in 1992. The Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) was eventually launched in 2004, thereby institutionalising the jointness concept where the three Services jointly perform functions in terms of governance and operational control. The JFHQ is entrusted with all the joint exercises, joint and combined operations as well as multinational operations.



38. At the Service level, there is a series of documents aimed at transforming the respective Services and enhancing their defence capability, in ways that align their resources with the country's strategic interests. These documents are: (1) the Army for the Next Generation (Army 4nextG) Strategic Development Plan that envisages thrusts to enhance the Army's capability towards 2050; (2) the RMN #15to5 Transformation Programme, serving as a blueprint to turn the Navy into "a balanced, credible and versatile armada" by 2050; and (3) the RMAF Capability Development Plan 2055 (CAP55) detailing its modernisation plan up to 2055.
39. Developing upon existing Government documents, this DWP presents a transformative strategy aimed at enhancing Malaysia's overall defence capability in a coherent way. This long-term blueprint seeks to translate the elements of national power into national strengths, which are robust enough to deter potential threats (along the concentric areas of the core, extended and forward areas), comprehensive enough to continuously build resilience at home, as well as credible enough to attract and expand circles of partnerships abroad.

How Does the DWP Serve the National Vision?

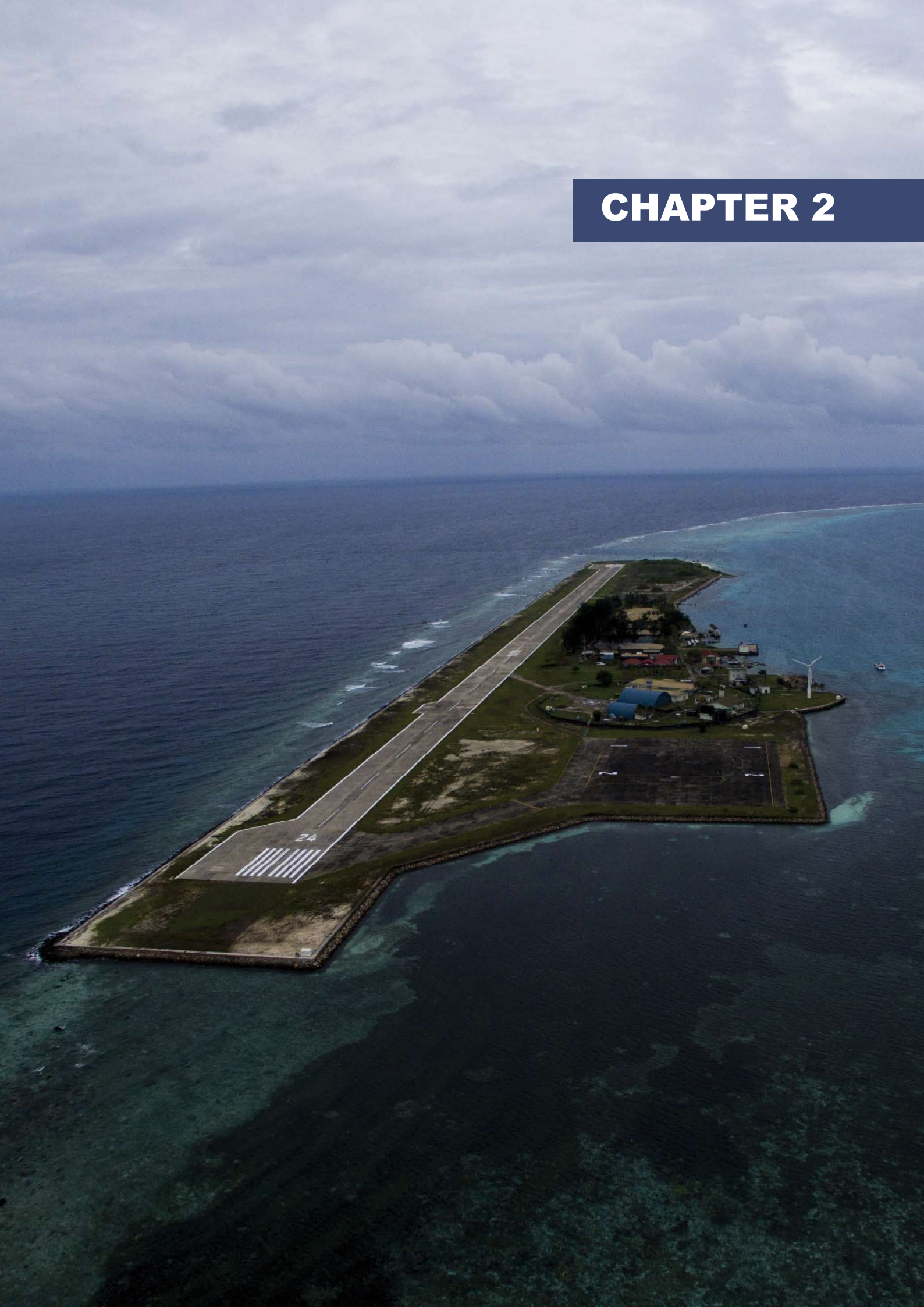
40. The DWP serves Malaysia's national vision in several ways. For the immediate and medium terms, it enables the Government to pursue three desired outcomes, namely: **legitimacy**, **acceptability** and **reliability**. For the longer term, the DWP strengthens Malaysia's position as a maritime nation with continental roots, and maximises its potentials as a bridging linchpin between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.



41. **Legitimacy** is about government authority, a central element in internal resilience. The DWP, having been deliberated and prepared after extensive consultation across civil-military lines with considerable input from academics, think-tanks, industry representatives, civil society organisations, all components of the government and private sector, reflects a broad spectrum of viewpoints about Malaysian defence including the required functions of the armed forces. Inclusively engaging the public and a wide range of stakeholders in the policy-making process is a fundamental exercise in democracy. It confers a great procedural legitimacy on the DWP and related policies.
42. **Acceptability**, the second desired outcome, is about policy agreeability among governmental agencies, in line with the whole-of-government approach. This DWP seeks to increase the acceptability of its vision across all government agencies, chiefly by forging a shared outlook on external threats and opportunities, and the need to view each other as indispensable partners. The higher the acceptability, the higher the governance cohesion and the higher the internal resilience. Reaching consensus and continuous maximisation of inter-agency coordination are desired outcomes of this DWP.
43. Another desired outcome of the DWP is **reliability**. It is about enhancing military readiness and optimal operational ability of the MAF in tackling security challenges effectively. The DWP provides the directions for the MAF to be transformed into an integrated, agile and focused force. A reliable defence force is expected to effectively protect national interests, **avoiding conflict when we can, and winning the war when we must**.
44. These desired outcomes reflect the prime audience of the DWP. Legitimacy is for the hearts of Malaysian people, acceptability for the relevant agencies and the reliability of the MAF for external partners.
45. All the three outcomes are vital. They lay the foundation for Malaysia to turn the nation's democratic dividends into a transformative, inclusive vision of serving a bridging linchpin role between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. The vision leverages on Malaysia's geography, diversity and democracy for punching above its weight at the international level.
46. This vision is supported by Malaysia's long-time diplomatic activism, defence approach and developmental aspirations. It is also anchored on the Government's commitment to contribute to ASEAN centrality, regional stability and global development, including realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligning them with regional agenda such as the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.
47. Malaysia's vision as the bridging linchpin between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions connects the nation's past, present and future, as follows:
 - i. **Past.** The Malacca Sultanate, the Malay dynasty that ruled the Malacca entrepôt and commanded the major sea route between India and China, was a preeminent trading centre in Southeast Asia during the 15th century. It was the emporium of the East. Leveraging on its geographical-halfway along the main international shipping route, Malacca established itself as a prosperous trading port by attracting merchants from Arabia, Africa, Persia, Europe, India and China. It was a centre of civilisational exchange and religious learning, spreading Islam to other communities in the Malay Archipelago. Its geographical location, however, attracted major powers to Malacca, making it the first destination for colonisation by Western powers in Southeast Asia when the Portuguese invaded the Sultanate in 1511.

- ii. **Present.** Since attaining independence in August 1957, the present-day Malaysia has actively forged cooperation with countries in different parts of the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. Malaysia's active initiatives began with Southeast Asian regionalism. Since the 1990s, it has grown deeper within, and gradually extended between the two regions. Over the decades, Malaysian activism has developed into multiple layers of diplomatic, developmental and defence cooperative platforms between and across the two ocean regions. These include ASEAN-led cooperation namely East Asian integration, ASEAN-Plus Three (APT) and other parallel dialogue processes, South-South Cooperation, the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL), the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP), the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) in the Sulu Sea and Sulawesi Sea, the Malaysia Field Hospital (MFH) in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, the multi-level defence partnerships with countries across the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, as well as our longstanding contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations in various parts of the world. These platforms are indispensable instruments for pursuing Malaysia's core interests and international standing.
 - iii. **Future.** In light of the fast-changing international environment, it is timely for Malaysia to envision a new direction, turning the existing platforms into a more coherent Malaysian middlepowership, while cultivating new possibilities. The bridging linchpin vision is a crucial step to move into this direction, to better position Malaysia at a time when the big power dynamics in and across the two regions are creating greater uncertainties for Malaysia.
48. The vision may serve to enhance both internal resilience and external partnerships. Internally, as a developing, multi-ethnic country with Muslim majority, Malaysia embraces the values of inclusivity, consultative dialogue and progressiveness, in tandem with the concepts of '*Rahmatan lil 'alamin*' (mercy to all) and '*Maqasid Syari'ah*' (higher objectives of the syariah). The diversity of culture can be an asset and strength for the nation to be a bridging linchpin between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. Malaysia is known to be courageous and quick-witted like the *Sang Kancil* (mousedeer). As narrated in *Sejarah Melayu* (the Malay Annals), the mousedeer spirit is exemplary for its smart and adroit manoeuvres to survive. The bridging linchpin vision, by underscoring Malaysia's non-aligned and inter-regional potentials, increases our contributions as a credible partner in the eyes of the international community.

CHAPTER 2



STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

1. Malaysia's present and future interests are tied to an uncertain and ever-changing security environment. This chapter first describes Malaysia's strategic outlook for the next ten years. It then lays out the Government's long-term strategy, charting the direction to protect the national interests, particularly to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity, in line with the shifting regional and global security environment.
2. As a result of the uncertainties at the regional and global levels, the international strategic landscape is becoming more complex and unpredictable in the coming years. Although Malaysia is not beset by military threats or conflicts at the present moment, the nation still faces three main security challenges. They are: (1) uncertain big power relations; (2) complex Southeast Asian neighbourhood; and (3) increasing non-traditional security threats.

A Changing Security Environment

3. The increasingly volatile external environment has caused a wide range of uncertainties, posing growing risks towards Malaysia's national interests. This development has the potential to undermine regional stability and global peace in the long run.
4. Globally, there has been a shift in economic and military power. This shift is highlighted by intensifying power competition and potential polarisation, increasing xenophobia, more prevalent non-state actors, more lethal trans-boundary threats, inevitable globalisation processes, uneven access to technology and fragile ecological systems.
5. Regionally, the intensifying power competition is concentrated more in Southeast Asia. This rivalry is not only heightening the longstanding tension in the region but also has extended to other sectors from trade and technology, to resource management and functional exchanges to infrastructure and connectivity development.
6. While this big power competition and their attempts to increase influence may present opportunities for Malaysia and other regional countries, at the same time, it may complicate regional cooperation. The attempts may cast shadows over Southeast Asia's stability and prosperity, potentially challenging ASEAN centrality. These developments have led to a more complicated, unpredictable outlook with the potential to disrupt the regional security environment. Malaysia may face challenges on a more serious scale and scope never experienced before.
7. Three challenges that will shape Malaysia's strategic outlook for the next ten years are identified as follows:
 - i. **Uncertain big power relations.** This refers to the US-China interactions and their relations with other powers. These two big power relations are the most important bilateral relations in the contemporary world and also the most important external factor for Malaysia. The bilateral ties have always been marked by a mix of cooperation and competition, with implications for regional stability, security and prosperity. Their interactions affect other countries' policies and actions.
 - ii. **Southeast Asian neighbourhood.** While big power politics affect Malaysia as consequences of power, the Southeast Asian neighbourhood impacts Malaysia because of its **proximity**. Due to geographical proximity, Malaysia's national security and interests are affected by its immediate neighbours' actions, policies and spillovers of their internal developments as well as bilateral relations among the

ASEAN member states. There is also a greater regional interdependence due to proximity. Hence, the Government is giving emphasis to shared prosperity, shared security and shared identity at the regional level.

- iii. **Non-traditional security threats.** These threats, primarily those that compromise human security and the environment, are escalating. These threats come in all forms such as extremism and terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, sea robbery and piracy as well as cyber threats. Examples include the Lahad Datu incursion in 2013, the repeated Abu Sayyaf Group armed abductions in the eastern waters of Sabah, the hijacking of MT Orkim Harmony off eastern Tanjung Sedili, Kota Tinggi in 2015 and cyber attacks in Singapore in 2018. Natural disasters are another form of non-traditional security threat in Southeast Asia. These non-traditional threats are **unpredictable** and may occur **anywhere, anytime** and **to anyone**. These threats are transboundary in nature and cannot be addressed single-handedly without the cooperation of other countries.
8. Developments in recent years suggest that the three factors will become more complex and will cost the nation dearly if not handled appropriately.

The Uncertain Big Power Relations

9. Big power relations are becoming more unpredictable. Despite their continuing cooperation and dialogue, the United States of America (US) and China have entered into a new phase where bilateral relations are marked more by rivalry than accommodation. The National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy documents, published by the US in December 2017 and January 2018 respectively, describe China as a “strategic competitor” and a “revisionist power”. Both sides are embroiled in an increasingly bitter trade war, accompanied by technology decoupling, maritime tensions and other points of friction. China’s occupation and militarisation as well as related activities in the South China Sea, along with the US Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) and other powers’ similar actions, have turned the overlapping sovereign claims issue into a big-power game. Incursions by foreign government vessels off the coast of Sabah and Sarawak are clear challenges to Malaysia’s sovereign rights in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea as provided by international law. Tensions have sparked in the South China Sea with the arrival of warships from outside the region. The growing rivalry and action-reaction between the powerful nations have raised the risk of regional polarisation.
10. At this point of time, when multilateralism appears to be in question and old alliances in doubt, protectionism and transactional politics are on the march. As unipolarity fades and chaos surrounding Brexit continue, the West’s influence will continue to decline. These developments have raised questions on global leadership, casting doubts on the international community’s capability to reach consensus and take collective actions on a range of transnational and regional issues. Meanwhile, the Russia-West standoff intensifies as the conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere in West Asia and Africa regions continue. US-Iran tension is also escalating. The growing convergence of Russian, Iranian and Turkish interests is changing the Eurasian geopolitical landscape. Other geopolitical developments include the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2018 (India and Pakistan joining the regional group that consists of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), which is reshaping the security and economic connectivity between and across the Central and South Asian regions. Despite the ongoing post-Cold War geopolitical reconfigurations in Eurasia and West Asia, South Asia remains beset with conflicts. Tensions between India and Pakistan have worsened, especially after the two nuclear-armed neighbours exchanged cross-border fire in the disputed Kashmir in late 2019.

11. China continues to implement its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims at reviving the Silk Road by constructing a vast network of infrastructure, transportation and trade links across Asia, Europe and Africa. The country's economic and diplomatic activism has been pursued side-by-side with its military modernisation, institutional initiatives (e.g. the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank [AIIB], the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation [MLC], Xiangshan Forum) and perceived aggressive actions over the South China Sea. Regional countries have reacted differently to these developments. Some are amenable to China's emerging role in regional architecture and global order, whilst others are uneasy about it.
12. Parallel to these developments is the revival of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) by Australia, India, Japan and the US in 2017. By 2018, each of the Quad countries had announced its own version of the "Indo-Pacific" strategies respectively, expressing its security roles and connectivity cooperation scheme. The Quad countries emphasise the importance of rules-based order, underscoring the freedom of navigation and openness of sea lanes, while promoting sustainable infrastructure development practices.
13. Amidst growing power competition between the contending interests, infrastructure connectivity cooperation joins maritime security as chessboards of Asian geopolitics.
14. On the maritime front, the US has stepped up its FONOPs in various parts of the disputed waters of the South China Sea. Australia, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom have registered their respective concerns over the issue, whether through their own initiatives or through joint statements. India and other countries have similarly called for safeguarding the freedom of navigation.
15. On the connectivity front, Japan has been active in implementing the Partnership for Quality Infrastructure since 2015. This initiative started concurrently with the establishment of the China-backed AIIB. It was followed by the announcements of bilateral, trilateral and coalition partnerships between and among the Quad members on connectivity cooperation. The US released its Indo-Pacific Economic Vision in July 2018 while the European Commission presented the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy in September 2018.
16. All these developments have both direct and indirect impacts on East Asia, including Southeast Asia, presenting opportunities as well as challenges. East Asia is the region where most of Malaysia's national interests are concentrated. Within the region, the outlook is mixed. Economically, East Asia remains the most vibrant and integrated region. Security wise, however, it is a region with multiple potential flashpoints. While there have been some attempts at resumption of diplomacy in East Asia between the two Koreas, between the US and North Korea, between China and Japan, the security of the region remains uncertain. The situation in the Korean Peninsula is still tense. The Taiwan Strait is still considered a potential conflict zone. Elsewhere, in Southeast Asia and other parts of the region, territorial disputes and overlapping claims between and among states have remained unresolved.
17. Malaysia maintains friendly relations with all countries and seeks peaceful resolution of disputes based on international law. The South China Sea should be a platform for cooperation and connectivity, not an area of confrontation or conflict area, which is in line with the spirit of Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). This cooperation is crucial to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight as provided by international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Malaysia insists on the use of diplomacy and international law to manage disputes.

18. ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms continue to serve as indispensable platforms for mitigating all of these challenges. ASEAN unity and centrality are a foundation for managing power dynamics and regional uncertainties. In June 2019, ASEAN issued the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific”. This document reiterates ASEAN’s inclusivity principle, while stressing ASEAN’s central role in leading closer cooperation, shaping the regional architecture and ensuring peace, stability and prosperity for the peoples in Southeast Asia as well as in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. Overall, this document interprets ASEAN’s commitment to be an honest broker in creating a safe, peaceful and prosperous environment.

The Complex Southeast Asian Neighbourhood

19. Malaysia’s security is directly tied to the stability of Southeast Asia. While ASEAN, as one community, has been successful in managing many regional problems, the fact is that relations between and among ASEAN member states are more dynamic and complex.
20. Malaysia is the only country that shares borders with the vast majority of Southeast Asian countries, either land or maritime. Due to the nation’s geographical centrality in Southeast Asia and colonial legacies in the region, Malaysia has yet to resolve land demarcation and maritime delimitations issues with some of its neighbours.
21. In addition to territorial and sovereignty disputes, there are other bilateral issues affecting Malaysia’s interests in the neighbourhood. These include: (1) conflicting interests extended from territorial disputes (e.g. illegal fishing in Malaysian waters); (2) contentious spillover from internal conflicts of neighbouring countries; and (3) refugee crises sparked by regional states’ domestic issues.
22. Bilateral disputes aside, there are also shared problems that bind Malaysia and other regional countries together. These problems: (1) affect nearly every country in the area or neighbourhood; (2) could not be handled effectively by any country alone; and (3) necessitate cooperation and collective action among the affected countries. Such problems encompass both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including extremism, sea robbery, piracy and cross-boundary environmental issues such as haze problems resulting from forest fires in neighbouring countries.
23. Geographical location confers both advantages and disadvantages. While proximity is the source of bilateral issues, it also has put Malaysia and our immediate neighbours in a state of interdependence in security, economy and social spheres. A case in point is maritime security challenges. Strategically located astride the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, Malaysia is at the crossroads of key trade flows between the East and West. More than 30 percent of global seaborne trade passes through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore which makes it imperative for the littoral states, i.e. Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, to maintain and strengthen cooperation between them. None of these three littoral states is singly able to ensure the security of the strategic waterways.
24. Currently, Malaysia together with Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand are coordinating maritime patrol programmes, under the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP), to combat sea robberies and other forms of maritime security issues. Additionally, the four countries also work with the London-based International Maritime Organisation (IMO), a United Nations specialised agency, to ensure the safety of navigation and to mitigate pollution risk from ships plying the Straits of Malacca. A similar initiative was implemented to increase the level of maritime security in the Sulu and Sulawesi Seas through the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines signed in 2016. These collaborations

illustrate the efforts of regional countries in pursuing the main objective of regional peace, security and stability. All these collaborations as well as other defence cooperation mechanisms will be elaborated in Chapter 6: International Defence Engagement.

25. The Government is committed to pursue a multi-pronged approach to effectively defend the nation's security and interests in the Southeast Asian region. This does not only consist of ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms, but also other approaches that have proven to be effective in managing regional issues. They include: bilateral diplomacy, international law and a web of partnerships involving countries within and beyond Southeast Asia. An example of such partnerships is the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), which consists of Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom that will be discussed in Chapter 6.
26. ASEAN will continue to be the cornerstone of Malaysia's foreign policy. It is an indispensable platform for Malaysia and member states to tackle shared, region-wide issues including promoting intra-ASEAN confidence-building measures, forging cooperation with big powers, facilitating Asian trade and investment as well as tackling economic challenges, environmental problems, contagious diseases and other non-traditional security issues.

The Non-Traditional Security Threats

27. Non-Traditional Security (NTS) issues involve non-state actors and trans-border crime with an asymmetric character, which have direct as well as indirect impacts to social, political, economic and environmental sectors. Terrorism is among the main NTS threats to this country, this region and the wider world. Apart from terrorism, threats such as extremism, hijacking and cyber attack might disrupt internal stability, cause loss of life as well as paralyse Critical National Information Infrastructures (CNII). Other threats such as sea robbery, kidnapping and illegal fishing might disrupt Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) and affect the safety of navigation, thus resulting in losses to the nation.
28. Among the factors attributed to these threats are the porous land border between states, globalisation, communication and transportation facilities and other emerging trends in various parts of the world. These trends include self-radicalisation through social media, rapid diffusion of Internet of Things (IoT), extreme ideologies, identity politics and so forth.
29. The enduring NTS threats that continuously affect Malaysia's interests are terrorism and extremism, cyber threats, maritime security threats, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNe) threats and natural disasters.
30. **Terrorism and Extremism.** The threats of terrorism and extremism to Malaysia's security are growing. From February 2013 to September 2019, the authorities arrested 511 individuals with suspected links to terrorism. Out of this, 336 were locals whilst 175 were foreigners. All of them were linked to Abu Sayyaf groups and were suspected of plotting attacks targeting places of worship, as well as channelling funds to Malaysian Daesh members in Syria and the Jemaah Anshorut Daulah (JAD) group in Indonesia. This reflects the transboundary nature of the threat.
31. The magnitude and forms of terrorist threats to Malaysia are tied to developments in neighbouring countries as well as West Asia and other regions. Returning fighters have come to Southeast Asia to exploit opportunities to forge ties with local terrorist networks. Hundreds of Southeast Asian militants, including those from Malaysia, who fought in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan have returned to this region, raising the Government's concern.



32. Terrorist activities such as spreading radical ideology, recruiting, suicide attacks and kidnappings have caused chaos, instilled fear and threatened public safety in various parts of the region. Most attacks have been targeted at governments, Western interests, places of worship and entertainment outlets. In June 2016, a bar in Puchong was attacked with a grenade, injuring eight people. Subsequently in 2017, Philippines-based militants attempted to emulate Daesh's modus operandi by trying to establish an affiliated province in Marawi. This led to an urban warfare with the government forces attempting to retake the place. In July 2018, a suicide car bomb attack in Basilan, Philippines, killed 11. The perpetrator is believed to be a Daesh member from Morocco, based in the southern Philippines. Such incidents could happen in other parts of this region.
33. Terror incidents in Malaysia and neighbouring countries have proved that the return of experienced terrorists after the defeat of Daesh in Syria and Iraq, poses increased risks to Southeast Asia. To stay relevant after its downfall, Daesh has reiterated the need to continue the war in its supporters' home countries. The international terrorist organisation has been manipulating social media to propagate and spread its narratives to followers. The death of Daesh's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in October 2019 has raised concerns of possible acts of revenge by his followers.
34. Extremist threats throughout the world are often linked to online self-radicalisation. Amateurs or lone wolf attackers can easily get information through internet sources which could influence them to become terrorists.

35. Transnational threats require transnational solutions. The threats of terrorism and extremism in Southeast Asia can be mitigated through efficient information gathering and close cooperation among ASEAN member states. Cognisant of the need to improve the mechanisms of intelligence sharing on militant activities in the region, ASEAN has launched the ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative (OEI), a strategic-level information sharing platform in order to increase cooperation among ASEAN member states to counter extremism.
36. Malaysia will continue to actively combat all forms of terrorism and extremism at the international levels. As part of a holistic anti-terror campaign, the Government has established the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT); the prominent institution places Malaysia in the leading position to tackle region-wide security issues.
37. **Cyber Threats.** Cyber space is the new domain for national security and geopolitics. State and non-state actors use a variety of methods to undermine the security of a nation without firing a shot. Cyber threats are likely to grow in Malaysia, in line with this global trend. CNII including banking systems, power supplies, seaports and airports, as well as health services are vulnerable to hacking and other forms of cyber crimes. There has been a significant rise in the number of cyber attacks worldwide, especially since 2006. Major attacks on critical infrastructure have already occurred in Germany, Iran, Ukraine and elsewhere. In 2015, cyber attacks on a power grid in Ukraine switched off 30 substations, leaving about 230,000 people without electricity. The cyber attacks took place during an ongoing conflict in the country at that time and were attributed to a state actor hacker group. These attacks indicate how cyber space has become another militarised domain.
38. Furthermore, the emerging and disruptive technologies such as IoT, Cloud Computing, Big Data, Deep Learning, 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have exposed military operations to cyber threats. They may disrupt system functions, as well as modify and steal data. The country's cyber governance, led by the National Cyber Security Agency (NACSA), is in need of more investment, coordination, enforcement and an active response strategy across the board at the national, state, corporate and community levels. The MAF through the Cyber Defence Operation Centre (CDOC) is a strategic partner of NACSA's National Cyber Coordination and Command Centre (NC4), and plays a vital role in the protection of CNII including response, communication and coordination in the event of a cyber crisis. CDOC monitors the cyber defence situational awareness while NC4 monitors the national cyber situational awareness encompassing the public and private sectors in Malaysia.
39. Critical infrastructure in most countries including Malaysia were developed using analogue technology and were much less susceptible to cyber attacks. However, this has changed and most CNIIs are now fully digital and internet dependent, putting them at risk of cyber attacks. In recognition of this, Malaysia has identified 10 CNII sectors to be protected and preserved at all times.¹
40. Facing uncertainties in the rapidly evolving digital era, the Government is determined to take effective measures to protect the country's CNII from cyber attacks. Malaysian defence planners are developing a coherent cyber doctrine in line with the Malaysia Cyber Security Strategy (MCSS) to enhance defence resilience and cyber security that requires among other things, putting in place the right management and operational governance mechanisms with cyber-savvy manpower and right technology.

¹ The 10 CNII refers to the defence and security sectors, banking and finance, information and communication, energy, transportation, help service, government, emergency service, food and agriculture.

41. The MAF has recognised cyber electromagnetic as a new operational domain. This domain provides critical capabilities that enables the MAF to conduct operations safely across all other domains.
42. The usage of Unmanned Systems such as drones as destructive weapons has become a more widespread practice. In September 2019, an attack employing drones was launched against Saudi oil processing facilities. Meanwhile, rebel groups in Syria had executed multiple strikes on military bases utilising drones with explosive payloads. Such incidents prove that these threats are a reality that we must confront.
43. For the purpose of military operations, the combination of cyber operations with Electronic Warfare (EW) capabilities forms up the Cyber Electromagnetic Activities (CEMA) efforts to protect CNII. EW is a promising countermeasure element in combating drones of all sizes and mission profiles. Defence can be carried out through EW to disrupt the navigational system, communication, fuses and weapon trigger functions, and may potentially take over the control of the drones.
44. In the near future, a combination of weapons and AI technology will pose a new threat to the nation. Potentially, AI will not only increase the efficiency and lethal effect of kinetic weapons, but also guide weapons. Such AI-guided weapons, defined as Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS), can independently select and attack targets without human intervention. Therefore, the current MAF doctrine dictates CEMA in supporting other military operations that will face these new threats.
45. Since cyber security threats are transnational in nature, overcoming the threats necessitates regional and global level cooperation. Therefore, it is necessary for ASEAN member states to implement practical confidence-building measures and adopt a set of common, voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in cyber space. The measures taken are also to enhance member states' trust and confidence in the use of cyber space to its full potential to bring about greater regional economic prosperity and integration.
46. **Maritime Security Threats.** Sea robbery and piracy have long been threats to ships and seafarers sailing through Malaysian waters. These threats have led to the formation of multilateral initiatives such as the MSP and TCA that aims to eradicate sea robbery and piracy effectively. The Government has also established the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), to overcome increasing maritime security threats. Non-traditional threats, like kidnap for ransom, smuggling, human trafficking and other illegal activities in the maritime domain have brought about more challenges to Malaysia. For example, the Kidnap for Ransom Group (KFRG) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) actively abduct hostages from the eastern coast of Sabah to extort ransoms for their release. Thus, closer cooperation between Malaysia and neighbouring countries, international maritime organisations as well as the private sectors is important to overcome all these threats.
47. Rampant illegal fishing activity is another maritime security threat to the nation. This issue has impacted the national economy and complicated efforts to ensure a sustainable fisheries industry in the MMZ. Every year, Malaysia loses up to RM6 billion due to illegal fishing activities. Approximately 980 thousand tonnes of the country's sea-based produce is lost annually. It adversely affects biodiversity, associated and dependent species and the wider ecosystem. Encroachment by foreign fishing vessels undermines Malaysia's economy, security and sovereignty. The Government is currently tackling this issue through collaboration between maritime enforcement agencies involving integrated operations such as Op Naga conducted in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

48. **Proliferation of WMD and CBRNe Threats.** The proliferation of WMD still constitutes a serious concern for the nation and the world. Additionally, the loosening of control elements in the movement of dual-use components have contributed to the proliferation of WMD. In relation to this, there are concerns on the use of CBRNe weapons by terrorists in this country. Easily accessible bio-technology and low production costs make it easier for terrorist groups to build biological weapons. This matter is being viewed seriously by the Government where MINDEF is the lead agency for the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). The Government is currently upgrading capabilities and coordination for responding to the possible CBRNe threats and disasters.
49. **Natural Disasters and Environmental Hazards.** Malaysia faces a range of environmental security issues. The nation is exposed to natural and environmental hazards such as floods, cyclonic storms, landslides, haze, droughts, tsunamis, hazardous and toxic waste problems, as well as air and water pollution. Climate-related natural disasters and other extreme weather incidents are on the rise, threatening the security and health of the *rakyat* as well as national development. From 1998 to 2018, Malaysia experienced 51 natural disasters, with over 3 million people affected and 281 people deaths. Out of these, floods affected over 770 thousand people, killed 148 people and caused approximately RM5.82 billion in damages. The 2015 flood is the worst in Malaysia's environmental history, superseding the 1967 flood. 2016 was the hottest year ever recorded in Malaysia. The recurring haze-smoke problems caused by forest fires in the neighbouring country have harmful effects on the health of the *rakyat* and disrupt the economy. Exceedingly high Air Pollutant Index (API) in the past forced the Government to declare climate emergencies three times in different parts of the country (September 1997, August 2005 and June 2013).
50. The Government is committed to fighting global warming. It continues to prioritise the goal of cutting carbon emissions in compliance with the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement. The Government will introduce a Climate Change Act, which will institutionalise a national climate change mitigation and adaptation plan.

Long-Term National Strategy

51. To protect Malaysia's interests in the face of the emerging challenges and new opportunities as described above, the Government is determined to pursue a proactive, long-term strategy.
52. Defence elements are the central components of this national strategy. The defence strategy supports the national strategy through shared prosperity, shared security and shared identity at national and regional levels. The process will create a balanced strategic ecosystem, cultivating space for wider external partnerships and wider policy options to maximise Malaysia's potential as a bridging linchpin between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.
53. This long-term strategy leverages on Malaysia's geography, national character and regional profile as a proactive nation in shaping regional affairs. Malaysia, together with fellow ASEAN member states and other partners, have actively implemented various initiatives on defence, developmental and diplomatic spheres throughout the decades (see Table 2.1). These initiatives have shaped the course of regional affairs by connecting countries, forging cooperations and creating institutionalised partnerships along different parts of the two ocean regions. These are the advantages upon which Malaysia is determined to build upon, and to protect its national interests while contributing to ASEAN centrality, regional stability and global prosperity in an uncertain security environment.

Table 2.1: Malaysia's Defence, Development and Diplomatic Initiatives.

SPHERES	MALAYSIA'S KEY INITIATIVES AND INVOLVEMENTS
Defence	- ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) & ADMM-Plus - ASEAN Militaries Ready Group (AMRG) on HADR - Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP) - Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) - International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao - Malaysia Field Hospital in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh - Malaysian Defence Cooperation Programme (MDCP)
Development	- Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL) & ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC) - South-South Cooperation - Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP)
Diplomacy	- ASA, ASEAN and ASEAN Community - Neutralisation of Southeast Asia / ZOPFAN - Promoting several international norms such as "common but differentiated responsibility" and "common and shared heritage of mankind" - ASEAN Plus Three (APT) & East Asia Summit (EAS)

54. Malaysia is situated at the heart of the dynamic Asian region. It is a **maritime nation with continental roots** that is connected to mainland Southeast Asia and Eurasia by land, and the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean on one side, with the Malacca Straits and the Indian Ocean on the other.
55. As a country surrounded by the sea and depending on it for its national well-being, Malaysia is a **maritime nation** by all definitions. All maritime nations, big or small, are characterised by three attributes, i.e. resources, risks and resolve. Malaysia has all the three elements:
- Resources and Interests.** The maritime domains are one of the sources of Malaysia's prosperity. The seas, seabed, subsoil, waterways, airspace and continental shelf are crucial to trade and commerce, marine fisheries and fishery resources, means of transportation, people-to-people connectivity and other modes of the nation's wealth creation;
 - Risks and Challenges.** The maritime areas, at the same time, are also a source of external threats that challenge Malaysia's sovereignty and sovereign rights over the MMZ, strategic waterways, airspace and critical lines of communication. These cover territorial disputes and overlapping claims, big power actions and interactions, sea robbery and piracy, as well as other sea-based non-traditional security issues; and
 - Resolve and Actions.** The maritime domain is an area where Malaysia is able to demonstrate its resolve to protect national interests as well as to influence and contribute to the region. To protect our resources and mitigate risks from the sea as outlined above, the maritime domain is an indispensable avenue around which Malaysia can transform our national resolve into an array of regional cooperative mechanisms. By advancing a series of initiatives with ASEAN member states, Malaysia has succeeded in turning ideas into concrete cooperative arrangements in defence, development and diplomatic spheres. Some of these mechanisms and related partnerships are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

56. **Continental Roots.** Emphasising the maritime domain is not to neglect Malaysia's continental stakes. Indeed, while land-based resources, consisting of critical resources and assets may bring risks, they are also a source of solution. The external threats and challenges stem from continental and maritime as well as airspace origins, historically, presently and into the future. The resolve to promote regional integration and to pursue national interests is therefore being expressed through and along our continental roots, northward to mainland Southeast Asia, as well as with potential link to different parts of Eurasia. Amongst others, Malaysia's notable efforts were the SKRL and AMBDC in 1995 and the Malaysia-Vietnam Joint Submission on the Extended Continental Shelf in 2009.
57. More infrastructure and transport connectivity projects are expected to take place in the decades to come, necessitating more integrated efforts to protect Malaysia's interests. This requires the MAF and security agencies to be transformed in order to confront more complex challenges that require an increase in defence capability for joint missions and operations.
58. **Malaysia's Linchpin Role.** Malaysia has the capability to play three interrelated roles: **bridging**, **building** and **binding**. Each role adds value and options for countries around the two regions: Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean. Each serves as a catalyst for creating greater developmental and strategic opportunities for Malaysia, increasing our internal resilience and external defence partnerships over the long run. Each leverages upon Malaysia's maritime and continental roots.
 - i. **Bridging.** Geo-strategically located in the middle of Southeast Asia, between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and between the continental north and the maritime south, allows Malaysia to serve as a regional hub to bridge connectivity in the cultural, commercial and security spheres. This is where "shared prosperity" meets with "shared identity" and "shared security" in line with ASEAN's aspiration. This function is similar to the Malacca Sultanate's historical role, but in modern forms. Malaysia is able to forge connectivity and link cooperation on a wide array of activities such as handling non-traditional security threats, establishing it as a hub for maritime security around the Malacca Straits and the South China Sea, a hub for cross-regional trade and e-commerce logistics, a hub for cross-border transportation as well as for other physical connectivity.
 - ii. **Building.** The second role is inviting multiple partners from both the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions to build interests and stakes in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. Its strategic geographical location allows **Malaysia to serve as a regional hub** through building the cooperation and partnership of markets, resources and other ventures of shared interests such as the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) and World Food Programme - United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (WFP-UNHRD) in Subang as well as the International Maritime Bureau (IMB)'s office in Kuala Lumpur. Partnerships like these build shared interests, create job opportunities, mobilise resources, transfer technology, expand exports and create a niche for Malaysia's development and strategic profile. These shared interest development can avoid dependency or dominance by the big powers.
 - iii. **Binding.** The third role is coordinating engagements to initiate regularised cooperation (as opposed to ad hoc arrangements) that bind countries together. Malaysia has over the past decades succeeded in working with fellow ASEAN member states and other partners in establishing a number of institutionalised cooperative mechanisms. On the basis of these mechanisms, Malaysia could play a leading role in strengthening their linkages and exploring new institutions and cooperation for

maximising shared prosperity, shared security and shared identity among countries along the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. These partnerships, in turn, serve to enhance Malaysia's bridging and building cooperation capacity, and in turn, ASEAN centrality.

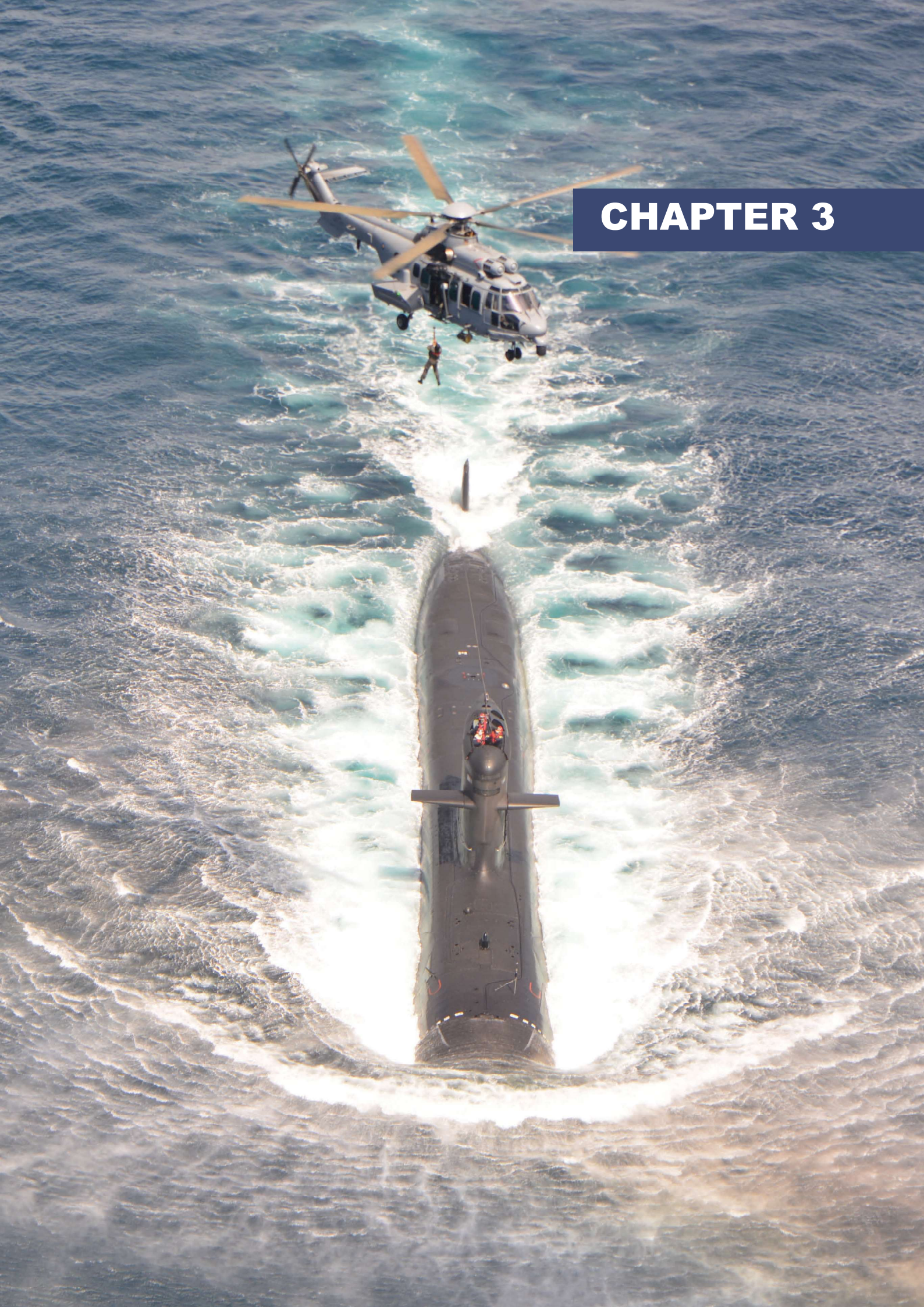
59. A reliable defence force is the key to protect Malaysia's interests over the land, maritime, air and cyber electromagnetic domains. Malaysia's maritime and continental roots necessitate the MAF and security agencies to jointly play important roles to effectively protect the nation's interests and defend its sovereignty as well as territorial integrity.
60. All of the above factors impact the force structure of the MAF. Based on geographical factors that include the two-theatre reality and current security landscape, the MAF needs to be transformed into an **integrated, agile and focused** force. A more integrated force is needed to effectively defend Malaysia's interests in handling traditional and non-traditional security threats. A more agile MAF will be able to respond better to various future operation scenarios. Finally, a more focused force can optimise resources towards achieving the objectives and goals of required operations. All of these are imperative, in order to more effectively protect Malaysia's interests as a maritime nation with continental roots, serving as a bridging linchpin between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.



SECTION 2

STRATEGY

CHAPTER 3



DEFENCE STRATEGY

1. To confront the increasing challenges posed by the uncertain security environment, the Government is determined to execute the national defence strategy with a renewed emphasis on enhancing its overall defence capability. This strategy is guided by a new National Defence Framework aimed at boosting Malaysia's defence preparedness while maximising its potentials as a maritime nation with continental roots, serving as a bridging linchpin between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.
2. Malaysia's defence strategy is centred on three pillars, namely **Concentric Deterrence**, **Comprehensive Defence** and **Credible Partnerships**. This chapter illuminates how the Government will implement this strategy in ways that serve Malaysia's National Defence Interests and Objectives.
3. The steps taken to pursue the long-term defence strategy include: (1) upgrading **defence capability** and strengthening **jointness** across the MAF and other security agencies; (2) increasing **security awareness** and **defence preparedness** through the **whole-of-nation approach**; and (3) taking a more **active role** in advancing progressive initiatives, widening partnerships and shaping regional affairs.
4. Fundamentally, Malaysia's defence strategy seeks to transform the MAF into an integrated, agile and focused force capable of protecting the national interests, particularly defending the nation's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Malaysia adopts a defensive posture, viewing force as the last resort in asserting the right to defend the nation, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. This DWP identifies ways and means of protecting national interests and deterring threats, whilst preserving shared regional peace, stability and prosperity.
5. **Geography is a vital link.** The Government takes into account Malaysia's geographical circumstances, situated at the heart of Southeast Asia's strategic waters surrounded by important Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) together with big power realities and domestic needs, in pursuing a firm and prudent national defence strategy. The Government is determined to ensure that the MAF is able to operate in two theatres simultaneously, as Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak are separated by the South China Sea.

National Defence Framework

6. Aligning Malaysia's defence posture with the national security policy and foreign policy priorities, the Government has developed a three-part National Defence Framework that consists of national defence vision, interests and objectives (refer Table 3.1). The **National Defence Vision** depicts "Malaysia as a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation". This vision forms the basis for the **National Defence Interests**:
 - i. **Security.** Defending the nation's land masses, MMZ, strategic waterways, airspace and critical lines of communication;
 - ii. **Sovereignty.** Preserving independence and preventing external interference; and
 - iii. **Prosperity.** Protecting economic prosperity, development and growth opportunities, including interests abroad.

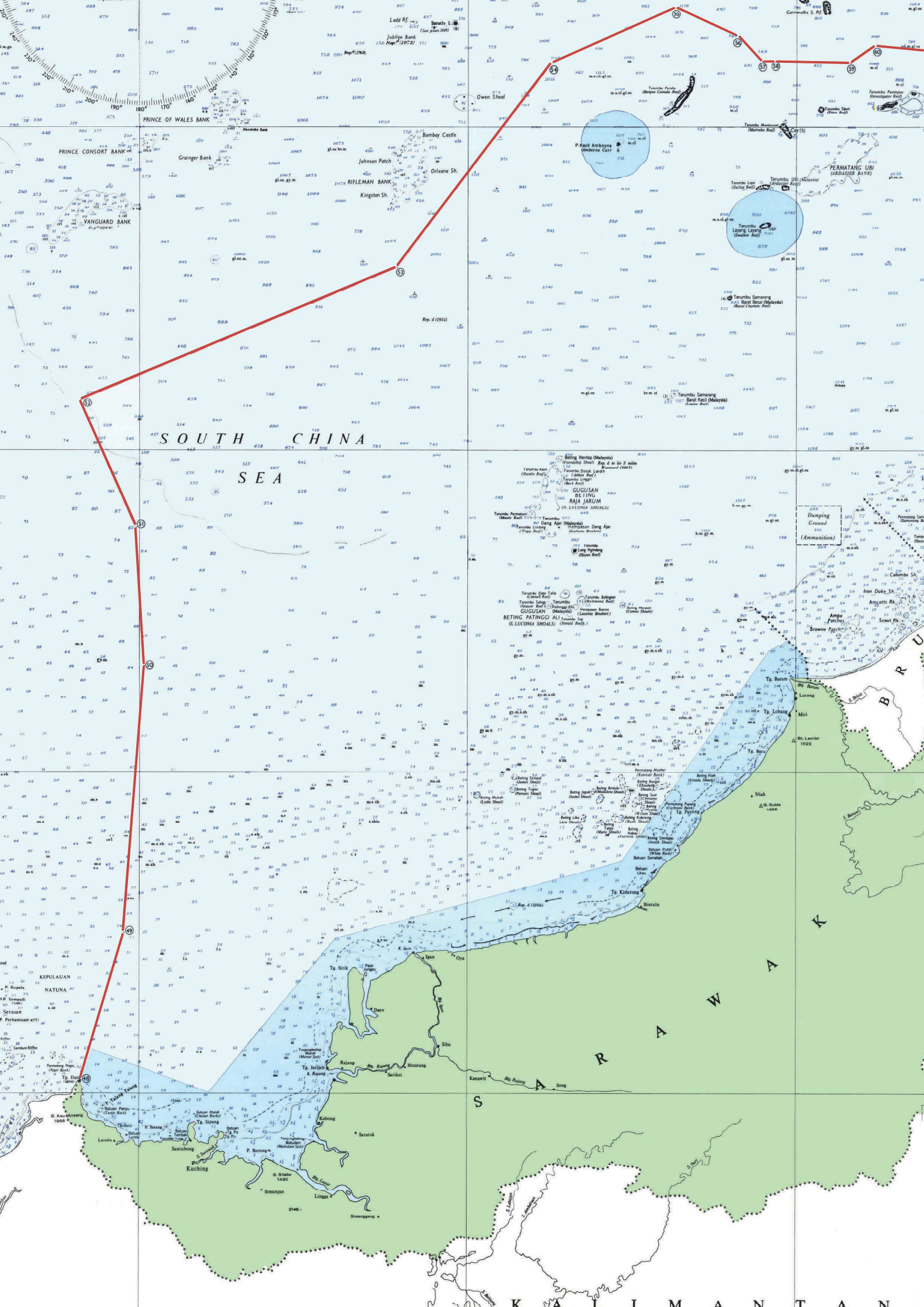
7. **National Defence Objectives** are categorised as follows:

- i. Developing multiple domain capabilities to detect, deter and deny any threat to Malaysia's national defence interests along the concentric layers of the core, extended and forward areas;
- ii. Enhancing Malaysia's internal resilience through comprehensive defence by adopting the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches;
- iii. Strengthening Malaysia's defence capacity and security through credible partnerships, chiefly by promoting innovative initiatives, deepening cooperation and pursuing multi-level defence engagements in a complementary manner;
- iv. Advancing Malaysia's defence industry as a catalyst through progressive niche-based self-reliance programmes in developing the nation's defence science, technology and industry; and
- v. Ensuring good governance practices in strengthening the defence sector by consolidating transparency, accountability and excellence in pursuing organisational transformations.

Table 3.1: National Defence Framework.

NATIONAL DEFENCE VISION				
“Malaysia as a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation”				
NATIONAL DEFENCE INTERESTS				
Security	Sovereignty		Prosperity	
Defending the nation’s land masses, MMZ, strategic waterways, airspace and critical lines of communication	Preserving independence and preventing external interference		Protecting economic prosperity, development and growth opportunities, including interests abroad	
NATIONAL DEFENCE OBJECTIVES				
Developing multiple domain capabilities to detect, deter and deny any threat to Malaysia’s national defence interests along the concentric layers of the core, extended and forward areas	Enhancing Malaysia’s internal resilience through comprehensive defence by adopting the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches	Strengthening Malaysia’s defence capacity and security through credible partnerships, chiefly by promoting innovative initiatives, deepening cooperation and pursuing multi-level defence engagements in a complementary manner	Advancing Malaysia’s defence industry as an economic catalyst and a niche-based self-reliance stimulant through progressive programmes in developing the nation’s defence science, technology and industry	Ensuring good governance practices in strengthening the defence sector by consolidating transparency, accountability and excellence in pursuing organisational transformations
[Chapter 4]	[Chapter 5]	[Chapter 6]	[Chapter 7]	[Chapter 8]







8. **Concentric Areas.** Based on the geography and national strategic considerations, Malaysia's interests are divided into three layers as in Figure 3.1.

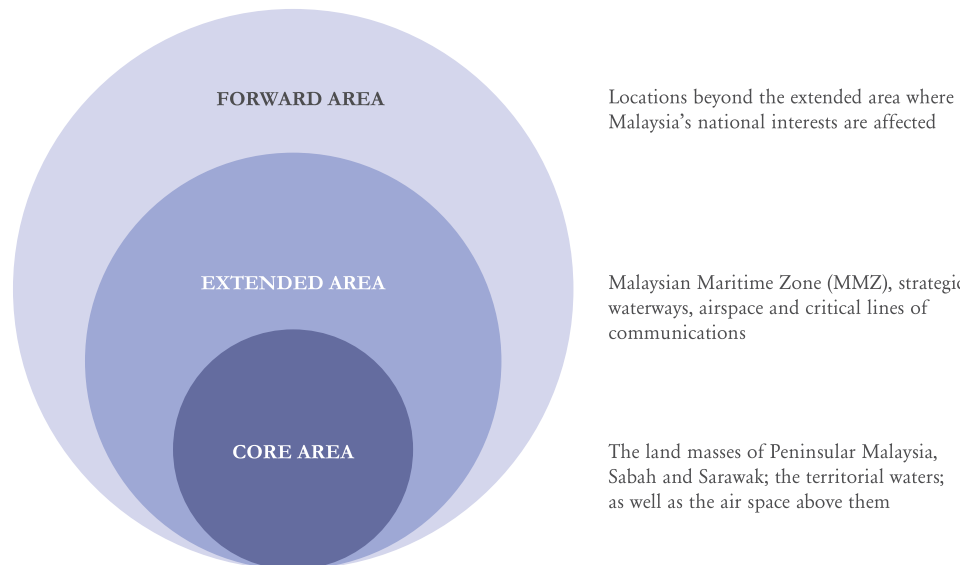


Figure 3.1: Concentric Areas.

9. Malaysia's areas of interests must be protected and defended at all costs, against any external threats. The **Core Area** houses the government administrative capital, socio-economic centres and main population zones. The **Extended Area** is rich in living and non-living resources especially hydrocarbons, as one of the main sources of Malaysia's revenue. The **Forward Area** covers locations beyond the extended area, with national interests that include regional stability and efforts towards global peace.

Fundamental Principles of Defence

10. Malaysia's defence strategy is developed based on the following principles:
- i. **Interest-based.** Developing plans according to the national interests along the concentric areas;
 - ii. **Activist neutrality.** Adhering to the principles of non-alignment and actively promoting cooperation by emphasising inclusivity and shared prosperity, alongside shared security and shared identity;
 - iii. **Aspired self-reliance.** Reducing dependency by strengthening the local defence industry through the advancement of defence science and technology;
 - iv. **Innovation and integration.** Enhancing Research and Development (R&D) in defence science and technology by emphasising defence capability development through jointness across all sectors; and
 - v. **Good governance.** Institutionalising good governance in national defence management.



Pillars of National Defence Strategy

11. Taking into account the National Defence Framework and the Fundamental Principles of Defence, the Government outlines a three-pillar defence strategy to protect Malaysia's interests along the concentric areas. These pillars are Concentric Deterrence, Comprehensive Defence and Credible Partnerships. They are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, involving different participants, purposes and processes (refer Figure 3.2).

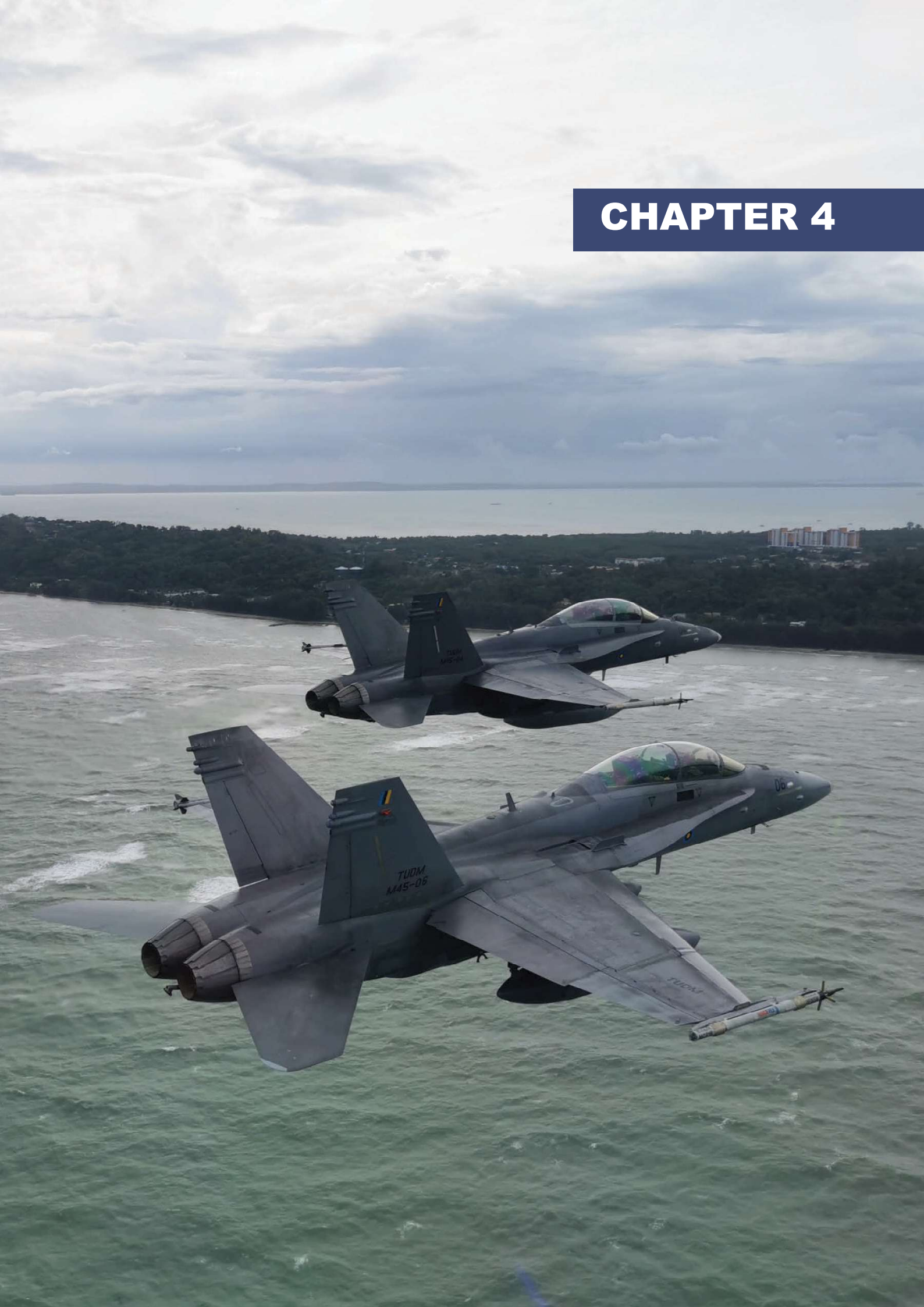
1st Pillar: CONCENTRIC DETERRENCE	2nd Pillar: COMPREHENSIVE DEFENCE	3rd Pillar: CREDIBLE PARTNERSHIPS
Who Malaysian Armed Forces	Who Whole-of-Government & Whole-of-Society	Who External Partners (Bilateral & Multilateral)
Purpose "Deterrence" Dissuading all forms of external intrusion or conflicts	Purpose "Defence Resilience" Building and strengthening internal resilience	Purpose "Partnerships" Strengthening and widening external defence partnerships
Process "Concentric" Jointness in defending national interests along the three concentric layers	Process "Comprehensive" Continuously building internal unity, defence capabilities, security preparedness, inter-agency coordination, and overall resilience	Process "Credible" Maintaining Malaysia as a credible partner, while contributing towards capacity-building and regional stability

Figure 3.2: Three Pillars of Malaysia's Defence Strategy.

12. **Concentric Deterrence**, the principal pillar, involves primarily the role of the MAF in protecting national interests, particularly defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity by dissuading all forms of external intrusion and conflicts. National defence is pursued along the concentric areas that cover land, maritime, air and cyber electromagnetic domains. The operationalisation of this pillar is further discussed in Chapter 4: Future Force.
13. **Comprehensive Defence** involves the synergistic application of both whole-of-government and the whole-of-society approaches to defend the nation in line with the concept of HANRUH. The process encompasses a continuous effort to build internal cohesion, enhancing defence preparedness, improving inter-agency coordination, strengthening nation-building, as well as boosting economic capacity and other aspects of national resilience in a thorough and sustainable manner. The nation's defence is also enhanced through KESBAN that emphasises on pursuing security and development simultaneously. The operationalisation of this pillar is elaborated in Chapter 5: People in Defence.
14. **Credible Partnerships** refers to bilateral or multilateral defence cooperation with external partners. These partnerships are credible from two angles. First, Malaysia's credibility as a dependable partner is the foundation of our defence engagements with countries in the region and the wider world. Second, these engagements benefit Malaysia and our partners in terms of defence readiness, security needs and regional stability. The operationalisation of this pillar is illuminated in Chapter 6: International Defence Engagement.
15. The Government is committed to implement all three pillars to achieve the National Defence Vision. The three pillars mirror the cohesion and combination of efforts by the government and the society in keeping Malaysia as a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation.



CHAPTER 4



THE FUTURE FORCE

1. Developing the Future Force is important in order to implement **Concentric Deterrence**, the DWP's first pillar of the defence strategy. The MAF serves as the "Nation's Shield" entrusted by the Government to uphold the National Defence Objectives at all times. Hence, the roles of the MAF can be summarised as follows:
 - i. **Primary Role.** To protect national interests, particularly to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity from traditional and non-traditional threats by conducting maritime, air, land and cyber electromagnetic operations; and
 - ii. **Secondary Role.** To conduct Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) including Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Search and Rescue (SAR) and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) among others, assisting the civil authorities in enforcement, nation building and supporting world peace efforts through the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs).
2. The force structure and force posture need to be reshaped to better address the uncertain security environment. While the MAF force size remains at the current force level throughout this DWP period, repurposing and re-prioritisation will be carried out to meet future requirements. More emphasis will be given towards enhancing joint capabilities in preparing for any contingency; from armed intervention to natural disasters; and realising the need to conduct two-theatre operations simultaneously between Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.
3. This, in addition to national awareness of the uncertain security environment, coordination between the MAF and other security agencies and external partnerships are components of the national defence ecosystem.
4. This chapter will address and explain the force structure that will provide the "deterrence" to dissuade both state and non-state actors from threatening national interests that could result in harm to Malaysia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The chapter will also discuss the capability requirements and the MAF's structure to **detect**, **deter** and **deny** the traditional and non-traditional security threats across the **core**, **extended** and **forward areas**. Finally, this chapter identifies the catalyst in developing the capability for the Future Force.

Force Structure

5. The Government shall develop the MAF into an integrated, agile and focused force, capable of responding to traditional and non-traditional threats during peace or conflict, with a high level of readiness to perform its operations amid the unpredictable security environment. A critical part in this force development is the Government's long-term investment in enhancing the MAF's preparedness with the necessary assets and equipment, as well as a knowledge-based and skilled workforce geared towards the smart soldier concept and other capabilities. The concepts of this force are summarised as follows:
 - i. **Integrated.** Jointness and close cooperation across the Services in all stages of the military process, from research and planning to procurements, training and operations;
 - ii. **Agile.** Ability to adapt and respond quickly to a variety of threats or critical situations while nimble enough to react to contingencies; and

- iii. **Focused.** Prioritising force capability development plan in accordance with the interest-based principle.
- 6. The Future Force possesses five main characteristics which are **jointness, interoperability, technology-based, able to operate simultaneously in two theatres and mission-orientated**. Possessing these, the force is rapid, deployable and multi-role, capable of operating in all four domains covering maritime, air, land and cyber electromagnetic, and able to engage multiple challenges along the concentric areas.
 - i. **Jointness.** Current and future operations of the MAF will continue to be conducted in the joint context, under command and control of the Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ). The concept of joint operations represents troops and assets integration of all three Services, assigned to the JFHQ. Future conflicts are hybrid and multidimensional that require an orchestration of a joint force in all stages of the military processes to win such conflicts. It will also encompass all states of military processes, from research through procurement and into the implementation of operations; regardless of activities in single or multiple domains. This joint concept is vital to achieve maximum synergy of the MAF;
 - ii. **Interoperability.** Commonality of doctrines, procedures, systems and equipment is very important to achieve interoperability between the three Services of the MAF and also between the agencies that would increase efficiency during joint or combined operations and minimise operation cost. Selection of assets and equipment should consider the needs of the MAF and security agencies with priorities given to products or services from the local defence industry. Interoperability can also be extended to ASEAN member states and strategically important nations to achieve economies of scale and high levels of readiness for the Future Force. Hence, it facilitates expertise development and confidence building with foreign militaries particularly during trainings, exercises and operations;
 - iii. **Technology-Based.** The Future Force will incorporate the latest technologies in the force structure and posture to fulfil the requirements of current and future operations. All planning should embrace the IR4.0, IoT and AI to increase efficiency, reduce workload and achieve sustainable operation costs in the long run. In order to transform the current force structure and posture that rely heavily on manpower, the MAF will review existing doctrines and incorporate more automated and autonomous technologies;
 - iv. **Able to Operate Simultaneously in Two Theatres.** Malaysia's geographical factor poses a big challenge for the MAF to defend the two theatres simultaneously. Considering the recent developments surrounding the South China Sea and learning from the Lahad Datu intrusion in 2013, Sabah and Sarawak now face greater risk and are in need of stronger defence. The ability to deploy integrated forces between the two theatres is vital to defend Malaysia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Therefore, mobility and reach are the keys for the success of the Future Force's rapid and uninterrupted deployment between the two theatres as and when required. Realignment and redeployment of forces between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak is another effort to ensure the success of the two-theatre operation; and