

The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization.

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Abstract

This article traces the evolution of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) since its establishment in 1971 to the present day. It details the evolution of the FPDA's three main pillars: the Integrated Area Defence System (IADS), the architecture for political-military dialogue, and the exercise programme. In addition, the article tries to place the FPDA in the context of the security roles played by ASEAN, the ARF, intra-regional bilateral military ties, and the defence relationship with United States. It argues that, while the FPDA's role in upholding regional security cannot be equated to the military contribution of the United States, and the grouping certainly faces significant challenges, it nevertheless contributes positively and innovatively to the ability of Malaysia and Singapore to address not only conventional threats, but increasingly asymmetric

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Introduction

It is not often that the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), a little known military consultation agreement between Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom, makes the news. However, in 2004 it did exactly that: at the conclusion of their second Informal Meeting in Singapore on 7 June the FPDA's five Defence Ministers issued a statement that not only "reaffirmed the relevance of the FPDA", but also "recognised the need for the FPDA to



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