

ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
INTER-SESSIONAL SUPPORT GROUP MEETING
ON CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES (ISG on CBMs)
Beijing, 20-22 November 2003

**7TH ARF ANNUAL MEETING OF
HEADS OF NATIONAL DEFENCE
UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES/
INSTITUTIONS**

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**7th ARF ANNUAL MEETING OF HEADS OF NATIONAL
DEFENCE UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES/INSTITUTIONS**
NEW DELHI
(October 15-17, 2003)

The Seventh ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Meeting of Heads of National Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions was held at New Delhi, India from 15 - 17 October 2003. India's offer to host this meeting had been endorsed by the ARF Ministers' at 10th ARF meeting in June 2003.

2. The meeting was conducted by the National Defence College of India and evoked keen interest from most of the ARF members. More than 40 participants from 18 countries attended the meeting. A list of the participating countries is at Annex-I.

Themes of the Conference

3. The themes chosen for the meeting dealt with the role of the armed forces in providing assistance to civil administration in disaster management and on UN peacekeeping operations. Participants presented papers on the both the themes during the course of the meeting.

4. The main theme of the meeting was:

'Role of the Armed Forces in providing assistance to Civil Administration to meet humanitarian requirements in times of:-

- (a) *Disasters, such as earthquakes, floods and cyclones.*
- (b) *Drought and famines.*
- (c) *Search and rescue missions both on land and at sea.*
- (d) *Environmental hazards such as bush fires and oil slicks;*
and
Training and coordination required between the Civil Administration and the Armed Forces to effectively counter these challenges with speed.

5. A supplementary theme related to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations was also included, which covered the various aspects of peacekeeping.

Discussions on the Main Theme

6. Delegates were of the view that Disaster Management is a challenging task which is both multi dimensional as well as multi-faceted. The fact that such tasks have to be carried out in a time critical environment and often involve interfacing with several agencies makes them enormously complex.

7. The importance of a suitable institutionalized framework for command and control was highlighted by several speakers. The need for suitable review of operating procedures, equipment requirements and training curricula was also highlighted.

8. There was broad unanimity on the issue of emphasis on disaster prevention/anticipatory action as against crisis management. Towards this end mutual areas of concern and cooperation were highlighted.

9. It was recognised that certain catastrophic disasters require a regional, and at times, a global effort. Towards this end, regional groupings in particular and the international community in general have a major duty to discharge. Delegates were in agreement that the discussion has been a major step forward in this direction.

Discussion on Supplementary Theme

10. It was highlighted during the presentations and discussions that UN Peace Keeping Operations are a subject of great mutual interest. The dynamics of peacekeeping and peace enforcement and how one may transit to the other was brought out. It was noted that there were times when the defence forces across the globe were called upon to perform at short notice. The participants also felt that training and equipping pattern of peacekeeping forces should cater for rapidly changing situations.

11. Delegates were of the view that **inter-operability** between forces was a key factor towards success of peacekeeping operations. For achieving seamless functioning between various agencies/countries it is vital that joint training be carried out.

12. The following elements were emphasised as necessary for the success of UN mission: (a) International Legitimacy, (b) International Support, (c) Minimum use of force, (d) Impartiality, (e) Respect for Human Rights, (f) Interoperability, and (g) Training.

Additional Presentation

13. On the final day two additional presentations were made during the time allotted for open discussion on subjects as under:

- (a) **Republic of Korea.** Position upon Role of the Armed Forces in time of New Security Environment.
- (b) **Indonesia.** National Resilience Institute.

Field Visit

14. Delegates were also taken to Agra to witness a joint army-air parachute drop operation. During the demonstration the delegates witnessed drop of heavy equipment and personnel from Indian Air Force aircraft. The demonstration also included slithering by troops and release of under slung load from a helicopter.

Conclusion

16. The conference was conducted in a warm and cordial manner. The quality of presentations and discussion were of an extremely high standard and were greatly appreciated by all. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the defence officials of the ARF member states to build and renew their contacts.

List of Participating Member States

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. EU
5. Indonesia
6. Japan
7. Laos
8. Malaysia
9. Mongolia
10. Myanmar
11. New Zealand
12. Philippines
13. The Republic of Korea
14. Singapore
15. Thailand
16. USA
17. Vietnam
18. India