

ARF SECURITY POLICY CONFERENCE

19 May 2010

Da Nang, Viet Nam

New Zealand Presentation

Further Exploiting ARF Potentials in Dealing with Non-traditional Security Challenges in the Region

- **New Zealand supports the ARF developing more practical forms of regional cooperation for addressing non-traditional security challenges.** The ARF has done well in establishing a number of forums for discussing these challenges – the Intersessional Meetings (ISMs) on disaster relief and maritime security are good examples of this.
- Non-traditional security challenges are complex and require different approaches to respond to them. International cooperation is necessary in combating non-traditional security challenges. ARF government agencies, and defence forces, would benefit from developing a greater familiarity with one another in these areas.
- **New Zealand supports developing activities in the ARF that enhance not only defence force coordination in managing non-traditional security, but also the involvement of a wide range of relevant government agencies and non-governmental organisations.**
- One way to achieve this is to **establish a pattern of exercise cooperation across the range of non-traditional security challenges the ARF addresses.** The most obvious area in which this could be developed in a limited timeframe is **disaster relief.**
- Given the prevalence of natural disasters in our region, disaster relief has naturally become a prominent theme at many levels of the ARF, including in the defence track. Moving the ARF into practical initiatives in this area will assist in building the capacity of regional agencies in the event of a disaster situation.
- As you know, there has so far been two ARF activities focusing on disaster relief. The first, a desktop exercise in May 2008 hosted by Indonesia and Australia, was a significant step forward in encouraging cooperation on disaster relief within the ARF. The second, the Voluntary Demonstration of Response in Disaster Relief exercise held in the Philippines in May 2009 was an excellent example of the way in which ARF militaries in particular can cooperate. This, the first ever live ARF field activity in disaster relief, saw an unprecedented level of military cooperation within the ARF region. It was a major step forward in the ARF defence track.
- Nonetheless, only 12 out of the 27 ARF member countries provided military equipment and personnel – and this exercise did not “practise” all the aspects of a

disaster relief situation that would assist ARF countries to more effectively respond to a real disaster.

- **New Zealand therefore welcomes and supports the proposed second field exercise on disaster relief, to be co-hosted by Indonesia and Japan and held in Manado in 2011.** We would like to see strong support from all ARF militaries for this event, and encourage the creation of an exercise that will allow militaries to practise together those actions that will be required of them during a real disaster. We also encourage the involvement of other relevant government agencies and non-governmental agencies. Responding to a disaster is not just the domain of militaries – there is a whole raft of other agencies that are also needed to assist.

- To illustrate how useful these types of activities can be, let me share with you an experience New Zealand had last year. Over July-September last year, the New Zealand Defence Force undertook exercises and training in Samoa. As part of the exercise, around 120 NZDF personnel and four helicopters undertook continuation training in deployed helicopter operations and high frequency radio communications within a tropical environment. A component of the exercise also involved the provision of civil aid assistance in cooperation with the Samoan Government and the New Zealand overseas aid programme, NZAID. HMNZS Canterbury, our logistic support ship, deployed to Samoa in support of this exercise and to conduct its own training for operating in the unique environment of the South Pacific.

- Just a few weeks after the exercise was completed, a devastating tsunami struck Samoa with significant loss of life. The NZDF was called in to provide immediate disaster relief assistance. The contribution made by the NZDF was substantial. It included reconnaissance and humanitarian relief flights, engineers, medics, divers, specialist search staff, radio technicians and many support staff. Well over 100 Defence and Police personnel were in theatre for several weeks and HMNZS Canterbury, our logistic support ship, returned to Samoa laden with emergency supplies.

- In expressing their appreciation for the NZDF's assistance, **Samoa commented that the cooperation earlier in the year had made New Zealand's contribution to the emergency response that much more seamless and effective.**

- This has lessons for the ARF. By holding practical exercises that address realistic disaster scenarios, we can increase our familiarity with the challenges faced in responding to disasters and improve our ability to meet them. We can gain an understanding of what each member can bring to a disaster relief effort, and how each other will operate during that effort.

- All this will ultimately significantly improve our ability to rapidly and effectively respond to a natural disaster. Holding these exercises in locations that do face the threat of natural disasters will also increase understanding of the environment in which a relief effort may one day need to be launched. This understanding will only serve to facilitate a better outcome.

- We recognise that this would be a significant step forward for the ARF, and would encourage those ARF members that are not yet ready to participate to attend as observers. Planning for these exercises will require strong support from the relevant experts in ARF countries, whose input will be invaluable in developing exercise scenarios that offer the most value to participants.
- We see the development of these exercises occurring alongside the finalisation of the ARF strategic guidance for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Exercises could even be used to test our ability to implement that guidance.
Practical exercises
- Eventually we hope to see a wider range of exercises, both military and non-military, in the various non-traditional security challenge areas the ARF addresses. These exercises should involve the use of military assets and platforms, as well as capabilities from relevant other agencies. New Zealand sees this as an achievable goal, one which should be worked towards with some urgency from now on.