

Contributions of the Armed Forces in responses to Traditional and Non-traditional Security Challenges

Armed Forces role in response to meeting traditional security threats remain paramount. This includes not just deterring threats to integrity and national sovereignty but also contributing to UN Peace keeping forces and deterring broader threats to international security in accordance with the UN Charter.

At the same time changing security paradigms and the reduced likelihood of conventional inter-state wars have brought into question the relevance, purpose and utility of the armed forces beyond their traditional security roles. The preparedness, competence, speed of delivery, high level of training, adaptability, the apolitical character and most importantly the faith reposed in the armed forces make them the first or natural choice of any country to respond to threats. How and in what role the military is employed domestically against non traditional threats will depend on the state of development, competency and capability of the other national agencies vis-a-vis the nature of the non-traditional threat the state is facing. It will also depend on on a country's political system Generally, when the other national agencies are well developed the military is likely to be employed in a supporting role. Our view in India is that Armed Forces should stay focussed on traditional roles and only play a supplementary role in other area.

Let me briefly highlight some of these roles. India is one of the original 50 founder members of the UN and has participated in 48 of the 66 UN peacekeeping operations to date, contributing more than 1,90,000 personnel, of whom about 156 laid down their lives in the line of duty. Indian contribution has been led by the Indian Army, with support from the IAF and also from the IN. Indian peace keeping forces are currently deployed in discharging

their responsibilities in Congo, South Sudan, Lebanon, Golan Heights, Abeyi, Ivory Coast and Iraq.

The ships of the Indian Navy sailed within 12 hours of the Tsunami of December 2004 on HADR mission to not only India's own east coast and island territories but also Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia. India has deployed ten ships and over a dozen Indian Air Force and Naval aircrafts in support of the International efforts for search of the missing Malaysian Airliner MH 370 in coordination with Malaysia. In addition the Indian armed forces have been deployed extensively in support of humanitarian relief during earthquakes, cyclones and floods around the globe.

To conclude the armed forces today undertake a wide spectrum of duties that range from countering terrorism, transnational crimes, protecting the vital sea lanes of communication against piracy and armed robbery at sea, safety of navigation, assisting during an epidemic, critical and quick response in the initial stages of disaster relief and rescue operations, evacuation of citizenry before the disaster and during times of unrest threatening human safety and life, search and rescue operations etc. These roles are donned by armed forces both independently and in a supporting role to the respective national agency. However in my view attempt to institutionalise any regular role for the armed forces other than its primary role could potentially detract the armed forces from their main combat endeavour.

I thank you for your attention.