

Contribution of Armed Forces in Response to Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Challenges (Myanmar)

Changing nature of Armed Forces in Domestic Affairs

1. As the nations are more focusing in economic development hoping towards prosperous community, peoples are more cautious in defence spending. Due to the development in exercising transparency, defences spending of many nations are no longer in the shadow. Defences spending of many nations are being closely watched by its own people and the trend is to reduce the spending. On the other hand, nations are enhancing its defence capability in hoping to get shoring up measures for assertive diplomacy.
2. In this context, Armed Forces position in domestic affairs is changing in line with realities in which budget constraints and defence buildup are in harmony with domestic politics.
3. In order to be a balanced policy and action to maintain an appropriate military power at sizable spending, many nations redefine its military role in domestic affairs. This is an inevitable point for many governments in trying to formulate a rationality for the public.
4. Accordingly the role and nature of Armed Forces change with diverse missions. As democratic norms are being accepted and practiced more and more, the role of Armed Forces in decision making process of politics of a nation gradually decreases to some extent. But not to the nonessential level. In order to maintain a stable political environment amid chaotic situation and social unrests, it is still a necessity to get assistance from armed forces. As governments and nations are always under budget constraint, the missions of armed forces are extended from a traditional one of safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty to protection of its citizens whenever calamity occurred. In this context leverage of armed forces increases significantly in policy making of a nation. As aforementioned progress are being

coming into existence and the extent of catastrophic damages need more attentions that can hardly be borne by a single nation. Armed forces are deeply involved in HADR works in coping with enormous damages with limited resources. Due to the nature of devastating effects and geographical position, armed force in HADR operations are transcending and need to surpass the geographical boundaries as well as other boundaries of social and culture. Those are the dramatic changes that we have observed.

Civil-Military Relations

5. Civil-Military Relations in many young democratic nations are in transitional stage. The issue of civilian control over military is taking place as a form in coping with democratic norms. But it still needs to go further.

6. Newly democratized medium and small countries especially the countries with history of subjugation are facing vast amount of challenges. The greatest challenge is to keep peace and stability in the countries. As the democracy norms are not widely flourish, social unrests and rule of law become a big issue in many newly democratize medium and small countries. Apart from domestic issues, there are many challenges in external relations. Protecting not only sovereignty but also national interests is a critical issue for any nation. In addition to those challenges, there are many non-traditional challenges such as transnational crimes, drug trafficking, gun running and terrorist activities. In this regard, it is very logic that law enforcement agencies and diplomacy alone cannot deal with the challenges we faced.

7. Under the above mentioned situation, military influence in policy making process have a significant role even though C-M relations is in comply with democratic norms. This is a reality we cannot ignore.

Armed Forces contribution

8. In traditional classic theory, military means is the last option to address the national interest. In this regard, military means is refer to use of force. As security

concept is changing from safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty to wider concept of social, economy, human security in addition to territorial integrity and sovereignty, use of military apparatus in domestic and international affairs is getting many facets that can contribute to encountering non-traditional as well as traditional security challenges.

9. **Cooperation in fighting against trans-border crime:** presently trans-border crimes are becoming more complicated and more dangerous that can cause serious threat to all spectrum of security dimension. Due to nature of porous border, spread pattern of population and trans-border ethnicity issue, volume of lucrative money in trans-border crimes, limited law enforcement in border area and budget constraints to establish a fully effective border control system, many trans-border problems need armed forces involvement from both sides of the border. In this direction, military cooperation fighting against trans-border crimes can contribute to CBM and eventually can lead to de-escalating the tensions.

10. **Cooperation in fighting against terrorism:** It is very hard to fight against any terrorist group without cooperation of other stakeholders. Especially bordering countries are crucial in cooperation fighting against terrorism. Many factors such as porous border, ineffective law enforcement, trans-border ethnic relation and terrorist activities under the name of separatist movement make the situation which needs cross-border cooperation. Military cooperation in operational level along the border will surely boost cross-border cooperation to fight an escalating terrorism. At the same time it can prevent border clashes which is likely to be happen in conducting unilateral operation against terrorism near border.

11. **Confident building measures:** The most important factor in calculating and analysing the threats is the intent not the strength. The other factors such as strength, equipments and budget are to be considered to evaluate the magnitude of and possible threat. In this context, trusts become keywords which can only be built through transparency. Trust is the ultimate contribution of the Armed Forces that deter the

escalation of tension into armed conflicts. Transparency in rule of engagement, activities of interaction among armed forces and setting up secure means of communications among armed forces will be the some of conducive Confidential Building measures especially in flash point situation.

Constraints

12. There are constraints despite Armed Forces contribution in dealing with non-traditional challenges as well as traditional challenges and defusing the tensions.

13. **Will of political leadership:** The first and the foremost constraint is will of political leadership. It is quite clear that armed forces cannot do any significant contribution without political will of leadership. History has shown us.. However, armed forces still can contribute something to be considered in political decision making.

14. **Legal constraints:** Legality of any action taken by armed forces is the another challenge. Without conformity with the existing legal apparatus of the nation, any military activities taken will be the political suicide for the incumbent government.

15. **Social constraints:** It will be very hard to transcend the social constraints. And it is quite sure that it will take quite a long time to overcome this challenge. For instance, century old animosity among belligerents will be the greatest barrier in defence cooperation. Future oriented and result oriented approach are some of the remedies.

16. **Economic constraints:** State of economy determine the scope of possible contribution. In fact, economy is the root cause and at the same time, limitation of the action. The reality is that no economy can afford all desired actions. Only prioritized and efficient management in allocation of resources can mitigate the economic constraints.

Conclusion

17. Despite many challenges, armed forces can contribute in the positive direction. It can lead to better understanding of the situation. It can lead to de-escalation of the tension. It can lead to cooperative security rather than confrontation. It can lead to conflict aversion. It can lead to strategic trust. Eventually, it can lead to stable security environment.