

**ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE ON “INSTITUTIONAL  
RESPONSE TO TRANSNATIONAL SECURITY THREATS” IN  
CONJUNCTION WITH THE PUTRAJAYA FORUM 2016**

**ON 19 APRIL 2016**

**SALUTATION**

**INTRODUCTION**

It is with an elated feeling of joy that I accept the invitation to present the views of the Malaysian Armed Forces on the topic “Institutional Response to Transnational Security Threats” as part of the theme “Regional Cooperation in Addressing Security Challenges” for the Putrajaya Forum 2016. For that, please allow me to extend my heartfelt appreciation to MIDAS for the invitation and our learned moderator, Prof Dato' Dr Zakaria Ahmad for his kind words.

The South East Asia region has since the 1990s seen unprecedented economic and social growth among the nations in the Region. This, by no small measure, was due to the pragmatic policies adopted, vibrant trade and economic activities coupled by the advent of industrialisation and the increasing movement of its people across the borders which not only encouraged trade but enhanced people-to-people interactions. Although these changes afforded increased wealth and stronger bonds, it also left nations vulnerable to the proliferation of transnational Non-Traditional Security challenges. These threats derived from terrorists groups, transnational crime

organisations, human trafficking syndicates and piratical or sea robbery bands have not only affronted law and order but challenged human security across national borders in the Region. The acknowledgement of the quantum of threat posed by these illegal activities not only to national but regional stability has compelled institutional responses from within and beyond the national borders. The increased complexity in the demography of population residing along the border and the need to ensure free movement of people and goods across the frontier has created a formidable challenge to Governments, especially in Malaysia.

### **TRANSNATIONAL NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES**

As part of our strategy to promote international trade and enhance people-to-people interactions, Malaysia has facilitated easy movement of goods and people across its borders to meet this end. Despite the endeavours, it comes with challenges especially in the form of Non-Traditional Security tests which transcends national borders where these organisations operate in a complex and diverse structure across boundaries. Geographically, Malaysia is exposed as it constitutes the southernmost tip of the Asian continent which affords excess to the two main Sea Lines of Communication, namely the Straits of Malacca and South China Sea. On the same note, Malaysia's pragmatic and trade friendly policies are seen to be open to exploitation by these unscrupulous groups, many of which masquerades as legitimate entities.

In the Malaysian Security context, transnational Non-Traditional Security challenges can be categorised into the following activities:

- a. Terrorism.
- b. Piracy or Sea Robbery.
- c. Human Trafficking.
- d. Smuggling.
- e. Transnational crimes.

Needless to mention that the sophistication, complex and vast networks which these illegal entities operate would afflict not only Malaysia but also its neighbours. Not only would these challenges threaten human security but could launch a wave of instability in the region should no concerted and comprehensive architecture be in place.

### **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TOWARDS TRANSNATIONAL NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES**

Non-Traditional Security challenges is defined by the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia as “*challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that arise primarily out of non-military sources*” would warrant a ‘Whole-of-Government’ approach in formulating holistic and comprehensive

measures cum responses. Similarly, the transnational nature of these challenges would necessitate bilateral and multilateral collaborations with the afflicted countries, especially the enforcement agencies. Hence, any measures taken to engage Non-Traditional Security challenges must begin at the Home Front before involving bilateral or multilateral arrangements.

Malaysia's incalculable experience in engaging Non-Traditional Security challenges can be traced in our Counter-Insurgency Warfare against Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) and North Kalimantan Communist Party (NKCP) during the First Emergency (1948-1960) and Second Emergency (1968-1989). The Communist Party of Malaya laid down their arms in 1989 while the North Kalimantan Communist Party surrendered in 1990. The primary platform in engaging the Communist Terrorists was the formation of the National Security Council (NSC) on 23 February 1971 with the aim to coordinate policies governing national security and formulates instructions on security measures including security operations, public order and other matters related to security at Federal, State, District and Village levels. The coordinated responses designed by the National Security Council was the proverbial 'straw that broke the camel's back' in our fight against Communist Insurgency.

With the demise of the Communist Insurgency threat in 1989, the National Security Council was retained and repackaged to face the more challenging Non-Traditional Security tests that the country faced. In this sense, the Malaysian Armed Forces

continued to play a prominent albeit diverse role in preserving national security. Utilising the KESBAN or Security and Development strategy of providing development while facilitating security, the Malaysian Armed Forces in tandem with other Government agencies continue to secure the border areas through continuous surveillance while undertaking development projects with other Ministries. All these measures are conducted through close coordination provided by the various National Security Council Instructions. Another important function of the National Security Council is the overseeing of the Border Management Committees between Malaysia and Thailand, and Malaysia and Indonesia. The functions of these Border Committees are to enhance cooperation and build confidence through the conduct of programs agreed by both parties. The Border Management Committees function in a multi-tiered structure with the General Border Committee (GBC) jointly chaired by both Defence Ministers, the High Level Committees jointly chaired by both Chiefs of Defence Force and the Regional Border Committee jointly chaired by operational commanders from both military forces. The engagements will treacle down to unit level where Commanding Officers of units located along the border will meet and interact. Needless to mention that membership of these Committees will include representative from all Government agencies responsible for Border Management.

## **MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS TO FACE NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES**

Outside the purview of the National Security Council, the Malaysian Armed Forces has established multilateral and bilateral arrangements to face transnational Non-Traditional Security challenges through close collaboration with neighbouring Armed Forces. These collaborations come in the form of coordinated joint patrols on land, at sea or in the air. Further to that too, there are constant exchanges of information and continuous enhancements of liaison between the various Armed Forces and us. Similarly, numerous multilateral or bilateral exercises have been conducted with Armed Forces within and beyond the region to further develop competencies, streamline common Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), build confidence and enhance camaraderie between the forces.

Some of the activities conducted are as follows:

- a. **Coordinated Patrols.** The Malaysian Armed Forces has been involved since 2006 in a multilateral coordinated aerial patrol over the Straits of Malacca with its counterparts from Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand designated Eye in the Sky (EiS). These patrols are conducted by air within the boundaries of the respective countries over the Straits of Malacca. Another similar arrangement, but by sea, would be the Coordinated Maritime Patrols by both the Royal Malaysian Navy and the Indonesian National Armed Forces along the Straits of Malacca initiated since 1993. Both these

initiatives have assisted in reducing the number of pirate attacks/sea robberies along this important Sea Lines of Communication. On land, both the Royal Thai Army and the Indonesian National Armed Forces with the Malaysia Army conducts periodical coordinated patrols along the respective borders with Malaysia.

b. **Exchange of Information and Liaison.** The Malaysian Armed Forces maintain strong liaison with the Armed Forces within and beyond the South East Asia region. On the same note, information especially on the shifts in Non-Traditional Security challenges and its *Modus Operandi* are constantly exchanged. Similarly, meetings and forums, whether within the ambit of ASEAN or bilaterally are regularly conducted to enhance awareness and afford exchanging of views.

c. **Exercises and Training.** The Malaysian Armed Forces regularly conducts exercises in the form of Command Post Exercises (CPX) and Field Training Exercises (FTX) in multilateral and bilaterally forms with Armed Forces within or beyond the region. These activities are either conducted under the purview of ASEAN (ADMM Plus EWG activities) or bilaterally. The aims of these manoeuvres are to enhance interoperability, assimilate common Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in relation to the various Non-Traditional Security challenges faced and to further develop the spirit of camaraderie among personnel of the various Armed Forces.

To date, these activities have afforded positive results in formulating a common response towards transnational Non-Traditional Security challenges. These programs have also created a sense of kinship and formed a sense of interdependence towards a common destiny, especially among members of the various Armed Forces.

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

Many countries in the region have identified their interdependent nature and vulnerability to escalation due to Non-Traditional Security challenges since the 1990s, some much earlier. Since then, fruitful and commonly beneficial collaborations have been established especially between the Armed Forces, either under the ambit of ASEAN or bilaterally. That said, the shifts experienced in the global and regional geo-strategic landscape may leave some arrangements obsolete or incompatible with challenges ahead. As such, these are some points that may need to be pondered to ensure that institutional responses against Non-Traditional Security challenges remain to be relevant, decisive, comprehensive and sustainable.

- a. **Common Destiny.** Realistically, nations are driven by national interests and all measures are applied to fulfil that requirement. That said however, in a closely intertwined region such as South East Asia where the degree of interdependence is high, it is inevitable that the advance

towards a common destiny will be successful when common threats are faced collectively. In this sense, transnational Non-Traditional Security challenges have been accepted as the common affliction faced by all countries in the region.

b. **Shared Awareness.** It is critical to ensure that continuous shared awareness is maintained. This will not only afford the creation of a Common Operational Picture (COP) to formulated comprehensive responses but help build confidence through transparency. Shared awareness would also ensure that the measures taken are proactive, timely, in accordance to national jurisdiction and not redundant.

c. **High Degree of Interoperability.** Despite operating within the jurisdiction of its national territory, a high degree of interoperability is required to ensure decisive responses to Non-Traditional Security challenges. This would call for continuous engagements and exercises to ensure that common Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are formulated, assimilated and tested by all personnel. It is pertinent to also understand the method of operations applied by the various Armed Forces in order to facilitate stronger collective responses.

d. **Military Diplomacy.** The institutionalised procedures creating responses to engage Non-Traditional Security challenges are like the skeleton which is constant and cold. The meat, on the other hand, is derived from the intangible spirit of common ownership, camaraderie, *esprit d'corps* and

the desire to walk the extra mile which is consistent with the military code universally adopted. It is then vital to mobilise military diplomacy to encourage more people-to-people interactions at all levels of hierarchy to ensure a sense of belonging exists despite donning different uniforms. This is the most important added value in any collaboration.

### **CONCLUSION**

Thank you for your kind attention and God bless.