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AIMS AND SCOPE

The Journal of Defence and Security is a publication of the Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security, MiDAS. The journal publishes original papers and reviews covering all aspects of defence and security. It is a platform to promote awareness on the capabilities and requirements of modern defence & security technologies and policies, covering topics in the areas of, but not limited to, Evolution of Military Information & Communication Systems, Smart Weapons, Modern Vehicle & Aerospace Engineering Challenges, Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance, Biological & Chemical Terrorism Countermeasures, Personnel Protection & Performance, Military Medicine, Emergent Naval Technology, and Defence & Security Strategic Management.

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COVID-19: A DISCUSSION ON MALAYSIA'S HEALTH AND SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

Health, as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its constitution, is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity” (Callahan 1973). This more inclusive definition corrects the earlier understanding that health only concerns the absence of diseases (Feldbaum & Lee 2004). The inclusion of mental and social well-being in the definition emphasizes the importance to approach the concept of health holistically. Security as defined by Buzan (1991), refers to the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independence and their functional integrity against forces of changes, which are seen as hostile. Buzan also emphasizes that the foundation of security is to ensure the existence and survival of state and societies through the mobilization of emergency action and extraordinary measures inclusive of security, and the focus of whom to be secured not only the state but also societies. When discussing the societies, the basic foundation is human or individual.

Keywords: *Health and Security, Movement Control Order, COVID-19, Vaccine, Human Security, National Security, National Sovereignty, Military Readiness*

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, a thesis titled ‘Health and Security: An Analysis of Vaccine Hesitancy in Malaysia’ by Mohd Farid (2019) discusses the threat posed by the rising number of parents refusing vaccination for their children to the ‘Health and Security’ of Malaysia. The main discussion then focuses on analysing the severity of vaccine hesitancy towards Malaysia’s economy and its population health status and evaluating the existential threat status of the behaviour. Although it was reported that the consequences of the behaviour towards Malaysia’s security from the Human Security, National Security and Bio-Security perspective were insignificant, concern towards the rising trend of both the scale of vaccine-preventable infectious disease cases brought about by the behaviour, and its consequences to the economy and Malaysian’s health status is still being emphasized. The present pandemic of COVID-19 boosted the argument that the threat posed by infectious disease towards the ‘Health and Security’ is existential. The foundation of the health wariness is due to the nature of the newly found virus that is contagious; easily spread between individuals; presently has no specific vaccine and treatment; and fatality as the utmost complication. The security wariness is more focus on its economic consequences, its effect on military readiness and threat to national sovereignty. Thus, in comparison to the thesis, this essay discusses the effect of COVID-19 from the Human Security and National Security concept perspective from the period of the commencement of first Movement Control Order (MCO) to the end of second MCO.

COVID-19 AND HUMAN SECURITY

The concept of Human Security projected by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) refers to the safety of an individual or population from chronic threats, i.e., hunger, disease and repression, and the protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of

daily life whether in homes, in jobs or communities (UNDP 1994). The concept is more of people-centric than state-centric approach (Sity Daud et al. 2015). COVID-19 is hypothetically viewed as threatening all the seven elements of Human Security as listed in Table 1.

Elements	Definition
Economic Security	Assuring individual basic earning that are usually generated from productive and remunerative work. In a specific condition, earning is gained from the public financed safety net. The objective of Economic Security is to ensure one can live their daily life as an individual by having the basic financial capacity to buy and maintain the basic necessity.
Food Security	Ensuring one at all time to have access to food both physically and economically. The basic food must be available, easily accessible, and affordable for an individual to ensure its survivability
Health Security	The requirement of one to have access to basic health care services in order to ensure minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles
Environmental Security	Protection of an individual from short- and long-term effect of nature's natural and human-made threats, and environmental changes
Personal Security	Protection of the individual from any form of physical violence that can arise from other individuals, states, or external states
Community Security	Safeguarding the people and population from loss of traditional relationships and values, and sectarian and ethnic violence
Political Security	Ensuring the freedom of people and population to live in a society that honours their fundamental human rights without being controlled by the government

Table 1. Seven Elements of Human Security and its Focus Matters

Source: Adopted from Baylis et al. (2017)

As shown in Figure 1, COVID-19 causes both direct and indirect effect on the Health and Security of Malaysian. The rising number of COVID-19 positive and death cases has affected the routine delivery of healthcare services to the population. Prevention services (public health) and in-patient hospital care of those affected by the virus has been given high priority by the Ministry of Health (MoH). The prioritization has cause other disciplines that are less related to COVID-19 being temporarily shut down (except for emergency services) to channel the health's human resources to fight COVID-19 as the front-liners. The moves have caused other non-COVID-19 patients' curative and rehabilitative treatment to be delayed and expected to surge and burden the health care services post COVID-19 pandemic. Although the intention from one aspect is seen as to reduce the risk of the high-risk population from contracting the virus within the compound of healthcare facilities, those scheduled for elective procedural and treatment follow up are at risk of experiencing disease progression over time.

The rising number of health care workers (HCW) that contracted COVID-19 virus while performing their duties created fear among the health front-liners (Mohd Iskandar Ibrahim et al. 2019). The basis of the fear is if they were found positive with COVID-19 or their close contacts, i.e., patients that attended the non-COVID clinic were positive of COVID-19, they have to be quarantined and investigated. Few incidents have been reported where clinics, wards and event hospitals have to be closed down for disinfectant process and HCWs have to be put in quarantine and investigated because patients are dishonest about their COVID-19 status when receiving services at the respective centres. Apart from burdening their colleagues that have to work extra hours to cover their place, the most fearful aspect is the risk of spreading the virus to their family members at home.

The implementation of MCO, although in need of curbing virus spread has directly affected a few categories of patients such as kidney disease and thalassemia patients. They are highly dependent on regular haemodialysis and blood transfusion procedure. With less blood donor presenting themselves to blood bank centre, the bloodstock reduces, and their health condition become at stake, increasing the risk of deteriorating health status. These situations affect the Health Security element of the Human Security concept.

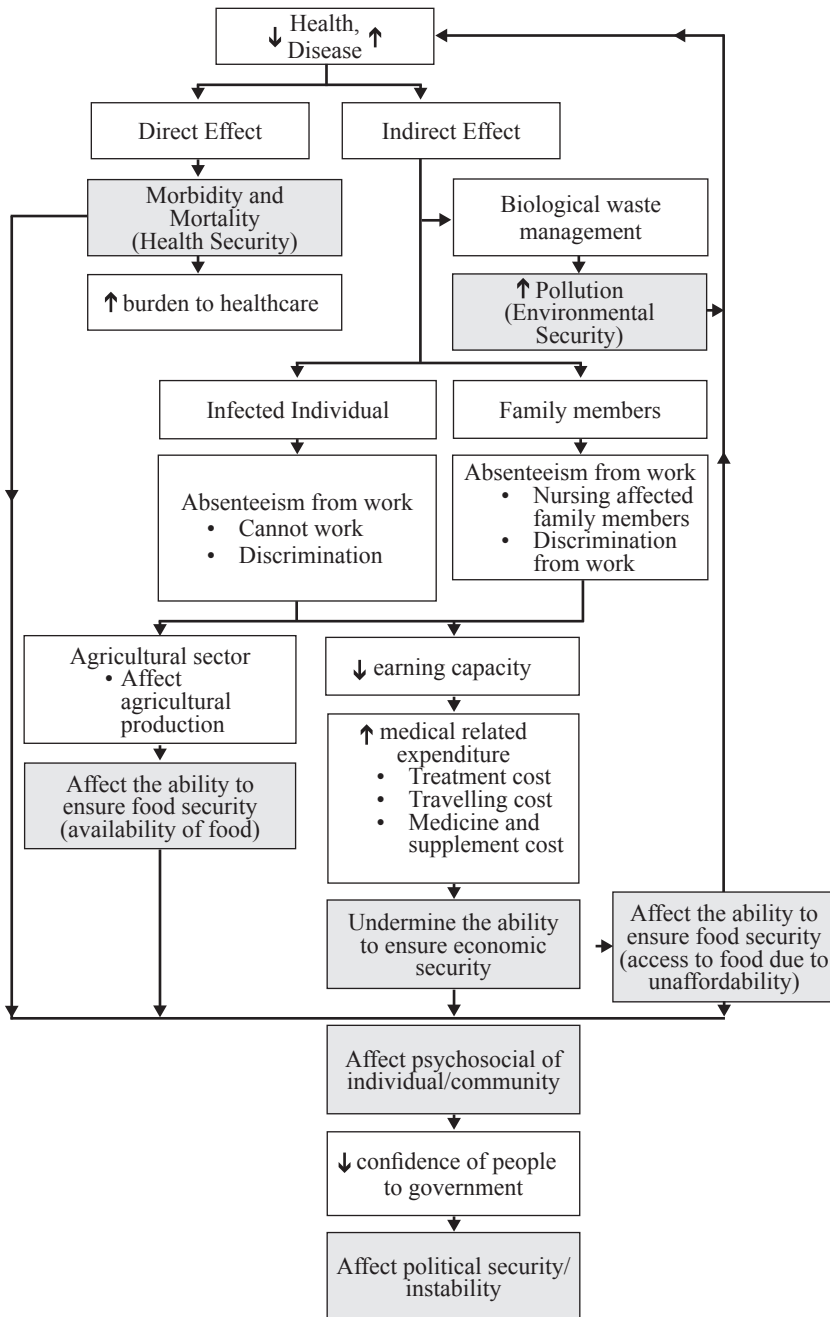


Figure 1: How Infectious Disease Affects Human Security

Source: Adopted from Collins (2013)

Biological waste management is an area where concern over pollution and the risk of virus spreading were given less focus. Nationwide, peoples are wearing facemask and latex gloves as precautionary measures, but the disposal aspect of the used items was not adequately managed except at the health facilities setting. Improper disposal of these items increases the risk of spreading the virus to those working in waste management sectors. Uncontrolled usage of these items, especially plastic gown and latex glove, which are non-biodegradable products, increases the risk of long-term environmental pollution that would viciously affect the population's health. The collapse of the waste management sectors would then create an environmental threat to the population. Thus, Environmental Security is gravely at risk. With regards to Economic Security, COVID-19 does not only affect those infected with the virus but the whole population and the state. The implementation of MCO as a measure to control virus spread has majorly affected national productivity and revenue. The amount of expenses spend on outbreak control, curative care, and people's welfare were not balanced by the amount of revenue received by the government. Thus, the state's financial status is at risk of a high deficit. At the population and individual level, the B40 and M40 income group are at the higher risk of Economic Insecurity, especially those earning a daily income from businesses and general works. Without secured income, their financial capacity to buy and maintain basic necessity is at stake.

The government also at the dilemma of prioritizing the balance between health and the economy. It can be seen from the government's decision to allow specific economic sectors to operate from the commencement of the second MCO in an attempt to ensure the financial balance is maintained. From the health aspect, allowing the economic sectors especially the industrial sectors to recommence their operation while the state is in the fight against COVID-19 would jeopardize all the activities that have been in placed to curb the virus spread. However, one needs to consider that without a stable economy, the outbreak control activities cannot be maintained. Thus, a grand strategy needs to be formulated to balance both necessities. The agriculture sector is foreseeing to be indirectly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the crops and poultry need to be frequently manned and maintained, MCO has caused the sector to be temporarily closed due to the disruption in the agricultural supply chain. Although the government keep ensuring that food supply and stock is not being affected as yet, we need to anticipate the stock will be depleting soon because COVID-19 is a global issue and not a single state issue. All over the globe, MCO is being implemented, and surely the food stock and supply will be a significant concern. Therefore, the justification for food insecurity is valid.

Concerning Community Security, the population need to prepare themselves to accept and adapt to the 'new norms' during and post COVID-19 pandemic. Shaking hands, religious gathering and visiting each other during festive seasons will not be as usual as before. Thus, those who have hardship in adapting to these new norms would be psychologically affected. Domestic violence cases are also reported to be on the rise during the MCO. Factors contributing to the rise are the lack of space for personal activities, especially those living in *Projek Perumahan Rakyat* (PPR) residential area with more than five family members in a unit. Living in a hardship and constraint environment while facing economic and food insecurity exposes those vulnerable to family conflict and domestic violence. Besides, the negative stigma towards COVID-19 positive cases' individual and family members created disharmony social environment. These situations, therefore, affect the Personal Security of the Human Security concept. All of the above Human Security elements if not properly and adequately managed by the government, would affect Political Security. To some Malaysian, the implementation of MCO has inflicted their rights as Malaysian citizens to roam freely in the country. However, at present, majority of the population still obliged to the MCO as evidenced by the high compliance level (more than 90 per cent) reported by the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) despite the fluctuating percentage in both the first and second MCO.

Political insecurity will be evident once the population loses their trust to the government, which will be an indicator for a collapse and incapable government. Thus, to ensure the situation will not happen, the decision made by the government must be in favour of the population needs and the stability of the national economy. It is a great challenge, but there is no room for compromising both health and national interest.

COVID-19 AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The effect of infectious disease on National Security can be analysed at the state level focusing on its effect on the state's economy, military readiness, population demography and inter-state relations (Collins 2013). However, not all infectious diseases are legitimate security issues. Thus, the question here is whether COVID-19 a legitimate security concern. Feldbaum and Lee (2004) stresses that for an infectious disease to be lifted as security issues, it must fulfil the following criteria as depicted in Figure 2; (1) the population are most affected rather than individual health; (2) the infectious disease causes a high number of cases (morbidity) and death (mortality); (3) the impact from the infectious disease is acute; and (4) more than one country/state/county is affected. COVID-19 fulfils these four criteria, thus, making it a security concern. The upliftment of COVID-19 as security issue also being empowered through the securitization process (Aldis 2008; Lo & Thomas 2010) made by the Prime Minister when he announced the implementation of the first MCO on 18 March 2020.

COVID-19 has directly affected the national economy through the implementation of MCO and closure of both Air Point of Disembarkation (APOD) and Sea Point of Disembarkation (SPOD) gates. Revenues from domestic and international economic activities are greatly affected while at the same time, the government needs to spend lots of money on outbreak control activities and ensuring its population necessities are fulfilled. The move has led to a financial depleting vicious cycle. The need to ensure COVID-19 outbreak is being well controlled has dragged the military into the fight against an unseen enemy together with the other government agencies. The primary role of protecting national interests and sovereignty is, however, still paramount and given the utmost priority. Thus, in ensuring both primary and secondary tasks are effectively being executed, Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) has to managed and strategized well its troops to perform both the assigned tasks while ensuring the need to minimize the effect of COVID-19 on overall military readiness.

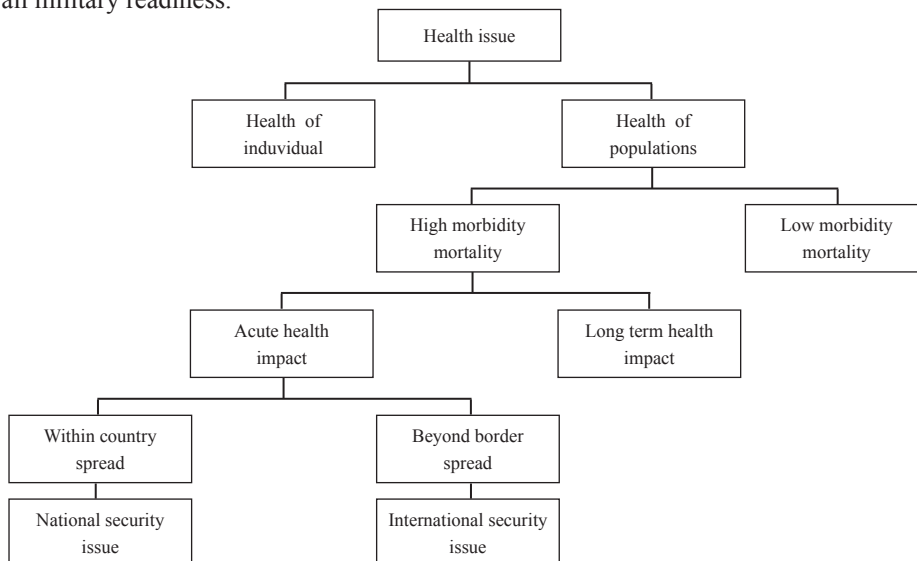


Figure 2: The Effect of Infectious Disease on National Security Elements

Source: Feldbaum & Lee (2004)

The 'lockdown' of an infantry battalion and headquarters of an elite brigade after its personnel were found positive with COVID-19 has dramatically affected the MAF readiness level. Thus, the decision to reduce the percentage of combat elements in MCO's enforcement task to 30 per cent and to replace the remaining 70 per cent with combat support, combat service support and the reservist has to be made. This right decision is to ensure the military readiness is at its highest level to conduct and maintain the primary task. Compromising security for internal health concerns is not an option for the military. Looking thoroughly at COVID-19 deaths' data and statistic, the majority of those who succumb death are the elderly population with comorbid history. This observation is supported with the statement by the MoH (Figure 3) that 88 per cent of those contracted COVID-19 virus will be at clinical stage 1 (asymptomatic) and 2 (symptomatic without lung infection). Thus, concerning demographic change, the category of the population that are at higher risk are the elderly. However, the risk of decreasing national productivity still in place if the number of adults being infected is high, given the requirement for them to be quarantined minimum of 14 days. This amount of days is equivalent to the number of days of productivity loss per worker, not including the amount of money the company have to spend on the worker's medical scheme.



Figure 3: Five Clinical Stages of COVID -19 In Human
Source: Ministry of Health (2019)

At this stage of the pandemic, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has not been actively playing its role. Each of ASEAN states is currently viewed handling the COVID-19 pandemic on their own. With Indonesia being claimed as the next COVID-19 epicentre in South East Asia, the threat for the rest of ASEAN states is imminent. Thus, ASEAN should focus on mitigating the risk of COVID-19 within the region, focusing not only the control of the pandemic but the economic mitigation aspects during and post-pandemic. As all the National Security elements above are directly and indirectly affected by COVID-19, it is justified to state that COVID-19 is an existential threat to National Security and International Security.

HAVE WE APPROACH IT RIGHTLY?

The initial phase of COVID-19 outbreak management by the government was mismanaged. The improper planning and short notice declaration of the first MCO has caused the virus to spread widely to other states from mass inter and intra-states people movement. Disinformation and

misinterpretation on the order of MCO have created panic and mass gathering of people at the police station and public transportation hub. It showed non-coordinated planning and execution of the MCO at the highest strategic and operational level. As a result, new clusters of COVID-19 infection arises. Thus, the intention of preventing the spread of the virus nationwide become flawed.

Over time, the government has learnt from their earlier mistake. Planning and interagency coordination has improved, and the execution of the second MCO become more structured than the first MCO. However, political key figures were seen as taking action on their own without consulting the subject matter experts. Statements and action taken by them were not parallel with the activities led by the leading managing agency, i.e., MoH. This situation has confused the population causing them to voice out their concern on the actual intention and role of these political figures. Despite having the National Security Council's Directive No. 20 (Disaster Management) in place, the contents of the directive were not applied and implemented well. Although planning and orders have been formulated well at the national and state level, information and execution of the plan at the district level were seen as non-congruent. At the time the first MCO took place, even the District Disaster Action Committees were not ready, and, in few districts, the committees are not in operation. It indicates that those responsible for disaster management are not well versed on their roles and task despite having the directives kept in their office.

The practice of not disclosing the information of those classified as COVID-19's Patient Under Investigation (PUI) and those ordered to be home quarantined to the local community leaders and committees due to medical in confidential reason is seen as a regressive approach in COVID-19 outbreak management by the MoH. As the logistic aspects to cater the needs of those ordered to be home quarantine were not in place, the PUI cases are free to roam in the community buying groceries for the sustainment of themselves and their family. If only the information were shared with local community leaders and committees, their movement could be monitored, and the risk of spreading the virus to the communities can be minimized. Thus, the policy of medical in confidential for specific infectious disease cases need to be reviewed on a case by case basis. In ensuring the military is at the highest level of readiness to operate in COVID-19 environment, training has to be approached differently from now on. Instead of having a routine mode of training, operation cum training is the alternative approach that the military has to embark. This new mechanism of training will ensure all military personnel will be at their highest level of readiness and able to adapt to the new operational environment.

Concerning border security during COVID-19 pandemic, all agencies handling the border security, i.e. MAF, RMP, Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), Immigration Department, and Royal Malaysian Custom (RMC) should be placed under one central command to standardize the operation's SOP, logistics and other operational requirements. Securing the border from the intrusion of non-citizens is paramount in ensuring not only the sovereignty of the state but also to ensure no new cluster of COVID-19 from imported cases. Again, these requirement needs the commitment and willingness from all the agencies operating at the border.

CONCLUSION

It is justified that COVID-19 pandemic is an existential threat. COVID-19 threatened both the Human Security and National Security elements of the overall 'Health and Security' concepts. The statement is supported with the justification that all seven elements of Human Security are directly and indirectly affected by the virus and its side consequences. Concerning National Security, the securitization process by the Prime Minister has endorsed COVID-19 as the

National Security issue in addition to fulfilling the criteria for an infectious disease to be lifted as a security concern. We have initially commenced the fight against an unseen enemy inappropriately; however, over time, we have improved ourselves in term of improving the conduct of the operation and fulfilling the administration and logistics requirement. There is still room for improvement in dealing with the present and future consequences. The fight still goes on as the war against COVID-19 has not ended.

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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A MODEL IN ENVIRONMENT OF CONTINUOUS CHANGES IN THE MILITARY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Transformational leadership can be defined as a way of leading that not only affects individuals, but rather in an organization as a whole. Transformational leaders tend to have certain traits among themselves that acts as driving factors towards achieving success. Not focusing on implying the law to force the issues on their subordinates, they put the emphasize on being a role model and setting examples of what is being expected from the subordinates. In this respect, among the major factors are; setting clear and consistent objectives, encouraging others to perform their tasks, leading through influence, being examples of integrity and fairness, and bringing subordinates to look beyond their self-interest. There are four key elements of a transformational leader; with some of these traits being more apparent in Military Leaders as compared to other organizations, more commonly known as the 4 I's of Transformational Leadership. These elements are Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation and Ability to Inspire Confidence, Intellectual Stimulation and Creativity and Individualized Consideration of Group Members. Among the advantages of this kind of leadership is the unity within the organization, lower staff turnover costs, creating changes and promoting a higher morale among the subordinates. Although there are certain negatives such as leading burnouts, negating with higher risks and the probability of power abuse, transformational leadership can still be considered as one of the best way to negate the changes that might be inevitable within an organization.

Keywords: *Military, Transformational Leadership Theory, Charismatic Leadership Style, Transactional Leadership Style, Inspiration Motivation, Intellectual Simulation, Individual Consideration and Idealised Influence*

INTRODUCTION

The theory of transformational leadership was first originated in 1978 by American leadership expert, James McGregor Burns. The model of 'transforming leadership' is being defined as a process where the leaders and followers are helping each in moving towards a higher level of morality and motivation. He believes that a great leader always shares his vision and set challenging goals for the followers, in order to create changes that are significant not only within the organization, but also in their daily lives. In 1985, the theory was taken another step further by academician Bernard M. Bass. He explained that transformational leaders are psychologically improving the motivation and performance of the followers. It was initiated from his theory that the term 'transformational' is used, to distinguish this leadership style.

Transformational leadership can be defined as a way of leading that not only affects individuals, but rather in a community or a social system. It strikes a positive change among the people in the community as a whole, with the aim of raising the community towards a better future. Among the positive changes that can be sensed within this kind of leadership is the improvement in morale, motivation and also the performance of the people within the community. And there are many ways these improvements were achieved, such as being a role model for the followers, being as part of the initial group, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the followers thus optimizing their performance and committing the followers towards achieving the goal together with the leader.

Transformational leadership occurs when leaders perform their roles so effectively that they gain the trust, respect, appreciation and loyalty of the people who follow them. This, in turn, changes (transforms) people's behaviors.

On the followers' side, they trusted the leader and are being very loyal to the leader. And the qualities that the leader brings is being transformed into the extra effort that the followers are willing to give in order to achieve the initial aim. This happens because the leader's initial aim brings benefit towards the whole community. And this is further help with the leader's ability to convey the aim towards the follower with his superior speaking and motivating skills. Transformational leaders tend to have certain traits among themselves that acts as driving factors towards achieving success. Not focusing on implying the law to force the issues on their subordinates, they put the emphasize on being a role model and setting examples of what is being expected from the subordinates. In this respect, among the major factors are; setting clear and consistent objectives, encouraging others to perform their tasks, leading through influence, being examples of integrity and fairness, and bringing subordinates to look beyond their self-interest.



Figure 1: Behaviours of Transformational Leadership

Source: wisdomjobs.com

LEADERS AND EXAMPLE

A transformational leader is often being brought into an organization to create some changes and fix it into a better one. Therefore, the leader is normally being tasked with re-setting the organizational goals and these goals need to be clearly relayed to all the subordinates so that everyone will be on the same wavelength towards achieving them. The leader is also responsible to maintain the goals without making too many unnecessary changes that might cause the subordinates to lose confidence and jeopardize the objectives. The leader must also be able to encourage and motivate the subordinates to perform their tasks successfully. To do so, the leader must have all the attributes of a good communicator as a transformational leader does not depend on rewards or punishment to motivate, but through developing the feeling of self-belonging towards the organization. This in turn will get the subordinates to put the interest of the organization above their self, sparking the creativity in solving issues and achieving goals.

It is often being said that, leaders that leads through examples are leaders that earn the most respect from the subordinates, and that is exactly what a transformational leader does best. The core values such as integrity and fairness will be observed by the subordinates, and when the leader has all these, it will be followed by everyone, creating ethos for the organization itself. There are four key elements of a transformational leader, with some of these traits being more apparent in Military Leaders as compared to other organizations. A transformational leader's first key element is the "Idealized Influence" where the act of being a role model through appearance,

attitude and way of thinking will influence the subordinates to be alike. This creates a sense of unity among the organization, with a certain core values and principles are being implemented from the top management tight down to the last available worker.

Not only this creates unity, but it also develops trust between the leader and the subordinates, as everybody knows what are the ethos of the organization. This in turn, will then allow the subordinates to have confidence in their leader. Another element of this leadership is the “Inspirational Motivation and Ability to Inspire Confidence”, where it refers to how the leader can generate confidence and motivation among the subordinates in completing their tasks towards the organizational goals. This will allow them to achieve a better standard, either in their works or in the daily lives. To achieve this, the leader must be able give a clear outline of his plan and convey them through concise communication with the subordinates. Not only the delivery of plan shall be clear, but it also needs to with continuous optimism and a sense of authority.

The next element is “Intellectual Stimulation and Creativity”. A transformational leader also brings his subordinates into the decision-making process, through the delegation of certain level of authorities. The leader also takes advantage of the subordinates’ thinking or mind which could be rather radical or out-of-the-box and get better outputs in their efforts daily. Firstly, it creates the feeling of responsibility among the subordinates, as their decisions could ultimately affect the organizational goals. Secondly, it stimulates their ability to think and perform in a creative and innovative way to achieve the objectives. To successfully implement this, the leader must be able to convey his general idea of the whole objective towards the subordinates, so that they will be able to keep that in mind and work their way towards the goal, without going through the nominated boundaries and limitations.

The last key element of Transformational Leadership is “Individualized Consideration of Group Members”. The ability to recognize individual strength, weaknesses and motivational factors is an important aspect of being a transformational leader. Not all subordinates are to be treated in the same way as some might be tempted more by rewards, while others are motivated by a challenge or a change in the working environment. Identifying specific needs will allow the leaders to keep on improving the ability of their subordinates and continuously motivates them towards the success of the organization. After these needs are being identified, it is then up to the leader to provide the required personalized trainings or mentoring for each of his subordinates. It is crucial to continuously maintain an open interaction and support to generate the medium for the subordinates to express their issues, especially those related to the leader-follower relationship goals. Although this will be extensive and requires a lot of time, the benefits that it brings will surpass all the efforts that is being put into it, as it brings the whole team towards the same organizational objectives.

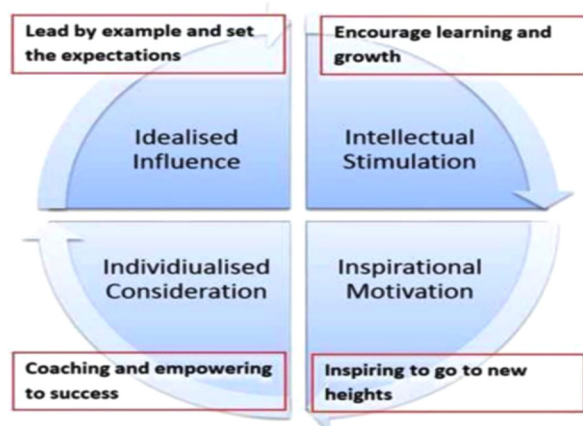


Figure 2: Important Element of Transformational Leadership

Source: Educational Business Articles (2019)

BENEFIT AND ADVANTAGE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership has many advantages that it can bring to an organization. One of the major benefits is that it is capable to bring everyone within the community to be in a common cause, which is towards the organizational goals. This is being developed through the ability of the leader to get everyone on board with sufficient motivation and influence. The commitment that everybody is putting in will see the increase in productivity of the organization as a whole and creates a positive working atmosphere among themselves when a transformational leader comes along. Another benefit that an organization will gain by having a transformational leader is that the subordinates will feel more engaged and connected to the organization. They will share the same vision with the leader and the objectives that is being set, diminishing the feeling of being isolated and secluded. This will minimize the probability of subordinates leaving the organization and staff turnovers, which will cost the organization dearly in terms of finding a suitable replacement and giving them adequate training.

A transformational leader is also able to influence their subordinates to embrace the changes that will be done towards the organization. Most people will normally be resistant to changes as they are afraid of what the consequences might be, which could be worse than the current situation. A transformational leader diminishes this fear by focusing on the positive impact that a change can bring and how everyone can contribute towards the success of the organization. Having a transformational leader on board also means that the organization will be based upon transparency and integrity, where everybody will be attached to the values that is established. This creates a benefit that sees the leader and the subordinates being focused on doing the right thing, without drifting away from the ethos, with the interest of the organization being the main priority.

Another major benefit that comes with transformational leadership is that they are good communicators, either with higher management or with subordinates. great communication skill is a great tool in promoting morale, as it relays clear roles of subordinates, minimize intra-group conflict and keeping a healthy work environment. It is easier to explain corporate goals from the top to lower subordinates, sharing their vision and embedding them into the mind of everyone in the organization.

With transformational leadership, it gives a lot of freedom for the subordinates to manoeuvre in completing their tasks. They are being given the trust to navigate themselves, with the goals of the organization being the main interest. A transformational leader will always try to ensure that the subordinates are always motivated in finding their own way of achieving the objectives. Implementing transformational leadership could also have a certain level of negativity within an organization. It depended heavily on the ability of the subordinates to accomplish their task, after the leader has given his outline on the goals to be achieved. However, sometimes it could be too conceptual and the subordinates do need a guidance or the operational planning on how to achieve those goals. The lack of details on the execution could bog down the efficiency and hamper the overall objectives.

There is also the possibility of a burnout syndrome among the subordinates, as not all of them are feeling inspired by the leader. Some will feel the pressure after being given the authorities and making crucial decisions within the organization. The leader also put the cultures and ethos of the organization highly, expecting the subordinates to be executing those values throughout their works. This could lead towards demotivation as they are expected to keep on improving and delivering more all the time. It is often to see that a transformational leader is being selected to a post with the aim of creating changes or fixing problems within an organization. However, it can turn out the other way if the leader sees a change as the main goals, rather than setting the outcomes that comes with the changes as the end state. This will lead towards destabilizing the organization, without achieving the expected outcomes. Upon seeing this, the top management

will then change to another leader, most likely of the same transformational type, to create further changes in hope of achieving the organizational goals. The continuous cycle of leadership changes will be disruptive and detrimental towards the subordinates and the organization as a whole.

Apart from that, there is also a possibility that the transformational leader and his subordinates are actually doing his work in the wrong way. The high degree for freedom of action in this type of leadership might not be in-line with what the organization's policies. The vision that this type of leaders has might be too wide, that the organization might suffer from its action and the consequences it brings. Being a transformational leader also requires extensive use of time, with most of it being spent on the communication between the leader and the subordinates. This will keep the subordinates on their toes, while the leader will rely on it to gain the feedbacks which could be through meetings or discussions. The problem with this is that if the feedback loop is broken, the commitment of the subordinates would falter as they would feel being left out or unappreciated by the leader.

The leader also needs all of the subordinates to agree with the vision that has been set, which will allow him to keep on motivating them to work hard in achieving those visions. However, if the subordinates start to disagree or lose confidence in the objectives being set, the motivation will wane and hamper the organization. Fundamentally, losing the influence is the biggest failure that a transformational leader must avoid. Being a transformational leader means someone who is not afraid of making changes towards the betterment of the organization. Continuing with the principles of previous administration might not always be the best of choice, especially when the results are not as productive as it should be. With changes being inevitable, the wisest choice would be to implement this kind of leadership to reap the most benefits that shall come with it.

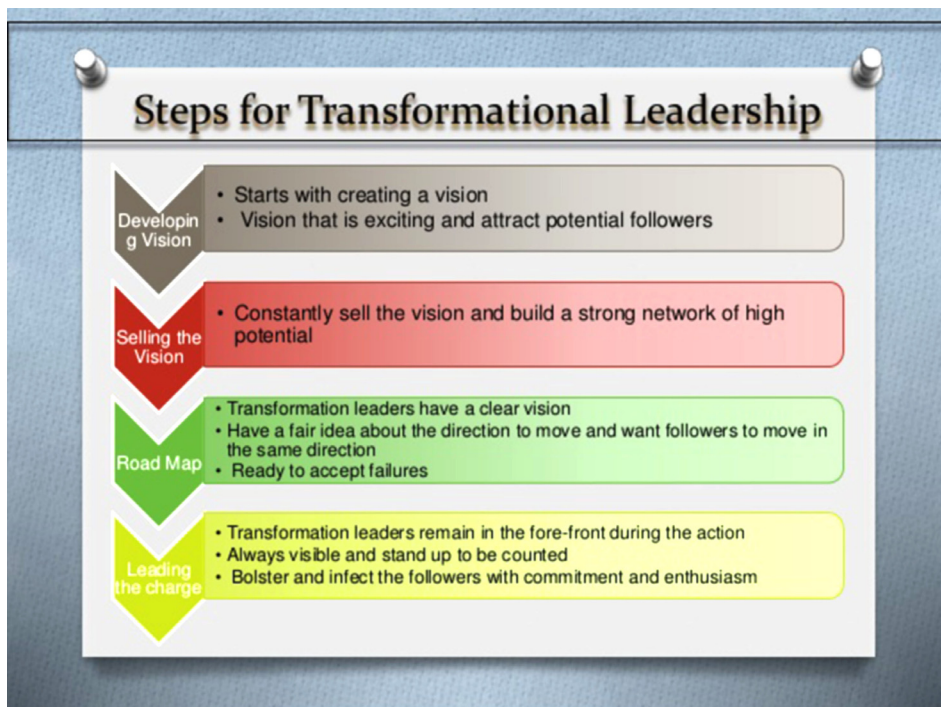


Figure 3: Steps for Transformational Leadership

Source: Source: Educational Business Articles 2019

WHY MILITARY COMMANDERS ARE MORE CHARISMATIC AND TRANSFORMATIONAL?

Based on the findings, the military leaders have to be more of charismatic and transformational due to the nature of the work they are into. More often than not, the Generals are getting some grey hairs fairly earlier than their counterparts in the business positions, even though they hold the fairly same responsibility. This is so obvious due to the level of responsibilities and commitments they are taking on daily basis of their works. The soldiers, for example, most of the times are prepared to trade their own interests and even their lives in extremes cases for the nation's interests. If that is the case then, a high level of inspiration and motivation is needed to elevate them to that level. For that reason, only transformational leaders who have high level of charismatic attributes can be able to spearhead that task.

The alternative of transformational leadership style in the military is a transactional leadership. As it has been discussed previously, the transactional leadership which is also known as a traditional military leadership's style, uses the existing organisational structures to build energy of the followers in return for rewards or punishments (Avalio & Garder, 2004). It is designed to promote (motivate) the follower's compliance through reward and punishment (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013, p. 358). The transactional motivations range from pay and rewards to punishment. The questions are how can you push a soldier too hard for a payment, reward or fear of a punishment while he might even not live enough to enjoy it following his fatal accident and in worth scenarios a death (Kolditz, 2012).

FACTORS LEADING TO THE MILITARY LEADERS TO BE GREAT

There are three main factors that influence the military to produce the great leaders; trainings, organisational powers, and self-sacrifice. The military leaders are subject to progressive and sequential series of careful planned training, educational and experimental events which are far more time consuming and expensive than similar training in other organisations. The time and costs needed to train a newly employed soldier (recruit) to a four Star-General are extremely high compared to the training given to a government staff up to the level of being an executive officer. As previously noted, the trainings are progressive, stage by stage involving practical experiments some in the real situation at wars or in very hard situations. Doing all this, a trainee becomes mentally strong and physically fit to face any challenges down the line. Through training, a chain of command can be applied all the way through to the very junior leaders

The second point is Organisational Powers Junior officers in the army, for example, are given extremely high powers in terms of the organisational structure proportionately to the task given. As they progress, the power is also increased gradually; something that makes them self-confident and emotionally motivated to discharge their duties perfectly. Two types of powers are needed in order for the military officer to be a true transformational leader are from his/her personal characters that followers are emotionally happy to follow without any arguments and another one is from organisational structure that allows indispensable authority and power to lead. The massive powers given to junior leaders in particular, can sometime be abused and become disastrous. Talented leaders with special traits leave the followers with no way of accessing; consequently, the follower's destinies are inescapably tied to the ambitions of their dominants leaders. Another concern arises when transformational leader uses powers, authorities, and trust given by the military to the followers in an unethical way benefiting himself/herself in the expense of subordinates in military.

The last point is Self-Sacrifice. Most importantly, the military leaders and their followers are built-up on “a concept of duty, service and self-sacrifice” and this is supported by the oath which they take when they are commissioned, that they would always place the common interests and goals before their own. This is perhaps the most important trait that the military leaders have to openly demonstrate. High personal qualities manifested by best code of conduct, can lead to a leader to be a superhero.

WHICH LEADERSHIP STYLE IS BEST FIT IN THE MILITARY SITUATIONS?

It is absolutely unfair to advocate one leadership style over the others in the military. The commander through his series of trainings and experiences is expected to use any leadership style taking into account the situation on the horizon. Under the transactional leadership style, the main motivators that commanders can use are rewards and punishments. The transactional leadership, therefore, is based on leaders and follower's self-interest; therefore, the style is suitable only for short-term and non-repetitive situations. A transactional leader is thus influenced under “this for that” scenario; therefore, if the followers did according to the commanders' order, they will be rewarded; if not, they will have to face some punishments. One of the disadvantages of the transactional leadership style is that it does not build a good relationship between the commanders and the soldiers. For that reason, the trust is always not there and soldiers cannot do whatsoever, anything beyond what they are expected to do. The relationship between the commanders and the soldiers is of a short time and ends when the task is done.

In the transformational leadership style, on the other hand, the relationship between the commanders and the followers is of a very long time and sustainable. The commanders take quite a long time to build trust and good relation with the followers. In return, the followers are inspired to the extent of trading their own personal interests for the national interest in extreme cases, sacrificing their own lives. In this case, rewards or punishments are not needed; the two are working as a team towards the mission. For that reason, for long lasting tasks, in particular military tactics and manoeuvrability, the transformational leadership style is the most suitable for the military leadership.

CONCLUSION

The concept of transformational leadership has wide appeal, and it is probably the most popular perspective on leadership today. Moreover, research suggests that transformational leaders make a difference. Subordinates are more satisfied and have greater commitment to their organizations under transformational leaders. They also perform better, engage in more organizational citizenship behaviors, and tend to make decisions that are more creative. However, the concept of transformational leadership faces a number of challenges. One problem is that some writers use circular logic by defining transformational leadership in terms of the leader's success. They suggest that leaders are transformational when they successfully bring about change, rather than when they engage in certain behaviors that we call transformational. Another concern is that some writers present transformational leadership as a universal rather than a contingency-oriented approach.

However, recently many have begun to explore the idea that transformational leadership may be more appropriate in some situations than in others. Transformational leadership seems most appropriate when organizations are in trouble and need to improve their performance and adapt to a changing environment. For an organization based in a stable environment that is performing well, transactional leadership may be just fine. Indeed, a transformational leader who tries to change a well-oiled machine might do more harm than good.

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MALAYSIA-PHILIPPINES RELATIONS: ANALYSING THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF DEFENCE DIPLOMACY AND THE IMPACT TOWARDS ASEAN

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ABSTRACT

The role of Armed Forces has traditionally be define by the functional imperative of the use or threat of force-weather for purposes of defence, deterrence, compliance or intervention. Defence diplomacy, in contrast, involves peacetime cooperative use of Armed Forces and the related infrastructures as a tool of foreign and security. It encompasses a wide range of activities such as military cooperation and assistance with the aim of improving relationships between nations or diffuse tension between allies. The Malaysian Defence Policy emphasises defence diplomacy in both bilateral and multiple cooperation amongst Malaysia's regional and global partners. It looks not only in maintaining peace but as a vital tool to assist each other in facing non-traditional threats as well as humanitarian and disaster relief operations.

Keywords: *Geopolitical, International Monitoring Team (IMT), Trilateral Maritime Patrol (TMP), Spratly Islands, Defence Diplomacy, Disaster Management*

MALAYSIA-PHILIPPINES RELATIONS

Malaysia and the Philippines have enjoyed a bilateral relationship that has already spanned more than 60 years. After the formation of 'Malaysia Baharu' last year, discussions on the next stage for Malaysia-Philippines relations were made between Rodrigo Duterte's visit to Malaysia after Tun Dr. Mahathir was re-elected again as the seventh Prime Minister of Malaysia. The meeting between both parties focused on security and defence issues within the bilateral relationship as well as the geopolitical issues in the region. In addition, both leaders further discussed issues such as terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crime, illegal drugs and piracy activities in the sea. Malaysia's act in expanding its regional role was appreciated by Duterte as Malaysia supported peace and development in the Southern Philippines.

The second meeting between both leaders was held during Mahathir's official visit to the Philippines in March 2019 and had covered on a wide range of issues across the bilateral relationship. Furthermore, the meeting focused more on the issues of security and the geopolitical aspect surrounding both nations. Both leaders have the same goal together with Indonesia on trilateral patrols which continues to develop further. Another issue discussed was on Malaysia's role in assisting the Southern Philippines in terms of peace and developments which Duterte had acknowledged. Geopolitically, both leaders discussed matters on the South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula.

MALAYSIA-PHILIPPINES DEFENCE COOPERATION

Malaysia has always been a strong believer of multilateral defence diplomacy with utmost efforts has been made to foster ties within ASEAN member states. ASEAN has always been the cornerstone of Malaysia's foreign policy orientation, and the MAF has been engaging either bilaterally or multilaterally with other military organisations within ASEAN and internationally.

There numbers of military engagements that have established between Malaysia and the Philippines. These military to military ties has grown stronger over the years, and some of the prominent ones are:

Collective Training. The MAF is engaged with the Philippines Armed Forces in bilateral military exercises to address current security threats besides enhancing the relations between both forces. One of the annual bilateral exercises between these two countries is the LAND MALPHI where the land forces of both Malaysia and Philippines will conduct a joint exercise where it enables them to appreciate and learn contemporary military tactics besides improving interoperability in preparing to overcome new challenges ahead in the region.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). Malaysia provided aid to the Philippines for the victims of various disasters in recent years. For instance, Malaysia had provided monetary support towards those affected by the Bohol earthquake in 2013. The country faced a 7.2 magnitude earthquake which damaged 30,000 homes, and more than 100,000 people were displaced (Rances 2013). Aids given by Malaysia were given in monetary form especially towards children. Besides that, Super Typhoon Haiyan had hit the Philippines on November 2013 which killed more than 6000 people and over 4 million people lost their homes (Caritas 2013). The typhoon sent tsunami waves and strong winds across the Philippines which managed to cut off communications in the area. Soon after the typhoon struck the nation, the Malaysian government had donated \$1 million to help in terms of food and medicines. Not only that, Sarawak too provided \$27,148 worth of aid for the survivors a year later after the destruction occurred (Rappler 2019).

International Monitoring Team in Mindanao. Malaysia not only contributes to the peace process in Mindanao but also provides leadership in the International Monitoring Team (IMT) which is highly important in the context of regional stability and peace. The deployment of an IMT in Mindanao is authorized under the provision of Chapter 8 of the United Nations Charter which allows peace settlement to be managed under the regional arrangement and upon the invitation of the host government. The IMT plays a major role in supporting the current GRP-MILF peace negotiations together with enhancing the momentum for the resolution of the conflict in Mindanao. Malaysia's key role as third party facilitator to the GRP-MILF peace negotiations appears promising as it involves itself in formal peacemaking and reaches the field of peacekeeping in the affected areas. In addition, the IMT is said to be a good channel for information for Malaysia and to be more accessible in working with the civil society organizations (CSOs). The direction of IMT is to monitor the phase of rehabilitation, reconstruction and the development of the conflicted areas and it is also portrayed as "ambassadors of goodwill" in representing the Malaysian government. The diplomacy relation is important especially to the local stakeholders because the relationships within the peace talks are limited to the GRP, MILF and the Malaysian government. The deployment of the IMT is stated as an important commitment by the government of Malaysia, and there were top-level visits made by the Malaysian leaders to show unequivocal support towards the IMT as peacekeepers in Mindanao (Ayesah 2005).

Trilateral Maritime Patrol. Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia had joined forces in order to protect the Sulu Sea from any terrorism and transnational crimes. The alliance between the three countries were dubbed as the Trilateral Maritime Patrol (TMP) and the primary command and control base were situated in the Tarakan Island. Malaysia's defence minister then, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussien stated that the aim of the operation was to overcome the violent extremists and terrorists' movements happening across the borders of the three nations. This operation was focused on as the Sulu Sea were used as a base of operations by terrorist organizations. In addition, the Indonesian military (TNI) mentioned that the joint patrol handled by the three countries were

aligned with the spirit and centrality of ASEAN which maintains the stability of the region in overcoming issues such as piracy, terrorism, kidnapping and other transnational crimes in the regional waters (Chan 2017). The operation covers largely on maritime-based but was followed by the involvement of land and air military assets. The trilateral air patrol adopted a continuously monthly rotation which will be led by Malaysia, followed by the Philippines Air Force and subsequently the Indonesian Air Force (Mengjie 2017). Furthermore, all three countries had established a set of procedures which were agreed upon such as sharing information and improving communication. The searches in the waters will be done efficiently via Maritime Command Centres (MCC) which are at Tarakan, Tawau in Sabah and Bongao in the Philippines (Justin Zack 2017).

ISSUES INVOLVING MALAYSIA-PHILIPPINES

The Malaysia-Philippines relations have evolved over the past six decades where both countries have enhanced their ties to a higher level. However, there are still two most unsolved issues between Malaysia and Philippines namely the Sabah Claim and The Spratly Islands' dispute.

Sabah Claim. The issue of who rightfully owns North Borneo or Sabah started way back in the 1600s. Historical documents had shown that the Sultanate of Sulu who controlled the Sulu islands in the Muslim southern Philippines, indeed owned a part of Borneo, including Sabah. During the 1700s, the Sultan of Brunei transferred a piece of its land which was under the control of the Sulu sultanate. Around the year of 1800 to 1850, the Sultan of Sulu then gave a part of its land to another sultan who gave it away to the Dutch. Next, Indonesia is known as a successor to the Dutch, later said to own the land. The Sulu sultanate then loses its remaining land, which was later name as Sabah, and during the period of European colonialism, it was either leased or sold to a British trading company, which remains a controversy up to now. However, under the current arrangement, the heirs of the Sultanate still receive annual payments from Malaysia (Cruz 2013). In 1963, after an alleged referendum showing that the residents did not want to be part of the Philippines or the Sultanate of Sulu, Malaysia incorporated Sabah as part of its national territory. And since that time, Malaysia has exercised sovereignty over the area through several aspects such as by keeping peace and order, regulating the relations among the people, and governing the ownership, possession and enjoyment of property rights (Panganiban 2013).

Spratly Islands Dispute. The claims of Spratly Islands are said to be complex as the bases of the claims shows a variety such as from historical, the right of discovery and on continental shelf prolongation. Malaysia claims the Sothern part of the Spratly Islands. The claim made by Malaysia is based on geography and uses the provisions of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention on the continental shelf as justification. Malaysia's claim on the Spratly Islands started in 1979 which were the most recent among all claimants. Malaysia went against all the odds to enter the Spratlys during Tun Dr. Mahathir's premiership and claimed sovereignty on Swallow Reef in 1983, Ardasier Reef and Mariveles Reef in 1986, and Investigator Shoal and Erica Reef in 1999 (Ruhani 2013). The publishing of Malaysia's new map in 1979 was coincided with the claims made and was protested by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and also raised disputes with Singapore and Indonesia over some islands and reefs which appeared in this map for the first time. The map included eleven atolls as part of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) based on continental shelves. Furthermore, Malaysia has asserted the ownership towards a 12-nautical mile territorial sea around the Swallow Reef and Amboyna Cay. Meanwhile, the Philippines claim most of the Spratly Islands archipelago based on discovery and is followed by the concept of "terra nullius" (Cordner 1994). The claim made by the Philippines continued as drilling activities were held in the region but with limited results. Besides, eight of the Spratly Islands are being occupied by the Filipino personnel.

Malaysia and the Philippines have overlapping claims to the Spratlys and have held frequent bilateral talks since 1988 in an attempt to find a solution but was to no avail (Mohammad Ali 1991). The Philippines had once issued a warning statement towards the Chinese and the Vietnamese to stop disturbing its territories in the area. In addition to this, Malaysia too had acted the same way as the Philippines in having the means of ensuring their rights in the Spratlys. The Malaysian Navy had arrested 49 Philippine fishers near the Commodore Reef on 5th April 2014. They were alleged to have entered the Malaysian territorial waters illegally. Malaysia released the fishermen without any prosecution made as there were several protests made in Manila. Besides that, more charges were raised by the Philippines over the naval and air activities supposedly by Malaysia in the area of Palawan Island. The Filipino Defence Secretary announced in September that the Philippines Armed Forces had reinforced it's air and naval forces in the South and had given naval protection towards its fishermen (Mohammad Ali 1991).

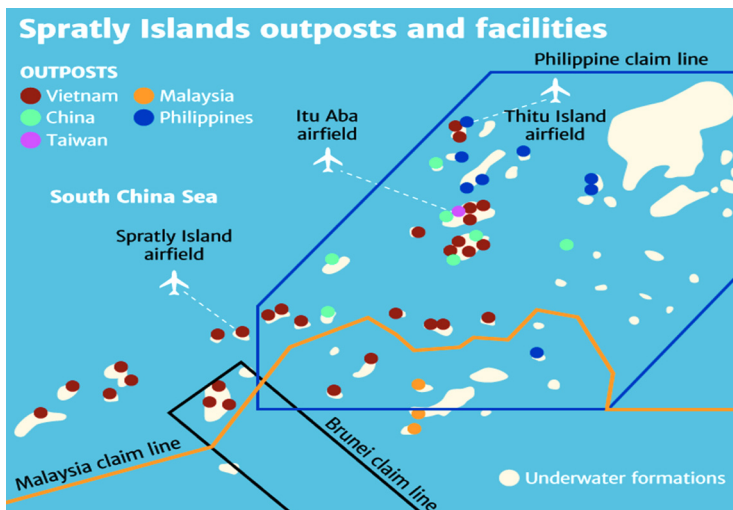


Figure 1: Spratly Islands Dispute (Malaysia vs Philippines)

Source: defencepoliticasia.com

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFENCE DIPLOMACY

Considering the wide range of defence diplomacy initiatives between Malaysia and the Philippines, it is important to analyse the role that is being carried out by the defence diplomacy activities especially related to military engagements through the use of soft power. Defence diplomacy activities are not constructed or conducted in small scales but through a larger process. The range of activities encompasses strategic security dialogues which enable to understand the concerns of participants and to establish areas of common interest. Also, visits at the level of Service Chiefs, professional defence and military expert exchanges, military training, combined exercises, disaster management and humanitarian assistance take place. Most importantly, defence diplomacy is seen as an important tool of foreign policy and can be utilized to build bridges of friendship, prevent conflict, build the capacity of friendly foreign nations, strengthen mutual trust and enhance security and stability between both nations (Amarjeet 2009).

Throughout the years the defence diplomacy relations between Malaysia and the Philippines can be seen as an act to pursue broader cooperation and to achieve commitment in overcoming differences. The defence cooperation in terms of the military has been mean to introduce transparency in defence relations especially in regards to the nations' capabilities between them. Furthermore, it also helped in reinforcing perceptions of common interests and can support precise

defence reforms carried out between both countries (Cotter 2004). Hence, defence diplomacy cooperation between these two countries has existed in a balanced form between diplomatic agenda and the security interests of the countries although there have been some unsolved issues between these two countries. The unsolved issues although seems to be pertinent, however with the defence diplomacy through military cooperation between them (through various discourses) not only brought cohesiveness but also became the key enabler to manage distrust and built trust.

CONCLUSION

Currently, Malaysia and Philippines relations are said to be at the best level as both current leaders are satisfied with the current bilateral ties built. The focus of both countries is to strengthen its defence cooperation, and several initiatives were taken into account to help maintain regional peace and stability of both nations. The diversity and the multi-layered defence cooperation of Malaysia-Philippines have helped in enhancing the cohesiveness among them. In conclusion, defence diplomacy not only has improved defence relations between Malaysia-Philippines; it has also played a pivotal role in pacifying issues between these two nations. Through various intellectual discourses between the defence organisation of these countries, has paved the way to overcome the trust deficit between them and enables shared commitment against future security challenges ahead.

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O PEACE, WHERE ART THOU? EXPLORING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS OF A LASTING PEACE FOR ROHINGYAS IN THE RAKHINE STATE

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ABSTRACT

Rohingya Muslims face the immediate threat of ethnic cleansing from the Rakhine Buddhists and the Myanmar state. Through the British “divide-and-rule” approach in British Burma since 1885, religious tensions were aggravated with systematic and institutional discrimination persisting after independence in 1948. The extent of persecution magnified after the 1982 Citizenship Law, in which Rohingyas were stripped of their citizenship, with consequent waves of mass expulsions and state-sanctioned violence in the 1980s and 1990s. While the release of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2010 and the democratic transition from the military leadership in 2011 were thought to be the ray of hope for peace, the reignited series of violence from 2012 until today evidently indicate otherwise. Given Rohingyas are undoubtedly among the heavily oppressed ethnic groups in the world, immediate yet effective peacebuilding efforts must be established. However, difficulties in implementing proposed solutions to this conflict illustrate its inherent complexity, especially in reprogramming ingrained societal norms and cutting the flow of external resources to prop the oppressive military. After traversing the practicality of various proposals, this paper advocates a ‘X+Y’ approach that attempts to redefine the non-intervention clause in the ASEAN Charter while increasing bilateral and multilateral dialogues with Myanmar.

Keywords: *Rohingya, Myanmar, genocide, peacebuilding, ‘X + Y’ approach*

INTRODUCTION

Myanmar is undoubtedly on the brink of genocide. The Human Rights Watch 2018 Country Report found that over 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh between August 2017 and December 2018 to escape ongoing state-led ethnic cleansing campaigns in the Rakhine State of western Myanmar. Violent military crackdowns in the region have also destroyed almost 400 predominately Rohingya villages through demolition or arsons, confined over 100,000 Rohingya and other Muslim minorities in detention camps within the Rakhine State, and led to various forms of human rights abuses, systematic and institutional discrimination, and sexual violence by Myanmar authorities (Human Rights Watch 2019). Unfortunately, the horrific scale of oppression and persecution faced by the ethnic minority are nothing new. Since the 1962 military coup by General Ne Win, there have been at least five waves of large-scale and systematic crackdown of Rohingyas: 1978 Operation Nagamin (“Dragon King”), 1992, 2012, 2016, and 2017. In addition, they were officially denied fundamental human rights after their citizenship was revoked due to the discriminatory 1982 Citizenship Law, which subjectively defined ethnic groups who migrated to Myanmar before 1823 as non-indigenous people. The Myanmar state allegedly justifies its atrocities against Rohingyas on the basis of their citizenship status. Often implemented under the guise of suppressing violent separatist movements or deporting illegal immigrants, these crackdowns frequently led to the exodus of hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas to Bangladesh. Despite the magnitude and circumstances of violence towards Rohingyas mirroring those of the

Bosnian War, the international community has remained largely silent in confronting the Myanmar government to end the targeted persecution. Thus, are there any other approaches that can offer a durable solution to this religious conflict or would they eventually face a similar fate as the Palestinians – a lifetime of suffering with no peace in sight?

Given its coverage in the literature, this paper aims to contribute new insights towards a durable solution for the Rohingya crisis. Peacebuilding proposals in Myanmar often emphasise on enhancing domestic institutions, such as democratic resilience, consociational democracy, and inclusive citizenship laws (Nemoto 1991, Lewa 2009, Kipgen 2014, Southwick 2015, Wolf 2017). To reflect the complicated nature of this issue, there are also more comprehensive solutions that include international or regional interventions (Bashar 2012, Azad and Jasmine 2013, Kundu 2017) and intersectional domestic-international strategies (Parnini 2013, Marston 2017). The discourse on the Rohingya issue arguably tilts to the lens of refugee management, with recommended policies addressing the security consequences of large-scale, often generational, Rohingya refugees in the region and their dire living conditions in crowded and under-resourced refugee camps in Bangladesh (Cheung 2011, Parnini, Othman and Ghazali 2013, Milton, et al. 2017). Therefore, it is the interest of this paper to offer practical approaches towards peace in Myanmar that should address the root causes of the mass refugee phenomena. There is also an academic motivation to outline a Malaysian stance in mainstream discussions of ending violence on Rohingyas. That is, an overemphasis on the roles of global superpowers and ASEAN in promoting peacebuilding initiatives in Myanmar, as exemplified by Zhou (2017), Amini (2017), Fan and Reilly (2018), Hassan (2019), among many, presents a literature gap on outlining potential contributions by individual countries that face direct consequences of the conflict. This paper is structured as follows: firstly, an introduction and background of the Rohingya crisis. Subsequently, an examination of proposed solutions that encompass both domestic and international angles. Finally, a comprehensive synthesis of a proposed 'X+Y approach' to impose international pressure and encourage domestic-driven changes in societal norms in hopes to end violence in the Rakhine State.

BACKGROUND OF THE ROHINGYA CRISIS

While this institutional violence is evidently rooted in the ethno-religious tensions between the Buddhist majority and Rohingya Muslims, what would cause such animosity and how has it been translated into a state-led persecution? While this paper acknowledges the nuances of conflating both Buddhists and the Burman ethnic majority, the former will be used as an umbrella term to include the latter for the sake of brevity, unless mentioned otherwise. Nonetheless, the notion of an inherent incompatibility between both religions being the major factor of this conflict seems rather unlikely given their relatively peaceful coexistence under the rule of the Buddhist Mrauk-U Kingdom (whose religion remains disputed by Rohingya historians) in the 15th century. Conversely, portraying Rohingyas as illegal Bangladeshi migrants, despite the presence of Muslim settlements in Rakhine State centuries prior to the establishment of the modern Myanmar state (Azad and Jasmine 2013, Leitich 2014), suggests a fundamental political issue at the heart of this conflict. Hence, to demonstrate further the political nature of this conflict and how religion came into the picture, the relationship between both groups and their conflicting narratives throughout Myanmar's history – particularly in the medieval dynastic period, British colonial rule, and post-independence era – must be examined.

Early Rohingya Settlements in Arakan

The violence on Rohingyas is motivated by the different perspectives on their origins in Myanmar. The literature presents two contested views that reflect the perspectives of both Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists. Firstly, Jilani (1999) presented discourses that are in favour of Rohingyas. Prior to the arrival of Islam to Arakan (present-day Rakhine State) in the 8th century through Arab Muslim traders, there has already been a majority Rohingya settlement alongside Arakanese Buddhists with the Rohingya language serving as the lingua franca in the region. In fact, Jilani also argued that the independent Kingdom of Arakan (1430-1785), also known as the Mrauk-U Kingdom and the eventual predecessor to the Burmese Empire, was a Muslim dynasty – as demonstrated by the use of Islamic titles and symbols in the royal court – with Buddhist influence, essentially challenging the notion of Myanmar being a Buddhist nation and supporting the idea of Rohingyas being native to Myanmar.

In contrast, Chan (2005) attempts to dissociate the historical links between pre-modern Arakanese Muslims and Rohingyas of today: despite agreeing with the presence of Muslims of Bengali descent in Arakan as of 15th century, the extent of their significance and size is not only often relegated to the sidelines, but also assumed to be distinct from that of modern Rohingyas. For instance, the earliest Muslim settlement in Arakan was only established in mid-1500s with the presence of Muslim Bengali soldiers in the outskirts of Mrauk-U city after the military cooperation between King Naramaikhlā of the Buddhist Mrauk-U Kingdom and the Sultan of Bengal in 1430 (Chan 2005: 398). However, such a populace remained small until the 17th century with the rise of the Arakanese Kingdom as an economic hub and trading outpost (and the diminishing power of the Bengal Sultanate), in which the Muslim community comprised either captured Bengali Muslim slaves from Arakanese raids into Bengal or groups of gentries serving the courts of the Buddhist Mrauk-U kings (Chan 2005: 398). Given the lack of credible anthropological evidence to provide an exact date of the earliest Rohingya settlements in Arakan, both sides attempt to accentuate and downplay, the existence of Rohingya to redefine the dominant political narratives and reframe the history. This underestimation is arguably essential in promoting the narratives of native Muslims in Arakan being genealogically distinct from modern Rohingyas, since a relatively small size of the former could have not possibly led to the current population of the latter (approximately in the low millions) only over several centuries, if not for large-scale migration. This narrative imperatively legitimises the mainstream perception of Rohingyas as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh rather than being “natives” to Rakhine. But the truth may perhaps lie somewhere in the middle – while they may have not been native to Arakan as early as 8th century, not all are “recent” immigrants from South Asia. That is, Yegar (2002) argued that the origin of Rohingyas could be traced back to the initial Muslim settlements in Arakan from the Indian subcontinent, especially from Bengal, in which there were large migratory flows between the Mrauk-U kingdom in Arakan and the Mughal Empire of India. Despite these two studies representing the opposite ends of a spectrum, there were no mentions of any sectarian conflicts between the Rakhine Muslims and Buddhist communities within the period.

Formation of Cracks in Muslim-Buddhist Relations in The Medieval Era

The somewhat peaceful coexistence between the Muslims and Buddhists in Arakan began to fracture, especially after the fall of Bengal Sultanate in early 16th century. Frequent clashes between Mughal Muslims and Arakanese Buddhists to assume control of Chittagong, a strategic settlement at the southeast of present-day Bangladesh, eventually led to a religious-driven discontent

when the latter was defeated and expelled by the forces of Shaista Khan, the Mughal governor of Bengal, in 1665 (Bahar 2010). Given the rather blurred lines between Bengalis and Rohingyas, the latter was targeted in the anti-Muslim riots and were forced to seek refuge in Chittagong in 1670 (Bahar 2010). This incident basically reinforces the idea of religious conflicts serving as an avenue to express unhappiness and anger towards perceived and actual hardships, possibly aggravated due to the sense of shame after being defeated by the Mughal Empire – although there were no further recorded cases of large-scale anti-Muslim or anti-Rohingya movements until the next century. That is, the conquest of the Arakan by the Burmese Empire, under the Buddhist King Bodawpaya, in 1784 displaced hundreds of thousands of Arakanese – both Rohingya Muslims and Arakanese Buddhists – to Chittagong (Ullah 2011). While Rohingyas suffered from another round of systematic violence and persecution, this incident is plausibly not entirely driven by religious animosity considering how local Buddhists were also not spared from such atrocities, perhaps due to the cultural and regional differences with possible attempts to subjugate the autonomous Arakan into the Burmese Empire. Although the pre-colonial oppression of Rohingyas was not completely motivated by religious factors, the fact that the perpetrators in the anti-Muslim and anti-Rohingya violence were mostly Buddhists could be perceived by the Rohingya community as an inherent distrust or unwelcoming of one group on the other.

Colonial Economic and Political Anxieties as Roots for Inter-Group Violence

The defeat of the Burmese Empire in the 1885 Third Anglo-Burmese War resulted in its dissolution and the annexation and incorporation of remaining Burmese territories into the British colonial rule. The British style of colonial governance subsequently sowed the seeds of, and eventually further aggravate, racial, religious, and cultural divisions between Rohingyas and the Buddhist majority – particularly through the manipulation of socioeconomic cleavages – with repercussions of which are still experienced today. The decision to place British Burma under the rule of British India instead of creating a separate British administrative colony between 1897 and 1937 feasibly incited anti-Indian resentments among native Buddhists due to ideological and historical factors. For instance, the great shame of failing to defend their symbols of culture and sovereignty from a colonial power (i.e., the sanctity of Theravada Buddhism and monarchy) might inflicted new and opened old wounds, which originated from the defeat and expulsion of Buddhist rule in Arakan at the hands of Aurangzeb, the Mughal military officer, in the mid-17th century (Mahmood 2017). While the Mughal rule of Arakan was not accompanied with recorded instances of anti-Buddhist oppression, it is possible that the genuine fear by the Buddhist majority was derived from a perception that a non-Buddhist ruler would pose credible threats in dismantling centuries of Buddhist privileged position in the mainstream society. As a result, these concerns could be exploited to justify and legitimise the targeted persecution of Rohingyas today – perhaps due to the difficulties to physically distinguish between them and people of Indian descent or the possibly-deliberate misconception between both groups. While this causal argument would require further scrutiny, consequential changes to the social structures and the position of Buddhism after British colonisation potentially remain central to the roots of sectarian division between both groups.

In addition, the British had politicised group identities in Burma out of political interests, which further deepened the political anxiety faced by the Buddhists. For instance, the census design virtually forced respondents to identify with a religion regardless of their level of adherence that would later serve as an avenue to reinforce sectarian identification (Charney 1999). Institutional social grouping can accentuate intergroup differences, and eventually incite conflict, by creating a

permanent barrier among identities and promoting stronger in group bias (Chandra 2012, Sambanis and Shayo 2013, Ferguson and McKeown 2016). The colonial administration also artificially grouped co-ethnic in distinct social cleavages with minimal consideration of its effects on social structures, and indirectly manifest its notorious “divide-and-rule” approach. For example, descendants of immigrants from British India, i.e., Bengali Muslims from Chittagong, were officially defined as “Mahomedan”, an archaic term often used by Europeans in the Indian subcontinent to refer to Muslims, or “Chittagonian” (Chan 2005) despite high social integration between them and ethnic Rohingyas (Nemoto 1991, Yegar 2002). Both groups share a common identity through religion, social customs, and language (Leider 2013: 227). Nonetheless, this classification contestably highlights the “foreignness” of Bengali-Rohingya offspring while simultaneously diluting the fact that Rohingyas are “native” to Myanmar and blurring the lines between “Muslims”, “Indians”, and “Rohingyas”. As a calculated political move, the British empowered ethnic minorities (particularly those of Indian descent) in key administrative and military positions to disenfranchise the Buddhist majority – who were seen as disloyal and rebellious – and discourage uprisings and armed resistances (Yegar 2002, The Irrawaddy 2018). The chaotic realignment of social structures by the British would set a highly divergent path for both Rohingyas and the Buddhist majority, especially after the (re)awakening and (re)definition of salient communal identities.

Moreover, the dissolution of the political border between Burma and British India and the economic necessity to develop the resource-rich, labour-scarce Burma had motivated British to adopt a liberal immigration stance, leading to an intense economic competition between migrant workers from South Asia and the Burmese. An influx of workers from as far as Punjab and Madras facilitated the labour-intensive economy (industrial rice cultivation and exports in the Irrawaddy Delta region) and infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, railways, and ports) in a cost-effective manner (Butkaew 2005, Leider 2013). Chaturvedi (2015) added that Western-educated Indians, upper-class business families, and *Chettiar* money lenders also migrated to Myanmar. This gap between Indian migrants and Burmans – by the virtue of British India being one of the more developed British colonies – left the latter displaced from the expanding colonial economy. For example, in Sittwe, one of the then busiest rice-exporting ports in the world, Indian migrants and their descendants formed 97% of the city’s population in 1931 (Chaturvedi 2015: 16), basically proving the perception of foreigners getting better-paying jobs and being placed on a path of greater wealth accumulation than the natives (Fink 2001). Similarly, the tendency for Indians to actively block Burmese people from filling vacant positions in the public and private sectors had led to their economic overrepresentation (Yegar 2002: 30), in which the subsequent economic anxiety and frustration further enhanced animosity towards foreigners. Given how communal tensions were recorded as early as the 1920s with Rakhine Buddhists being “...apprehensive about the ... invasion of their countries by hordes of Chittagonians” (Leider 2013: 238), anti-Indian and anti-Muslim riots were prevalent throughout Burma in the 1930s that led to the death of hundreds of Indian workers and destruction of properties (Mohajan 2018).

The culmination of these economic and political anxieties was violently expressed during World War II (WWII). Inter-religious violence was further enflamed during the Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942 due to the opposing allegiances between social groups, in which the Burman ethnic majority sided with the Japanese due to their religious similarity and the desire for independence while ethnic minorities – Karen, Kachin, Chin, Rohingyas, and other non-Buddhists – aligned with British in exchange for promises of autonomy (Mahmood 2017). In the Rakhine State, Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists were in direct confrontation as the former joined the British “Force V” while the latter was recruited into the Japanese “Patriot Arakan Force”

(Nemoto 1991). The frustrations experienced by the Buddhist majority also motivated attacks on minorities, such as Rohingyas, due to the perception of the latter enjoying disproportionate social, political, and economic advantages relative to their population size and influence under British colonialism. Furthermore, the religious conflict was exacerbated with the institutionalisation of Buddhist nationalism – of which Buddhist elements were infused into the foundation of Burmese nationalism – to mobilise opposition against colonisation. Although Myanmar is multi-ethnic and multi-religious, the exclusionary crux of Burmese nationalism was contestably motivated by the ethnic diversity of the overwhelming Buddhist populace. Despite Buddhism being practiced by almost 90% of the population, most of its adherents are spread across various ethnic groups. In fact, formulating a new national identity that revolves around Buddhism did not only strengthen the construct of a unity Burma, but also fit the political incentives of the Burman elites to mobilise the ethnically diverse Buddhists against non-Buddhists (Tonning 2014). In other words, politicising salient identities to express political-economic anxieties and mobilise anti-colonial movements has virtually laid the roots for the Rohingya conflict today.

Buddhist Nationalism as a Tool for Post-Independence Political Legitimacy

Post-independence, Buddhist nationalism stayed relevant in Myanmar to serve the electoral motivations of opportunistic politicians. For instance, to court the Buddhist support in the 1960 Burmese general elections, the-then Prime Minister, U Nu, ran on a religious rhetoric, in which promises to elevate Buddhism as the official state religion further infused the essence of Buddhist and Burmese identities (Sahliyah 1990). In fact, upon his ascension to the Premiership, he tabled the State Religion Promotion Act that was later passed by the Parliament in 1961, leading to the use of the Buddhist lunar calendar, official observance of the *uposatha* or the Buddhist sabbath, dedicated airtime for religious programmes on state broadcasting radio, and the teaching of major Buddhist scriptures to Buddhist students in government schools (Sahliyah 1990). A synthesis of this period would also underline the complex inter-group dynamics. There were efforts to rebuild peace between both Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingyas post-independence – as illustrated by the representation of Rohingyas or Muslims in mainstream political-economic spheres. But the religiously motivated secessionist movements among Rohingyas only strengthened the perception of their incompatibility with the Burmese identity. While assuming that Rohingyas have dual loyalty, or are even disloyal to Myanmar, solely due to their religion is inherently problematic, their persistence for autonomy and self-determination implies a somewhat weak sense of belonging. For instance, there were armed resistance and insurgencies against the newly independent government between 1948 and 1950 as some Rohingyas preferred to be under the Muslim-majority East Bengal (present-day Bangladesh), resulting in the government suppression and social ostracisation of the Rohingya community (Nemoto 1991). The amplification of Buddhist nationalism as a post-independence nation-building tool may have inflamed the secessionist sentiments among some Rohingyas, and thus, further reigniting the sectarian division.

However, the politicisation of Buddhism would later be a double-edged sword for U Nu as it emboldened the Buddhist clergy (*Sangha*) to demand greater Buddhist elements in the national legislation, leading to the (re)initiation of sectarian violence between Buddhists and non-Buddhists (Smith 1965). While political concessions were made to appease the ethnic minorities, they were then perceived as disputing the sanctity of Buddhism – in which the subsequent fear of communal riots essentially prompting a military coup by General Ne Win in 1962. At first, the junta-initiated “Burmese Way to Socialism” seemed to imply a move towards inter-faith peacebuilding – with the state-led secularism abolishing state *Sangha* communities and reversing existing religious

policies, among many (Charney 2009, Yuthaworakool 2017) – but it also led to the mass removal of Burmese of foreign descent, nationalisation of minority-held business, and dissolution of non-Burmese political representation (Chaturvedi 2015). Nevertheless, credible potential challenges to its political legitimacy then incited the junta to inflame both Buddhist nationalism and the religious tensions between Rohingyas and the Buddhist majority. That is, Yunus (1994) and Keenan (2013) stated that religious sentiments were exploited – in which non-Buddhists were perceived to conflict with the ideas of a Buddhist Burma, and hence, a common national identity – to serve as a distraction from the public discontent of the autocratic regime, food shortages, and a failing economy. Given how Rohingyas were already depicted as an enabler of British colonisation through their allegiances in WWII, their devoutness to Islam and distinct physical features basically augmented their “otherness” (Haque 2017). This means, future institutional violence and discrimination – namely the 1978 Naga Min mass expulsion of Rohingyas and the 1982 Citizenship Law that constitutionally stripped Rohingyas off their Myanmar citizenship – were justified to safeguard the Burmese Buddhist and the *Sangha* from a religious adversary (Schober 2011).

Examining the Buddhist-Muslim relations in the Arakan region throughout modern history has virtually underlined the political roots of the violence on Rohingyas. While determining who is “native” to a region and justifying its “cut-off point” in pre-modern nation states are inherently complicated due to historical migratory circumstances, the power of definition usually lies in the hands of the political elites. Religion is merely incorporated to further incite the highly-contested narratives of the origin of Rohingyas – with the lines between “natives” and “foreigners” being intentionally blurred on the grounds of technical definitions – in which religious and cultural differences would be utilised to justify their expulsion and discrimination. Similarly, Zawacki (2013) introduced two complementary yet distinct strands in describing the causes of conflict: the operational angle argues how domestic political, economic, and social structures were purposely designed to encourage systematic and institutional oppression toward minorities – with structural weaknesses within Myanmar law, administrative policies, and societal practices offering no credible enforcement mechanisms to restrain the state – while the political outlook implies that this violence reflects underlying legal, political, and economic hardships. The 1982 Citizenship Law essentially serves as an example of the former. The exploration of the origins of the Rohingya conflict shares the philosophical nuances of Prasse-Freeman & Mausert, who reinforce the arbitrariness of social categorisation: “...the Rohingya are not hated because they are different, but because there is fear that they are actually the same...” (n.d.: 14).

EXPLORING PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FOR CONFLICT RECONCILIATION AND PEACEBUILDING IN THE ROHINGYA CRISIS

The consequences of systematic and institutional oppression of Rohingyas go far beyond the humanitarian lenses. Persistent physical and property insecurity threaten democracy with the erosion of social integration, civil liberties, human rights (Przeworski 1995), and long-term socioeconomic growth with potential losses of productive investments in human and physical capital. This risk is basically amplified in Myanmar due to its democratic and economic infancy from only recently opening up after 50 years of a closed socialist economy and a repressive autocracy. In the light of the ongoing military crackdown on Rohingyas, proposed solutions must be comprehensive to protect universal human rights while also averting democratic backsliding and economic stagnation. Drawing inspirations from past religious conflicts and fundamental tenets for durable peace, approaches that could be replicated within the circumstances of the Rohingya conflict are explored: direct international interventions and internationally led empowerment of

both foreign non-state actors and domestic civil societies. Due to changes in the dynamics of inter-state and intra-state relations over the past few decades, they are accordingly reflected in the shifting definitions, functions, and norms of the interventions.

Approach 1: Direct International Interventions

From being largely limited to maintaining and monitoring peace in disputed territories, direct international interventions have found their way into institutional reconstruction and nation-building, especially within failed and fragile states, because of the emergence of complex threats to state legitimacy and the redefined nature of statehood post-Cold War. Despite their ambiguous effects, how do foreign interventions maintain their relevance as a foreign policy instrument in the context of contemporary internal conflicts and civil war? Their effectiveness in helping to end inter-group violence and promote durable peace feasibly remains under heavy scrutiny given the humanitarian and institutional failures in Libya and Somalia – although credit must be duly given to the success stories in Sierra Leone and Timor Leste. Even with their well-wished intentions to safeguard the physical security and individual dignity of those facing credible threat to their livelihoods, external interventions raise a complicated dilemma since they fundamentally contradict the inviolability of national sovereignty and ideologically manifest the features of 21st-century colonialism (Ottaway and Lacina 2003). Yet, the disastrous consequences of the global inaction in the Rwandan Genocide virtually underline how such interventions are still, in theory, the better alternative. Therefore, with a range of diverse approaches (diplomatic, economic, or military) and deployment timing (either as a pre-emptive prevention or a direct response to ongoing conflicts), interventionist policies – especially those that are multi-pronged in nature – can influence the incentive structures of political elites.

Diplomatic interventions could be simply defined as the processes of external negotiations and engagements involving the relevant stakeholders of a domestic matter, especially in the cases of violent conflicts in the complex multipolar and multiplex world today. Such initiatives present a non-coercive, non-violent, and non-binding approach in preventing further escalation of societal tensions and nudging the perpetrators to alleviate escalations. These policies intend to promote a compromise based on the centrality of elite bargaining, in which both sides would be willing to forego their most preferred outcome in exchange of the best situation given their circumstances – an essence that is possibly comparable to Pareto efficiency. However, there are also instances of negative diplomatic interventions, such as visa bans for diplomatic officials, suspension of high-level bilateral engagements, and cultural, academic, and sporting boycotts to signal breakdown in negotiations (Hazelzet 2001). To illustrate the diverse nature of diplomatic instruments that perhaps could be replicated to end the violence, Wolff and Dursun-Ozkanca (2012) have listed five examples of diplomatic interventions: 1) conditionality, in which peace serves as a prerequisite towards further access and benefits to the international community; 2) fact-finding missions to obtain a grassroots understanding of a conflict and prepare better policy outcomes; 3) mediation, of which an external polity would guide the warring parties at the negotiating table; 4) confidence-building measures that often redesign the domestic structures to promote peace; and 5) international judicial measures that empower the prosecution of crimes against humanity. In fact, the ethno-religious conflict in Yugoslavia witnessed the range of diplomatic interventions, both positive and negative, that managed to thwart and bring justice to the systematic atrocities – from issuing travel bans on the perpetrators of violence in Bosnia to implementing the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (Hazelzet 2001, Wolff and Dursun-Ozkanca 2012).

Despite their rather coercive nature, economic-motivated interventions – i.e., the infusion of economic tools into foreign policy instruments – have arguably become more relevant in today’s globalised world, in which the greater intertwining of economies today have left countries more sensitive to abrupt disruptions in economic processes. These interventions exist in various forms, as encapsulated by two distinct umbrella terminologies: “carrots”, or positive approaches, and “sticks”, or negative approaches. An in-depth exploration of these categories outlines a spectrum of economic instruments, of which economic “sticks” consist of direct and indirect trade embargo, restrictions on investments and borrowing (i.e., capital flows), denial of access to international or foreign financial systems, suspension of non-humanitarian aid, and seizure or freezing of assets in foreign banks. Conversely, economic “carrots” may range from conditional development aid to promises of favourable trade and investment opportunities. While credible threats of economic punishment and guarantees of economic assistance can have a myriad of implications to both recipient and sender countries, their ability to force offenders of human rights to shift their incentive structure at a relatively low humanitarian and financial cost essentially places them in the middle ground between the extreme ends of military operations and policy inaction. In the context of developing countries, “carrots” can provide the much-needed capital for economic growth while “sticks” can magnify the extent of economic hardship among the public, which potentially encourage top-down and bottom-up policy or leadership changes. For instance, apartheid South Africa faced comprehensive economic sanctions in the 1980s by the US, Europe, and Japan due to its institutional discrimination of non-whites, in which the average annual net capital outflow was 2% of the GNP throughout the sanctions – although their actual effectiveness on promoting political change was questioned given how South Africa was already facing structural economic weaknesses (Ch. Hefti 2002). Moreover, Hufbauer et al. (2007) also outlined how the failures of sanctions to restrain alleged human rights violation in Iran, Cuba, and North Korea could be attributed to design and implementation flaws rather than those of intuition.

Despite their high financial, human, and diplomatic costs, military interventions would often be the subsequent response to severe breaches of international humanitarian laws by the warring parties in the unfortunate breakdown of diplomatic and non-aggressive channels. For example, the recorded cases of systematic war rapes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide in the Bosnian War between April 1992 and November 1995 – which saw over 200,000 people killed and many more displaced due to extreme ethno-religious fragmentation – were essentially reflected in the scale of international military responses. That is, NATO forces conducted series of airstrikes on the perpetrators (i.e., Bosnian Serbs who are loyal to Serbia and are mostly adherents of Eastern Orthodoxy) and aided in military operations to prevent further crimes against humanities – namely on the Bosnian Muslim plurality and to a lesser extent, the Bosnian Croats who are loyal to Croatia and mostly of Catholic religion. Consequently, the military assistance managed to shift the balance in power against Serbia, which would then force the three sides to return to the negotiating table and sign the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace for Bosnia and Herzegovina (or the ‘Dayton Agreement’). On the other hand, military interventions can also take the form of foreign peacekeeping missions during and after violent conflicts. As illustrated by the Bosnian War once again, the earliest peacekeepers comprised the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) that was responsible to ensure safety of Bosnian civilians and to escort humanitarian aid. Their presence in Bosnia remains until today, albeit at a much smaller extent, to preserve the implementation of the Dayton Agreement: the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) from 1995 to 1996, the NATO Stabilisation Force (SFOR) from 1996 to 2004, and the EU Force (EUFOR) from 2004 until today – technically exemplifying how military interventions could contribute to peacebuilding strategies.

Approach 2(a): Empowering Foreign Non-State Actors

The growing legitimisation of international interventions has subsequently led to the increased presence of external non-state actors in the processes of conflict management, resolution, and reconciliation. The international community has demonstrated that individual human security is no longer limited to the responsibility of a state. The (relatively) well-funded and structured non-state actors now have a greater role to play. For instance, UN-associated agencies and international humanitarian organisations (IHOs), such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Doctors Without Borders, have amplified their involvement in the Rakhine State after the large-scale violence on Rohingyas in early 2010s, namely to deliver basic needs to thousands of victims of the conflict. However, current domestic political dynamics have altered the circumstances of such interventions. The perception of these external non-state actors being biased towards Rohingyas while ignoring the plight and hardships of Rakhine Buddhists – a belief, corroborated by xenophobic and nationalistic sentiments – have resulted in public discontent towards, attacks on, and the eventual suspension of these organisations (Perria 2017). In addition, members of the UN Human Rights Council Fact-Finding Mission to Myanmar were threatened with travel bans, which eventually would force them to utilise remote testimonial collections – an approach that could allow Myanmar to challenge the legitimacy of the entire Mission (Human Rights Watch 2017). Given their exclusive access to conflict areas and an inherent commitment to human rights, IHOs should not confine themselves only within the realm of humanitarian provision. The international community should indirectly enhance the organisational and technical capacities of these non-state actors not only to enlarge the extent of their humanitarian delivery, but also facilitate transmission of grassroot information to better inform policy choices – though at an arm's length to maintain their perceived neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

As alluded to by the growing clout of globalisation on international relations, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) could also leverage upon their economic prowess to influence domestic policies. The notions of reputational risks and ethical investments have basically encouraged firms to be equipped with a greater awareness of the political environment in their prospective country of interest. For instance, Western oil and gas corporations in Myanmar have been rather reluctant to expand their operations, investments in infrastructure, and development of future fields given the reputational risks of being associated with a state that engages in systematic persecution and borderline ethnic cleansing of Rohingyas (Economist Intelligence Unit 2018). Simply put, given the perceived rise in ethical consumerism, public perception can exert political and economic pressures – perhaps through advocacy movements and calls of boycotts – on firms to alter their behaviours because of the threat to their profits (Pellandini-Simanyi 2014, Davies 2016). Thus, to empower the role of benevolent corporations, governments can incentivise such behaviours by establishing guidelines on international commercial transactions. For instance, the Norwegian Ministry of Finance released an ethical guideline for the management of the Government Pension Fund of Norway, the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world, which prohibits investments in firms that are directly or indirectly involved in violations of human rights – ranging from producers of cluster ammunitions, nuclear weapons, and weapons of mass destruction to abusers of labour rights and beneficiaries of illegal Israeli colonial settlements in Palestine. While the Rohingya crisis has not completely deterred foreign firms, especially those in the region, to invest in Myanmar, declining investments in its gas industry have potentially led to disruption in immediate power supply and losses in revenue (Economist Intelligence Unit 2018).

Approach 2(b): Empowering Domestic Civil Societies

Local civil society organisations (CSOs) are often no stranger to peacebuilding initiatives. They played a substantial role in contributing to a sustained peace agreement in the aftermath of civil wars in Mozambique (1992), Guatemala (1996), Sierra Leone (2000), and Liberia (2003), among many (Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). The ability of Colombian CSOs to participate and successfully push their policy agenda in the peace accords between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a far-left guerrilla group, further illustrated their influence during conflict management processes (Losnegård 2017). These “achievements” were probably possible due to their (relative) proximity to the grassroots, in which CSOs can offer a platform to manifest non-elite representation, and thus, occupying a legitimate political and social clout in the mainstream society (Barnes 2006, Paffenholz 2014). Local CSOs are somewhat allowed to operate with greater flexibility than those with international links since the latter could be perceived as a more credible threat to the political regime. However, the extent of this statement might be less applicable in Myanmar given how domestic democratic resistance towards the junta was inherently attributed to foreign influences by the virtue of its leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, being educated in United Kingdom (Clapp 2007). Since effective CSOs would require a comprehensive civil network and mature institutional capacity to exert credible political pressure on the state, the international community should provide technical assistance and financial support, to ensure their organic development. CSOs should also avoid prolonged “institutional competition” with mature external entities, in which such a parallel presence can limit the extent of institutional building. Thus, the tensions between a systematic sectarian conflict and the realm of peacebuilding and conflict reconciliation would possibly require CSOs to prioritise the dissemination of democratic instruments and social harmony, a task that is no mean feat especially in autocracies.

Democratic institutions have often been proposed as a tool for conflict resolutions by promoting consensus among contesting social cleavages and addressing sectarian conflicts (Ake 1996). Kipgen (2014) outlined how consociational democracy, i.e., a power-sharing mechanism in divided societies, can accommodate the divergent preferences and interests of competing social cleavages. In the context of Myanmar, the government could allocate quotas for minority representation to alleviate the grievances faced by ethnic minorities and break perceived stereotypes through increased inter-group interactions. However, given how the government has adamantly expressed its refusal to integrate Rohingyas into the mainstream society, domestic civil societies can then fill the vacuum to promote peacebuilding democracy. Despite criticisms of civil society reflecting the notion of privatising state functions and being mostly dependent upon the quality of citizens (Berman 1997, Ishkanian 2007), they can serve as a counterbalance – or even an alternative – to the state (Bahmani 2016, Cooper 2018). Moreover, Kenyan CSOs have illustrated how CSOs can challenge authoritarian regimes to promote democratisation processes through concerted pressures and mass mobilisation (Ndegwa 1996, Murunga and Nasong’o 2007) and training for political leadership and opposition movement (Mutunga 1999). There is a rich literature on the presence of civil societies in promoting democracy, especially in the context of the former Soviet Union, with the biggest recipient of USAID democratic aid between 1990 and 2003 being Eurasian countries (USD5.8 million) whereas Asian countries only received around USD1.3 million (Finkel et al. 2006). While the international community and foreign CSOs can contribute to the empowerment of domestic groups in many ways, a particular emphasis is needed on enhancing the domestic groups’ ability to both shape and transmit effective democratic narratives for local and external consumption. This approach empowers CSOs to exert some influence on such narratives, which could then minimise the likelihood of the government to conflate democracy with regime change, and therefore, block promotion of democratic mechanisms.

The alleged association between state-initiated mobilisation of Buddhist nationalism and the military crackdown on Rohingyas essentially accentuates the deficiencies in the discourse of state functions in Myanmar, in which there is a clear failure of the state to protect the physical security of Rohingyas. Although they are arguably *de facto* Myanmarese, the 1982 Citizenship Law has made them *de jure* statelessness, which would essentially absolve the government from any responsibilities of providing Rohingyas with any protection – thus, propelling domestic CSOs to prominence albeit from the perspective of mediating social tensions. Their inherent ability to serve as a potential platform to represent civilians who often disproportionately suffer from violent conflicts suggests that civil societies can then initiate meaningful yet effective dialogues and engagements among other social groups and the government (Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). For instance, there could be a dichotomy between Rakhine Buddhists and the political elites – of whom most reside outside the Rakhine State – on the Rohingya conflict. The Rakhine Buddhists might be less eager for sustained violence on the political elites due to the retaliatory nature of repressed social grievances. But this notion seems to be on the fringe, if it exists after all, considering how the current active engagement of Buddhist monks has revitalised the role of religion, with flourishing anti-Islam civil societies attempting to conceptualise anti-Muslim sentiments (Lee 2015: 26). Nevertheless, the fact that rational actors would prefer peace than violence underlines the potential hope for pro-peace CSOs in Myanmar. Civil societies can play two overarching cultural roles to promote dialogue, justice, and peace from the angles of individual-community and community-community relations (ISESCO 2015). Civil societies too could be the mediator between the individual and the society, in which the society provides the individual with an outlet (e.g., a peace-themed World Poetry Day) and relevant assistance express and promote its cultural visions for peace, while also occupying the power to frame narratives of peace and harmony when interacting with other communities (ISESCO 2015). In the context of Myanmar, these two approaches would hypothetically take the form of Rohingya-based societies highlighting the longing for peace within the community and disseminating such expressions to build a theoretical bridge to other societies.

The complexity of the state-led persecution of Rohingyas is basically reflected in its proposed solutions to achieve vision of lasting peace and a violence-free future. To offer a comprehensive overview of effective and practical approaches that embody these sentiments, best practice from contemporary intra-group conflicts and divided countries have been explored. Although religious demographics and dynamics in Myanmar may differ from those of the countries covered, the comparable magnitude of victims, extent of human rights abuses and crimes against humanity, and sectarian nature of the conflict imply their relevancy and replicability as a peacebuilding tool. Both direct international interventions and empowerment of domestic entities have demonstrated their ability to redefine the country's domestic political structures by altering diplomatic, economic, political, and social, among many, incentives – with hopes to end violence. However, to ensure that these approaches can be successfully replicated in Myanmar, a thorough understanding of both their fundamentals and the overarching local structures is needed.

IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS IN THE RAKHINE STATE

Despite the wide range of recommended solutions on the Rohingya conflict from both domestic and international perspectives, promoting a peaceful, genuine, and durable peacebuilding and reconciliation would require an approach beyond their carbon replication. Considering how they were largely inspired by similar contemporary cases in other countries, there is an utmost need to adjust such proposals to better fit the local circumstances and context. Failing to reflect

the unique nuances and domestic socio-political-economic configurations in Myanmar could lead to, at best, the preservation of status quo, while at its worst, the worsening of sectarian relations. For instance, lessons from Bosnia have suggested how external-driven peacebuilding initiatives must be complemented by genuine domestic motivations and institutions to promote a credible perception of justice. The rushing of democratic elections without concrete state institutions and capacities merely led to the reinstatement of the previous regime, of which some were directly or indirectly complicit in the violent conflict (Riskin 1999). Rees (2003) observed how the sense of post-conflict “normality” in Bosnia is still missing among victims due to the reluctance or inability of political elites to bring most war criminals to justice. Since some sort of international intervention is needed – either to directly pressure the Myanmar state or strengthen domestic institutions for an internal change – there is an immediate need to circumvent the effects of decades of insular and autocratic military rule, which has potentially instilled a deep distrust of foreign involvement. To prevent such interventions from posing a moral dilemma and setting a negative precedent, the essence of the interventions in Myanmar should operate around existing regional (e.g., ASEAN) and international multilateral (e.g., UN General Assembly) mechanisms.

‘X+Y’ Approach: Redefining ASEAN While Engaging Myanmar

There is a need to reconstruct the approach in engaging Myanmar judging from how current engagements have technically failed to shift the incentive structure of the regime. Despite the initial targeted economic and diplomatic sanctions on senior military generals by the US and the plan to impose broader economic sanctions by the US and the EU, political elites in Myanmar are perceived less motivated to change due to the nature of domestic political-economic structures (Economist Intelligence Unit 2017). These individuals are mostly insulated from Western economic pressures since they have greater stakes in military-run corporations and conglomerates, such as the Myanmar Economic Corporation and the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings, with such enterprises relying more on regional economic networks from China, Thailand, and India – countries that are allegedly less concerned about the domestic affairs of the recipient country (Economist Intelligence Unit 2017). In fact, Myanmar is further resistant to threats of Western sanctions given its strategic importance to China’s Belt and Road Initiative – as illustrated by the signing of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between both countries in April 2019 on the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor and the provision of a USD148 million grant to Myanmar (Economist Intelligence Unit 2019) – in which the vast expansion of economic linkages and networks remains an utmost priority to China’s global ambitions. Thus, an effective pressure on or intervention in Myanmar would virtually require the “consent” or participation of regional actors, especially of China, albeit the prospect of such an event occurring seems highly unlikely. Nevertheless, Malaysia could perhaps initiate a more reprimanding approach on Myanmar within the ASEAN platform, in which there exists the possibility to further escalate this matter to the East Asian Summit – of which both ASEAN and China are among the members – to strategise a more concerted effort in inducing changes on the political-economic structures of the elites in Myanmar.

ASEAN has a vested interest in the Rohingya crisis for reasons beyond the humanitarian realm – as Myanmar’s regional neighbours, ASEAN member states are confronting the spillover of the domestic issues with the mass influx of Rohingya refugees. The notion of strength in numbers would imply ASEAN’s ability to exert greater pressure on Myanmar relative to unilateral and individual actions from the member states. Yet, in its existing structure, ASEAN faces institutional difficulties and restrictions in imposing credible force when engaging with Myanmar. Currently,

most of its responses are perceived limited to generic statements of concerns and general calls for actions with no genuine attempts to even denounce the complicit military and political elites – although Malaysia has delivered a rather lashing statement on the need to bring the perpetrators of the violence on Rohingyas to justice during the otherwise lackadaisical ASEAN Summit in Bangkok (The New Straits Times 2019). This approach clearly opposes the Article 1(7) of the ASEAN Charter, which highlights its core commitment towards promoting and protecting human rights. However, Limsiritong (2017) discovered that ASEAN's institutional and organisational design prioritises and safeguards the principles of non-interference over those of human rights and other matters. This strict adherence to such principles can possibly be justified by the relative peace and non-alignment in the region, in which the idea of equality of sovereignty reinforced by the non-interference policy minimises potential tensions among ASEAN member states (Ramcharan 2000). Moreover, the fact that all of its member states then managed to escape the Cold War relatively unscathed – with none falling into the direct orbits of either the Soviet Union or the United States – further highlights the successes of its political configuration in supporting regional peace. However, this same principle can also be seen as a double-edged sword when it comes to human rights abuses in the region. Although ASEAN could justify its idleness during the Khmer Rouge genocide – which occurred less than a decade after the former's establishment in 1967 – on the basis of institutional infancy and weak political legitimacy, it risks doing the same even five decades later – despite its perceived organisational capacity – in the light of the Rohingya conflict.

Since the existing approach of ASEAN's two-pronged "internal diplomacy" – in which the public commitment towards non-interference is simultaneously followed by the private, face-saving, diplomatic interventions (Ramcharan 2000) – has essentially failed to stop the violence, ASEAN must be bold in revisiting the idea and consequences of such principles. While its member states could opt for individual and unilateral interventions, e.g., the hypothetical case of Malaysia imposing sanctions on Myanmar, the abject failures of such practices by the West should be a cautionary tale. Despite interventions on the basis of human security are no longer restricted within the realms of multilateral politics (e.g., under the purview of UN General Assembly) and may reflect the foreign policy interests of an individual country, obtaining a regional consensus would not only reinforce the legitimacy for humanitarian intervention, but also exert a greater political pressure on the basis of the ASEAN Consensus. The failure to redefine the non-intervention clause can also increase the likelihood of individual member states undermining ASEAN's structural integrity, in which the lack of consensus and consultation among member states could threaten to shake the growing regionalism initiatives in the organisation. In other words, an unsolicited intervention by ASEAN countries could set a policy slippery slope, in which Myanmar, or other member states, could conduct similar interventions with a relatively weak justification in the future. The complexity of this approach inherently reflects the magnitude of the Rohingya conflict. While the idea of reinventing the core of ASEAN will surely face substantial opposition from member states – potentially arising from the uncertainty upon opening the non-interference Pandora Box – it is worth noting that the spillover of the Rohingya conflict to the shores of Malaysia and Thailand, which would possibly intensify with the ASEAN inaction, could also threaten to undermine the existence of ASEAN.

CONCLUSION

The latest series of violence on Rohingyas have painted a rather pessimistic outlook on the prospect of national reconciliation and puts peace far out of reach. Although the conflict is

mostly motivated by sectarian tensions, its roots are arguably found in the politicisation of religion, and identity in general, which essentially masks an entrenched political, social, and economic issues in Myanmar. That is, hardships from the closed socialist economic system and an oppressive junta rule have basically failed to mitigate colonial-era economic and political anxieties, which were made worse through nationalistic and xenophobic mobilisation of the Buddhist majority. Although the Rohingya conflict is essentially a domestic issue, the international community cannot afford to remain silent on the prolonged suffering faced by Rohingyas – especially for ASEAN given that it is occurring in its backyard – because of the scale of the humanitarian crisis and the overarching consequences. Its implications have extended far beyond Myanmar’s borders as the mass exodus of Rohingya refugees in the region, mostly bound for Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia, is posing substantial security threats and severely straining regional relationship. Given how this paper has drawn inspirations from contemporary cases of inter-group violence to outline best practices to end the violence and promote genuine reconciliation, the Rohingya conflict plausibly needs a creative yet bold stance – i.e., the “X+Y” method of redefining the non-interference clause in ASEAN while maintaining multilateral engagement with Myanmar to exert greater pressure on this issue. However, with the potential implications of opening up ASEAN to regional interference and scrutiny, a further in-depth study is required to avoid any unintended consequences. Nonetheless, the eventual ASEAN solution must be fundamentally rooted in addressing complex human emotions, such as fear, prejudice, and perceptions of injustice for effective peacebuilding.

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RISK MITIGATION SECURITY STRATEGY OF COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN MILITARY ORGANISATION

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ABSTRACT

“Risk management is a more realistic term than safety. It implies that hazards are ever-present, that they must be identified, analysed, evaluated and controlled or rationally accepted.”

Jerome F. Lederer

Terrorism and violent extremism phenomenon have escalated without boundaries with unpredictable circumstances. Accordingly, this erratic threat has increasingly affected the global humanity ecosystems at large causing the military organisation to be dragged in this vicious occurrence. This article elaborates the risk mitigation security strategy proposed to be adopted in countering violent extremism. The projection of this paper deliberates the significance of identifying the motives behind the phenomenon and fundamentals of terrorism and violent extremism associated with risk management elements. The risk mitigation mechanism in an organisation underlines the substantial planning measures to be incorporated into the framework for counter violent extremism. The article concludes recommendations for further exploration of this issue to be capitalized from diverse scenarios.

Keywords: *Terrorism, Violent Extremism, Risk Mitigation, Liberalisation, Radicalisation, Crisis Planning Deradicalisation, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE),*

INTRODUCTION

“Managing risk is very different from managing strategy. Risk management focuses on negative-threats and failures rather than opportunities and successes.”

Robert S. Kaplan

Currently, the uncertainties of the world economies affected the nexus between international business and human resource organisation around the world. Eventually, these organisations are exposed to a variety of risks ranging from economic, operational, compliance and reputational. These organisations may cause unpredictable susceptibilities and intense competition from the effect of globalisation and market liberalisation (Azizan & Lai, 2013). It also raised awareness amongst leaders of the potential benefits of risk management in an organisation. In fact, risk management practices could lead to better project management, effective use of resources and better service delivery (Collier et al., 2007). Many studies have considered risk management as a component of the organisation’s management control system (Beasley et al., 2005; Gordon et al., 2009; Subramaniam et al., 2011).

Terrorism and violent extremism phenomenon have represented the lethal effects of risk management on social phenomena as well as economic and political influences (UNDP, 2016). For most organisation, government policies are intended to suppress terrorism as it gives an impact on the security threat of a country. It will affect organisation risk operations more than the precipitating

terrorists' acts themselves. All violent extremism conducts are significant effects that established itself has risked potential indicators, particularly in dealing with the human resources dimension. Terrorism and violent extremism subject have become an acquainted menace in the contemporary world and are likely to remain as main risk attributes in all aspects of daily life. Relatively, the counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE) studies have predominantly developed over the years across the world to complement the unpredictable terrorism threat that has substantially increased without boundaries. Inevitably, the military organization is seemingly involved to a certain extent in preventing the circumstances from getting worse. The threat of terrorism in Malaysia continues to pose a severe risk challenge as authority's grapple with the complexity of growing radicalization and strive to stay ahead of terrorists plotting attacks in the country. Since 2013, it is reported that over 260 individuals have been arrested following violent extremism and terrorism-related offences and at least 14 planned terrorist attacks had been averted according to the authorities (Jani, M.H, 2017).

The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) and the term internal security and defense are always inseparable, particularly concerning the sovereignty, prosperity and security of a country. Threats on national security are continuously evolving depending on the degree of extremism inclination and intention of the other party, particularly with the emergence of Islamic State (IS) or DAESH threat. The Defense Intelligence Staff Division (DISD), Ministry of Defense (MINDEF) alongside with the Religious Corps (KAGAT) are the department responsible in handling all issues pertaining to violent, extremism and terrorism in the MAF. Various initiatives and strategies inclusive of risks mitigation are transpired under DISD including awareness program, media approaches (distributing pamphlets, posters), seminars and deradicalization program to overcome these negative phenomena (DISD, 2017).

Managing risk is becoming a fundamental concern, and the ability to identify risks and adapt to the ever-changing environment are among the critical success factors for organizations (Arena, Arnaboldi, & Azzone, 2010). Risks mitigation approaches in the domain of CVE is reflected in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding attempt in any organisation. The efforts to evaluate these issues are imperative to improve the program prioritization, as well as effectiveness and efficiency. The measures are likely to restore fundamental beliefs and build up the resilience among military communities to such phenomena. There is an additional impulse for guidance around risk mitigation in this space as CVE work is considered by many in the development field to be a 'risky endeavor'. Retrospective to this challenging situation, some issues need further scrutiny to avert this matter from escalating. This article aims to identify what is a risk mitigation strategy that needs to be implemented to address the CVE issues in the MAF. Besides that, the paper also proposed suggestions that need to be considered within the risks decision-making process in dealing with CVE among military personnel involved in this inhumane conduct.

TERRORISM MENACE

Terrorism threats are phenomenal issues which are unpredictable events that occur in a complex environment. This negative phenomenon has widespread since the 11 September incident in the United States. Hence, the persistent involvement of Islamic State (IS) or DAESH in the Middle East has ultimately caused unprecedented and deteriorating terrorists' threat worldwide. Regardless of economic and political pressure, increased military intervention is required to impose sanctions and eradicate this peril. Nevertheless, the terrorist's threat remains evident and continuous efforts are needed to assess critical domestic, regional and international risk. The

influence manifested by this group has spread its wing across the continent by inflicting fear, terrorist and create an imbalance of security and safety in our homeland. The modus operandi of this group is very flexible, unpredictable and dangerous as it drags the involvement of innocent civilian.

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE)

The United Nations Security Council has progressively accentuated the necessity for a comprehensive approach to counter the evolvement of terrorism and violent extremism. One feature of such method is known as countering violent extremism (CVE). Sumpter (2017) explained the fundamental concept of countering violent extremism (CVE) is to integrate efforts to thwart individuals from harboring violent extremism events thus to minimize recidivism among alleged people that have already conducted these offences. This CVE approach involves extensive events of pre-emptive activities. These activities synergize with the objectives of eliminating main elements of violent extremism within the scope incorporated in the CVE strategy. Such an approach includes activities that focus towards suspected personnel that possibly be exposed to damaging extremism risk consequences.

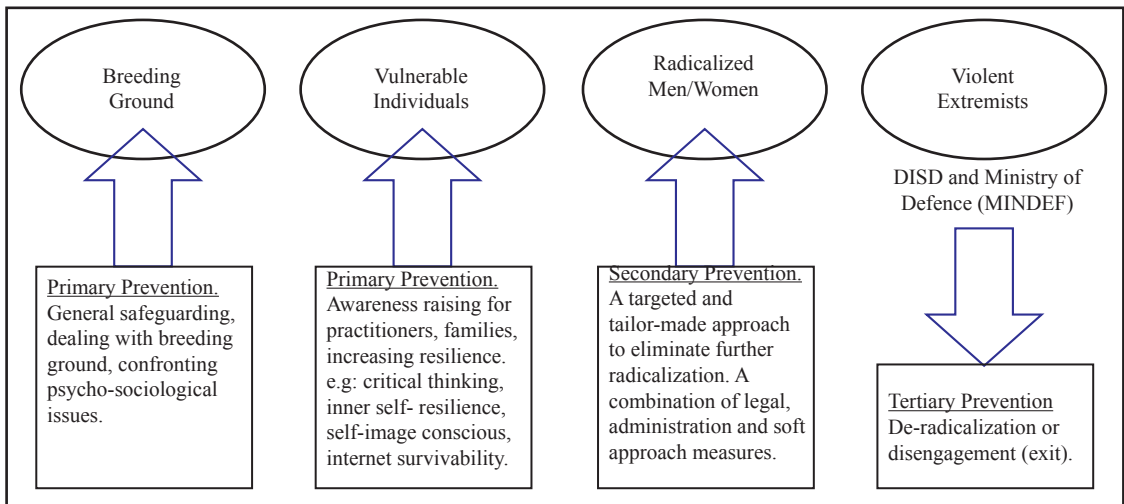


Figure 1: Overview of CVE Strategy Process

Source: Source: Gielen (2017) CVE Policy Spectrum

IDENTIFYING RISK MITIGATION AIM

Military Commanders and personnel in this field raise concerns about incorporating CVE efforts into risks mitigation and hypothetically transforming the risks mitigation measures towards the ultimate objectives of diminishing violent extremism threat. The development of these CVE efforts before the insertion of risks mitigation is crucial as it will be reflected in the results. The risks mitigation outcome can be translated within its perimeter for short term and long-term period to encounter any undesirable circumstances from different negative avenues to emerge in future. Relatively, the risk mitigation measures undertaken encompasses diverse mechanism of CVE field. It prompts a specific program to reach for the indirect threat of mitigating violent extremism from other intangibles factors using current information technological enhancement. By realizing the initiatives of integrating risk mitigation with CVE efforts, especially in the MAF environment,

the ultimate objectives of risks mitigation are accomplished with the contributing role of military commanders, staffs and human resources department. This development between security elements and counter-measures effort will involve various corps of MAF, particularly the Defense Intelligence Staff Division (DISD), Religious Corps of MAF and other pertinent agencies. With the participation of these agencies in the MAF, the synergy factor and decision-making process will be more prudent, achievable and sustainable.

AN EXTENSIVE RISK MITIGATION STRATEGY IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PLANNING

A comprehensive countering violent extremism planning should encompass risk mitigation strategy which consists of the risk's prevention program, crisis planning, risk mitigation measures and continuity management. This strategy is evident in the MAF organization setup.

Risk prevention

Risk prevention in violent extremism realms is translated into pre-emptive action undertaken in an organization that exposes its structural management, human resources discrepancies, financial setbacks, loss of assets and mismanagement of mishap. Risk prevention is a practical procedural technique that encompasses an efficient process of numerous methods. It also includes measuring the possibility and circumstances of these threats whilst emphasizing necessary counter-measures protocols to extend efforts in reducing its consequences (Levitt, 1997; Loosemore et al., 2005). This mechanism is simplified in four main factors which are:

Recognize Resources and Susceptibilities

The organizational resources can be categorized as tangible assets such as people, infrastructure, equipment and materials, and intangible values such as knowledge, feelings, information, experiences and influences (FEMA, 2004a). These factors must be explicitly explained, discussed, documented and monitored systematically with the current technology system to encounter any potential adverse circumstances of the terrorism threat. For instance, there are violent extremism activities that are intentionally planned and targeted to the community at large. In contrast, others may just create havoc by damaging infrastructure or divert the attention for political mileage with different reputation agenda. By recognizing these range of resources associated with terrorism affair, it is essential to evaluate the susceptibilities of these resources (Rhodes, 2002). An organization should identify its drawbacks in terms of infrastructure composure, equipment accountability, facilities inventory, safety, security and occupational health, organization management, etc. These susceptibilities can be theoretically more evident compared to others and it is crucial to circumnavigate these factors, which need to be fully understood either from a positive or negative perspective. For instance, if a military organization stores hazardous or explosives devices in a specific building, such items may be helpful or harmful to the nation or infrastructure.

Identify The Risks

It is vital to identify the possible sources of hazard to an organization's resources and the susceptibilities that may influence it. Furthermore, the hazardous situation will directly impact future events and activities by any organization (Decker, 2001). The possibility of danger or risks

that may incur towards a military organization can bring about the catastrophic outcome to the society without a strong defense structure. These risks are evident and maybe potentially identified as threat elements. Currently, terrorist's ideologies and method are continuously progressing; hence, an organization must keep abreast with the current philosophy of media and technology enhancement on potential threats. The phenomenon of violent extremism and terrorism threat imposed are visible and planned well ahead in advance based on their intention towards a specific schedule. These threats may vary according to the terrorist's ideologies and philosophy in realizing their true motives. As such, their preference will essentially disrupt the supply chain flow that involves human resource segment, infrastructure, equipment, materials, necessities, financial and organization reputation. In retrospective, the anticipative fundamentals are significant to avoid primary resources susceptibilities.

Risks Evaluation

This process is significant to evaluate the probability and circumstances involving violent extremism planning and must be addressed systematically. Risks are very subjective, whereby most organization, companies, firms are exposed to it but in a diverse context with different impact. For instance, security or military organization are riskier and more prone to hazard environment compared to a commercial media company. It is because of the differences in the company's core duties and responsibilities. Nevertheless, every organization risks committee is crucial to assess the threat, and the management committee structure must set the target or prioritized. The organization risks committee should differentiate the high-risk resources factors compared to the low-risk resources, and due emphasis should be given to these aspects. As such, terrorists' threat is a different category of risks management because of its complicated nature, unpredictable activities and subtle act imposed. For instance, during the national religious celebration that has long holiday period, ammunition depot, military headquarters or military installation and airports are more likely to be the target of terrorism act, even though these locations are prime security refuge.

Integrate, Execute and Evaluate Counter-Measures

The fourth step of the risk prevention mechanism process is to integrate, execute and evaluate counter-measures to reduce the risks committed. Obviously, at this stage, after the potential risks had been identified and analyses, the next step is to determine and synergize the measures undertaken for subsequent action. The main objectives are to leverage the possible counter-measures that would alleviate the possibility of risks outcome and create a positive working environment in the organization to perform sufficiently. This may include reevaluating current procedure, the reassurance of domestic policy and update rules and regulation imposed for maximum performance capacity. In the military environment, to indulge in a risk-free circumstance is impossible; therefore, the need to inculcate awareness, educate and instill proper countering violent extremism guidance is essential among military personnel.

CRISIS PLANNING

Crisis planning is the most significant part of the strategy as it relates to the organization's ability to mitigate the effect of crisis; some of the impacts can directly impact the organization's reputation, resources and personnel. As such, situations can be explained by the hazardous urge of perseverance which overspread the organization's managing abilities, erecting pressure

and concern among organizational personnel and outsider stakeholders (Loosemore, 2000). In a military organization, a violent extremism crisis may strike in different avenues that have an impact on the organization sustainability, human resource management and family's survivability. Hence, the human resource department plays an essential role in identifying adequate support and rendering proper motivation assistance to all families affected by the crisis. Ultimately, the internal and external surroundings of the organization would require crucial decision-making support via the involvement of the community, public relation and government in crisis planning. There are three stages of crisis planning approach which are:

a. **Pre-Crisis Stage.** Tresh and Guernsey (2003) mentioned that studies conducted have found that most organizations exposed to high-risk industries need to appoint a catastrophe evaluation committee which oversees the overall crisis management situation. This stage includes coordinating the preparation prior to the crisis and its susceptibilities, revising the law and act which govern under crisis disaster, managing individuals upon the shortcomings and organizing the crisis repercussion. In the MAF, this committee is placed under DISD responsibilities which includes of arrange a regular meeting, collect current information/data on crisis management, receive feedback to improve crisis, conduct periodical essential risk evaluation procedure, obtain logistics inventory, assets management, infrastructure data, and assess social and religiosity background of all military personnel to best prepared for crisis occurrence. At this stage, this committee contribution is essential towards preparing for the next phase of crises management.

b. **Crisis Stage.** The stage is very crucial as it manages events systematically without imposing any uncharacteristic threat at large. It is imperative that the committee must be in control and able to digest and describe the issue. Besides that, the committee should act conclusively to avoid relapse (Loosemore, 2000). Suppose violent extremism activities occur in a military environment context. In that case, it is under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces context, whereby all military personnel are abiding by the laws and regulation govern under the Malaysian Armed Forces Act 1972. Subsequently, the DISD will react towards establishing a case to investigate and make necessary in-depth confirmation of military personnel alleged to be associated with this crisis. Security and safety are paramount, and the military higher formation leaders would not compromise these. Any interference from outside sources will be disregarded and avoided.

c. **Post-Crisis Stage.** After a crisis, the committee will identify and conduct necessary action, which focuses on awareness, recovery and educate the personnel involved. This stage may also include family support and organization assistance. A comprehensive mechanism of crisis recovery plan should be formulated in place for long term planning. It will allow the committee to rectify the issues substantially and proactively towards developing a better and comprehensive crisis planning mechanism to face the uncertainties threat soon.

RISK MITIGATION MEASURES

Depending on the crucial threat it imposed, there are various risk mitigation measures or risk mitigation techniques that are applicable to be implemented towards the community.

However, in a military organization, these measures need to be scrutinized and meticulously evaluated as it deals with national security personnel. The prominent risk mitigation strategy in the MAF organization includes the deradicalisation program. This program is designed specifically for alleged or detained military personnel involved in violent extremism activities which focus on conducting rehabilitation and recovery programs under the *soft approach* method. This approach is being practiced and applied in Malaysia, particularly in the MAF. These deradicalisation program objectives are to create awareness and establish a systematic treatment program among alleged violent extremists' military personnel. The modules segments of this program may consist of components of psychological aspects, religious/spirituality education, motivation and counselling, self-belief and self-esteem fundamentals portion, counter-ideologies exposure, nationalism/patriotism awareness element, and family cohesiveness support planning.

ORGANISATION CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

An organization continuity management is a comprehensive long-term period planning setup explicitly designed to ensure the survivability of an organization aftermath a crisis (Wold and Shriver, 1997). There is a various program developed for an organization to periodically sustain while maintaining its operability to be effective and efficient. With regards to military organization, an organization continuity management reflects the command from top hierarchy and control leaders giving precise instruction particularly at this juncture; thus, top organization commanders are responsible in conducting the countering violent extremism planning. At this avenue, there are four stages in constructing this management plan which comprises of:

a. First Stage. Constructing the Organization Continuity Management Program:

This step is erected to establish a committee to derive precise vision, mission and objectives of the program that may include short and long-term milestones.

b. Second Stage. Leaders and Commanders Are Well-Versed of the Program:

All military leaders and commanders are well adverse and understand the fundamental nature of this program. The top-level military leaders should acquire relevant information about this program. This stage may include the program implementation procedure, process of its conduct, human resource capacity, capitalization of resources, and awareness of the potential hazards.

c. Third Stage. Assess Organization Outcome: This stage focused on the technology-driven mechanism that may have an impact on the survivability of the organization post-crisis. As such, this stage will analyses the technology system approach undertaken to mitigate risks that may include engaging high technology expert to halt or counter any possibility of violent extremism breach.

d. Final Stage. Monitor, Reevaluate and Review the Current Planning: At this stage, the organization continuity planning has achieved its goal. However, ongoing evaluation is vital for continuous improvement and readjustment towards the current program for the betterment of the organization. This final stage may include identifying any setbacks, make necessary amendments, and subsequently proceeding with the improved program method.

PROPOSED RISK STRUCTURE FRAMEWORK OF COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN MAF

A structured military organization such as MAF is also visible to risks encounter, especially in dealing with violent extremism realm internally. From the earlier literature review explaining on the risk mitigation strategies to counter violent extremism in the organization, it is clear that a practical structure of the whole process of CVE is required for a clear and deliberate explanation. Therefore, to that extent, a proposed risk structure framework, as stated in Figure 2, is formulated to explain the process of countering violent extremism for decision making aspect in the MAF which underlined five steps of the risk evaluation method.

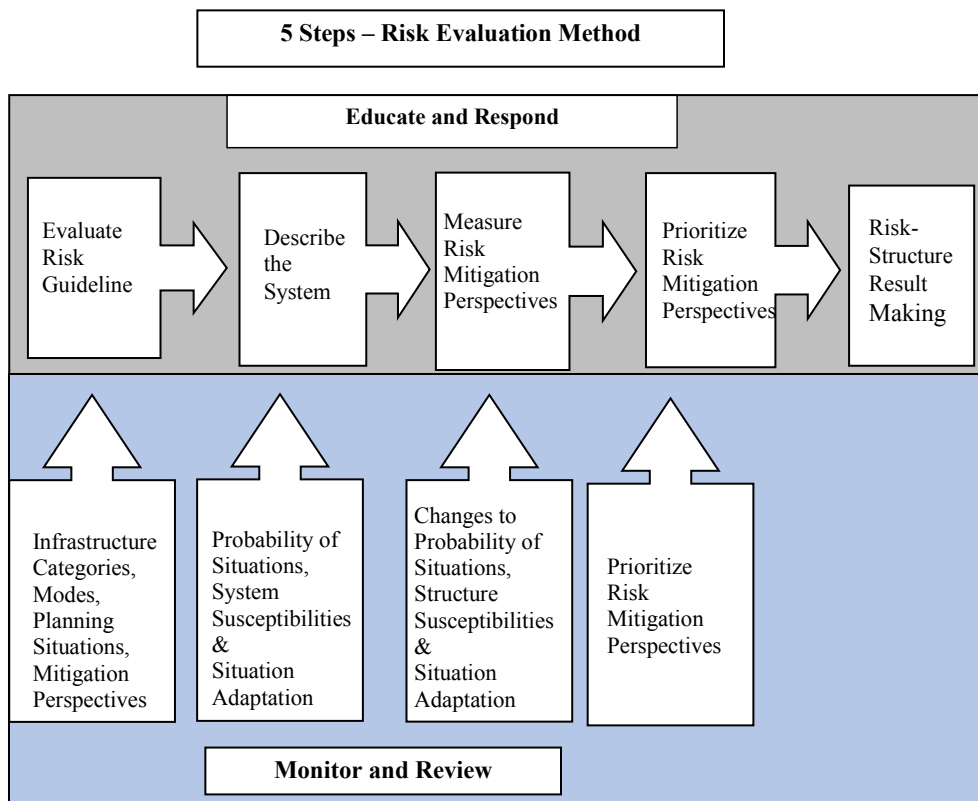


Figure 2: Risk Structure Framework of CVE in MAF
Source: Adapted from UNDP (2019) Risk Management Process

RECOMMENDATIONS

The value-added of risk management includes the potential negative dynamics associated with risk-insensitive programmers and the benefits in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. In the absence of a risk assessment, CVE programming may inadvertently stigmatize specific populations perception, reinforce power dynamics in human capital and exacerbate non-uniformity with other agencies in the government sector. Eventually, the process will lead to targeting of beneficiaries' stakeholders, readjustment of modus operandi by violent extremist groups, contribute to the diversion of scarce resources, allure ramifications on the reputation of CVE committee in the military organization, and foster inefficiencies. The process for undertaking risk assessment is

viewed as an opportunity to increase trust, transparency and accountability within the MAF, and amongst other government agencies and local stakeholders. The time invested in the process will have benefits that go well beyond the CVE programme or strategy. By undertaking risks assessment, we are enhancing the chance of the programme to succeed and therefore contributes towards a meaningful impact on the CVE phenomenon. We are simultaneously protecting ourselves, our colleagues, families' members, stakeholders and the reputation of military organization.

Risk assessments and risk management strategies should be undertaken before the development of a new CVE strategy and should remain an ongoing, iterative process of adaptation. However, even if CVE programmes/initiatives are already underway, it is never too late to undertake a risk assessment. As we begin or continue programme implementation, we should return to the risk management strategy to continue evaluating the evolving context - and the interaction effects between the programme and the context – and adapting the system and the proposed plan as and where necessary. Consequently, there are three main elements of strategizing risk mitigation of CVE in MAF, which is the principles, the framework and risks mitigation process. Fundamental principles are the guidelines of the risk management framework and help to ensure that the CVE program is risk-sensitive as possible. The fundamental tenets of CVE programming include context analysis, conflict sensitivity and 'make no harm', results-based management, and human rights-based approaches. The framework captures the overall approach to risk mitigation. It consists of the policies and procedures to implement the risk management process. The process includes the scope of the program; the human and financial resources are allocated both to the operation of risk mitigation measures and time availability to complete the process.

Therefore, the structured risks framework is proposed for MAF that defines, in effect, the parameters of the scenario. The risks mitigation process can be emulated systematically from diverse systems to justify a comprehensive risk management strategy. There are five steps of risks evaluation method of the structured framework to be integrated with educating/response and monitor/review aspects with all key stakeholders' personality. All the lessons learned during the risk mitigation process are reviewed in the framework for further scrutiny.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that this article indeed has established a foundation in identifying risk mitigation strategy of CVE in the military organization, specifically for major sustaining issues in the defense and security of a nation. As such, this article also created new lenses for scrutiny. Hence, it can magnify the quantum studies in the field of violent extremism specifically for the organization as there is insufficient research being conducted from the academic standpoint. A diverse spectrum of exploration research can be extended to allow knowledge enhancement process among military personnel, especially in the field of terrorism. Therefore, it is imperative to prolong this research extensively from various avenues of research. This is to extend the empirical research within the context of violent extremism threat subjected to the MAF circumstances. The highlight of the article is to comprehend the current stand of violent extremist threat in the MAF and the proposed risk mitigation strategy will improve the CVE planning mechanism. Ultimately, the risk structure framework is designed for the decision-making process to be implemented for the benefit of the entire organization.

The military organization is inevitable to uphold the sovereignty, security and prosperity of the country. The organization vows to restore the citizens' hope and confidence in defending

our beloved motherland with pride and dignity. Hence, reaffirmed its stand as the backbone of the country's constitution and pledge loyalty to His Majesty the King, the military organization shall always be dependable by all means in defense and security of the country. Indeed, it distinguishes itself as a force to be reckoned with despite any undesirable circumstances that may occur along the way.

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MAF ROLES DURING FLOOD DISASTER AND IMPACT ON THE NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

Flood disasters are a phenomenon that is prevalent in low-lying coastal regions and areas susceptible to a seismic activity where extreme weather events leading to the possibility of frequent occurrences of flooding. This situation is likely to result in an increase in flood relief operations, and the scale of the operation is linked to the scale of the disaster event itself as well as the risks. The execution of flood relief operations required the intensive mobilization of assets, as there is often search and rescue involved, with the primary focus of the most operation is to attend to the most vulnerable in the population, such as the sick and injured, children, women, the displaced and the elderly. In Malaysia the government has relied heavily towards the MAF in particular the Army during any Flood relief operations, the role of MAF forming as part of a whole-of-government response in assisting fellow Malaysian or affected states in a humanitarian crisis is not a new phenomenon. Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in military support to populations affected by humanitarian crises. It is expected, as seen from the events of 2014 and 2017 studied, that the Army's involvement in future humanitarian operations is expected to increase in frequency and will continue to remain integral to the Malaysian Government's national strategic objectives.

Keywords: *Disasters, Emergencies, Flood Relief Operations, Operational Readiness, Deployment, Expectations, Preparedness, Response, Mitigation, Recovery*

INTRODUCTION

Massive disasters, especially floods, often result in threats to human life and loss of property. They also affect infrastructure, agriculture and the environment (Rayyan et al. 2019). In the context of security, flood disaster can be categorised as a non-traditional security threat (Alan Collins 2013). During the floods disaster that hit the east coast in 2014, the Malaysia Armed Forces (MAF) deployed the military assets and manpower to aid in relief operations, as the flood situation had worsened and caused major disruption (*Laporan OP MURNI 2014/2015*). The deployment of military assets; land, air and water by the MAF was required as the assets could be mobilised in the affected areas they can be used to move in any situation, weather and geographical area of the disaster (Ungku Azlyet et al. 2015).

FLOOD RELIEF OPERATIONS

NADMA has been the focal point in managing a disaster in Malaysia. It was established under the Prime Minister's Department on 2 Oct 2015 following the flood in 2014 and execute orders from the National Security Council related to disaster management. NADMA is an organisation and management of the resources and responsibilities under the Prime Minister's Department for dealing and coordinating with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies (preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery). The aim to establish NADMA is to coordinate relief and management operations, to help reduce the harmful impacts of all hazards, including disasters, that occurs at the national level or to support humanitarian efforts at the international level. The Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Housing, Urban Wellbeing and Local Government are also responsible for managing a disaster. Several agencies involved in disaster management are the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department, Malaysian Civil Defence

Force (MCDF), Ministry of Health and Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). There were also some voluntary organisations which involved themselves in emergency/disaster management such as St. John Ambulance of Malaysia and the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. The main branches under NADMA are Policy Planning Branch, Operation Management Branch, Post Disaster Management Branch, National Disaster Command Centre – **NDCC** and Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART) - internationally known as SMART, is a Disaster Relief and Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Task Force. The SMART task force is a United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) certified Heavy USAR in June 2016. The Malaysian flood disaster management agency is based on NSC Directive No. 20 and the Regulations. These documents outline the goals of the Disaster and Land Relief Management Policy and Mechanism. The Directive further outlines the scope of duty and how the various agencies will engage in the management of disasters. The council co-ordinates the work of the National Disaster Management and Assistance Committee composed of various federal, state and local agencies.

Government agencies are responsible for different aspects of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) while maintaining their core capabilities. At the state level, the District Office is empowered with significant roles in disaster management and relief. Activation of the specific executing committee will depend on the characteristics and scale of the event as well as coverage of impacted areas. In any case, the District Office is the key implementing agency on the ground to ensure responses are coordinated, assets and human resources are sufficient, and communication is established with the media. Each disaster management committee has its responsibilities. Level 1 is a local incident, which is controllable and has no potential to spread. Therefore, the District Committee ensures coordinated actions, including the provision of available assets and human resources. Level 2 is a more severe incident covering a wider area (two districts) with the potential of spreading out. The state assists the district, such as financial aid, additional assets, and human resources as needed. Level 3 is complex and effecting a wide area or more than two states. The Federal Government determines the national disaster management policy, financial assets, and human resources. Figure 1 shows the three levels of disaster management.

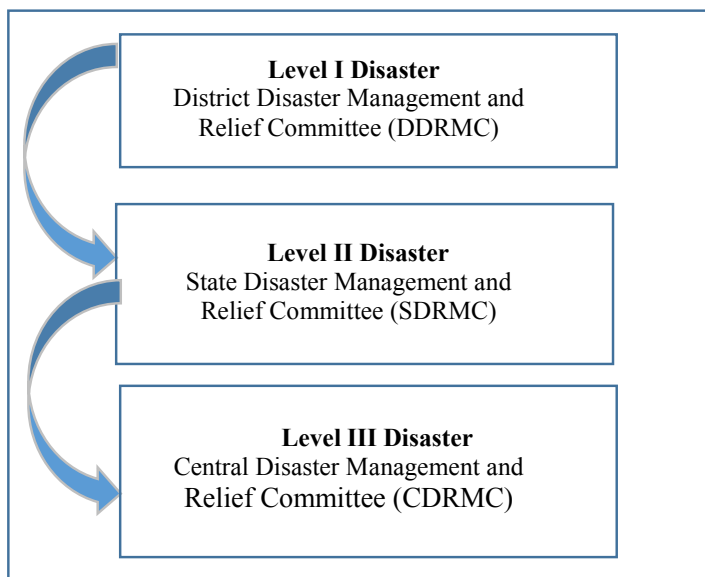


Figure 1: Level of Disaster Management

Source: Malaysia Disaster Management Reference Handbook 2016

During the flood disaster relief operation, the military had cooperated, interact, collaborated, interpretable, with all securities agency as well as with the local peoples. NSC Directive No. 20 had given authorities to execute the disaster relief operation. Relief agencies involved with disaster relief operations in Malaysia are Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), Royal Malaysian Police Department, Malaysia Fire and Rescue Department, Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART), Emergency Medical Services, Malaysian People Voluntary Alliance (RELA), Civil Defence Force, Malaysian Red Crescent Society (PBSM), St. John Ambulance Malaysia and Other Non – Government Organization (NGO) agencies. From the list above, one of the relief agencies directly involved in flood relief operations is the MAF. At present, events of the disaster have increased enormously in which a number of military assets are deployed in response to the gaps that the civil agencies could not deliver. The military deployment had shown an efficient disaster response due to their comprehensive structure, sufficient equipment, well-trained personnel, highly mobile and reliable assistance when the time requires. During the floods in the east coast in 2014, the MAF deployed a large scale of the military assets and troops optimally following the flood situation that worsened and disabled all activities. The deployment of the military assets either land, air and water equipment by the MAF were found to be suitable for the affected areas in which these assets can be arranged to move in any situation, weather and geographical area of the disaster. Military assets such as helicopters, assault boats, trucks and others had been used to assist the victims in operation such as medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) for a speedy recovery and effective action. The tag line *to be “the first on-site”* does show the seriousness of all agency to collaborate and interoperable between themselves. Besides, there are anticipations of the resources and military assets that are required during the execution of the flood operation.

INVOLVEMENT OF MILITARY IN FLOOD RELIEF OPERATIONS

It is undeniable that military involvement in flood relief operations has had a high impact on the effectiveness of such operations. Ajaya Kumar (2015) in his highlighted the reason for the reliance on the armed forces as the first choice to act as responders as they are consistently prepared and equipped to be deployed in the harshest of environment and situation due to the nature of their training. Apart from training for war, the MAF has an equally vital secondary role to play. It is also responsible for providing Military Aid to Civil Power (MACP) entrusted to assist the civil agencies in carrying out law enforcement (when required), preserving public order and disaster relief operations that may plague the nation (Ajaya Kumar 2015). Nora Ibrahim et al. (2018) raised the point on the important role played by the MAF to ensure the effectiveness of the disaster response in an area hit by the disaster. They also identified reasons for increased military involvement in disaster management related to the public expectations, the moral of personnel, adequate training opportunities and humanitarian operations as means for the diversification of the role and skills of the armed forces. The MAF has always been trained in addressing logistics problems, supplies attributable to extreme weather conditions and inundated roads. Rayyan Cheong Tian et al. (2018), discussed factors affecting effective flood disaster response operations in the Infantry Corps of the Malaysian Army. They examined the factors which contribute to affecting effective flood disaster response in Infantry Corps such as command and control, coordination, equipment and logistics, human resource and communications.

During the floods disaster that hit the east coast in 2014, the Malaysia Armed Forces (MAF) deployed the military assets and manpower to aid in relief operations (*Laporan OP MURNI 2014/2015*). The deployment of military assets; land, air and water by the MAF was required as the assets could be mobilised in the affected areas they can be used to move in any situation, weather and geographical area of the disaster (Ungku Azlyet et al. 2015). *Laporan OP MURNI 2014/2015*

noted that the deployment of the military in carrying out these flood relief operations directly impacted their operational readiness such as logistics, human resources, training and financing. This impact is evidenced by the fact stated in *Laporan OP MURNI 2014/2015* stating that the MAF spent RM5,903,228.73, which involved the cost of repair of damaged equipment and infrastructure, fuel consumption, ration, and medical, supplies, in carrying out the 2014 flood relief operations (*Laporan OP MURNI 2014/2015*).

Another flood disaster struck in Seberang Perai in Penang from 5 to 7 Nov 2017, and the military was deployed to provide support in the relief operations. The flood disaster event of 2014 should have been used as a lesson whereby the MAF would need sufficient support from the Government and other relief agencies in carrying out flood relief operations, and they should not take the role as the main role. However, in the flood disaster of 2017 in Seberang Perai, Penang, the MAF played a significant role in the flood relief operations. It mobilised the troops and assets to provide support and assistance to the flood victims. The Chief Minister of Penang directly requested the support from the military to Malaysia Minister of Defence then (Astro Awani 2017). The number of victims reaches up to 6,054 at 39 relief centres.

In the 2017 flood disaster event, the MAF deployed troops, which comprising 368 officers and men, as well as various military assets such as military transport, water supplies, as well as setting up an operational field kitchen. The question arose, to what extent should the government rely on the MAF when carrying out flood relief operations, taking into account the potential impact on their operational readiness. The military is not the mandated agency for the disaster relief operations, nor is it the main force to be mobilised in the event of a flood disaster in the country. However, based on *Laporan OP MURNI 2014/2015*, the reliance of government on the military to carry out such operations is high. This research will examine the impact on operational readiness of the MAF when engaging in flood relief operations, focusing on the impact to the Malaysian Army (MA) and provide options to help improve the efficiency of the operations with minimal impact of the MAF operational readiness.



Figure 2: The Flood-Prone Areas In Peninsula Malaysia

Source: Mohammad Muqtada Ali Khan et al. 2014

ROLES AND TASK OF MAF IN FLOOD RELIEF OPERATIONS

South-East Asia faces three major safety threats (maritime security, terrorism and natural disaster spill over effects). Malaysia is organizing and developing its forces to resolve each of these concerns. The MAF includes the three branches of service: the Malaysian Army, the Royal Malaysian Air Force and the Royal Malaysian Navy. The MAF is an organization force with 110,000 active personnel and 296,300 reserves. The MAF has no legal authority to enforce domestic law. However, recent legislation (NSC 2015) would formalize the military assistance in peacetime contingencies. Among military services, the Army and the Air Force plays the prominent role in HADR in Malaysia and abroad. From a military perspective, assisting civil authorities is perceived as a secondary task of the Army today, as being part of a more open and democratic society means more significant participation in civilian and overall nation-building activities. The MAF's contribution to HADR missions lies in its ability to estimate the consequences of disasters and the major risk factors for human casualties. They also supply experts such as explosive specialists, engineers, divers, search and rescue teams, and air medical personnel. Types of support can be provided by MAF while conducting flood relief operations can be divided into four phases, as follows:

a. **Pre-deployment Phase.** In this phase, the military units which get involved with the operations have deployed small elements of troops and assets to areas potentially flooded, and in this phase also information exchange between other civilian agencies will take place. Information exchange between these agencies was undertaken to streamline joint efforts to carry out relief tasks during the flood disaster. Efforts to synergize all existing assistance and assets to optimize output by the agencies involved will also be undertaken in this phase. Besides, a flood relief exercise will also be carried out at the base of each unit as a preliminary preparation by the formation to deal with the impact of the flood. It covers all aspects of coordination of staff assignment in forming, preparing related procedures and so on. All of these efforts are aimed at improving the procedures and action plans that will be adopted throughout this operation. To identify high-risk areas being hit by flood and to take precautionary measures to prevent untoward incidents, monitoring groups will be initiated. The group has been located in several flood hot spots from the beginning to get the most up-to-date information on the situation in the area. Intelligence on life and property threats will be implemented to mitigate and overcome the impact of floods as a whole. Troops and assets will also be deployed to remote areas to facilitate efforts to assist and also rescue flood victims effectively when floods occur in areas of responsibility. This remote area will often be cut off from the access road as a result of a major flood. Therefore, by placing troops and assets in the area of responsibility, appropriate assistance can be provided to the flood victims.

b. **Rescue Phase.** The flood disaster hit east coast that occurred in 2014 has caused the relief operations to focus on that area. However, the attention has also been given to other flood-prone states, including Sabah and Sarawak. Rescue operations carried out in this phase focused on evacuating victims from flooded areas to relief centre using boats, vehicles and military assets. Besides, the Army is also tasked with providing food and beverage to flood victims in areas of disruption, and established lines of communications been cut off at the flood relief centre. The military also helps to provide help to construction work when facilitating disaster management operations. The Government also expects the military to help provide construction while also repairing the flood-damaged infrastructures. These damaged infrastructures need to be repaired and rebuilt to restore the conditions of life to normal post-flood disaster. The assistance that the military can

provide includes manpower, machinery, equipment, transportation and engineering expertise. Basic needs of the flood victims such as cooking and prepare food for them, providing health services and helping to distribute donations. If any victims get sick and need for further treatment in the hospital, the military will also provide vehicles and send the patient to a nearby hospital. The flood disaster which hit the east coast in 2014 has caused the relief operations to focus on that area. However, the attention has also been given to other flood-prone states, including Sabah and Sarawak. Rescue operations carried out in this phase are, evacuating the victims from flood area to relief centre by using boats, vehicles and military assets. The Army is also tasked with providing food and beverage assistance to flood victims in areas of disruption and where the line of communications has been cut off. At the flood relief centre, the military also helps in providing basic needs to the flood victims such as; cooking and preparing food for them, providing health services, and helping to distribute donations. If victims were to get sick and need treatment at the hospital, the military would also provide vehicles to send the patient to a nearby hospital.

c. Support Operations Phase. Overall statistics, as of 23 June 2015, show that approximately 8,617 flood victims had been sheltered in relief centres during this flood season. The most affected areas on the east coast for Peninsular Malaysia, i.e. the states of Kelantan, Terengganu (Kemaman) and Pahang (Temerloh and Mentakab). For the area of Sarawak, the area was most affected was Betong. The task carried out by military personnel at this phase was to distribute food, beverages, and clothing supplies to disconnected areas; as well as to set up a military field hospital in evacuation centres. The medical centre treated victims with health issues, supported by the military medical staff. In addition, the Army Engineers Corps carried out tasks of repairing the roads to provide access to the flood-affected areas.

d. Post Disaster Phase. The role of the military in assisting flood victims are not limited to only disaster events. Even post-disaster, the military is tasked with assisting areas affected by floods such as carrying out cleaning work in schools, mosques, clinics, and other public facilities. The task at this stage is focused more on restoring the affected public infrastructure function so that it can operate as per usual again. For those who have been displaced and have no shelter, the military has provided temporary shelter at nearby military camps. An example of this is when a total of 38 families of flood victims have been placed in Sungai Durian Camp in Kuala Krai (Kelantan) after the flood disaster of 2014. Engineer vehicles type C, such as tipper and backhoe, were also mobilized during post-flood to carry out cleaning and engineering work in flood-affected areas.

WHY THE GOVERNMENTS HIGHLY RELY ON MAF IN CONDUCTING FLOOD RELIEF OPERATIONS

As mentioned earlier, the Government's dependency and expectations on the MAF to carry out flood relief operations are relatively high due to some reasons such as the constraint of Manpower. Manpower is one of the essential elements while carrying out a mission or task in a group of a military formation. The number of personnel must be sufficient enough to ensure the mission can be performed successfully. It is the nature of the military service to structure and assign tasks according to groups. In the mission of rescuing flood victims or carrying out flood relief operations, the military will organize personnel according to groups, to better determine the number required to perform the designated task. In the case of the 2014 disaster, eight infantry

brigades were mobilized, with more, with more than 1000 personnel brought in to assist flood victims affected by the disaster (Ridzuan et al. 2018). A large number of military personnel is one of the factors why the Government's expectations on the Army is quite high.

Second reason is access to all type of Transportation. The military service is capable of providing transportation for all access; land, air or water because as all three branches of the armed services which are Army, Navy and Air Force have that kind of capability. In the event of a flood disaster, transportation is one of the essential elements in carrying out various rescue operations such as to move flood victims from affected areas to relief centres as well as sending food assistance to areas that have lost line of communication. In some cases, there is an inaccessible connection in disaster impacted areas making it difficult for land vehicles to access; hence the need for assistance in the use of air transport either to carry out rescue operations, to deliver food or to evacuate flood victims to safety areas. The military's ability to provide all kinds of transportation, whether land, water or air, is also one of the factors of Government's dependence and expectation on the MAF in carrying out these flood relief operations. In flood disaster 2014 there were 89 militaries 3-tonnes trucks, 27 Land Rovers and 19 TATRA trucks were used during the flood relief operations. The numbers have shown that the armed forces are one of the relief agencies that provide the most vehicles for rescue operation in times of flood.

Third point is because military are able to provide machinery equipment assistance for disaster relief work at all levels. Other than the possession of weapons when carrying out military tasks and defending the country, the military is also equipped with a variety of equipment that can be used to carry out rescue operations. Some of the equipment used in carrying out a flood relief operation are generators, water equipment such as life jackets and paddles, engineering equipment and other construction equipment and crafts. The ability to provide a variety of rescue equipment is one of the reasons MAF is able to carry out rescue missions successfully. Other than that, Military is well known in providing specialist services such as explosives, engineering, communications, field medicine and other needed assistance. Military organizations have a wide variety of specialties, all of which are used during war situations. In peace situations, such expertise can be used to assist public agencies in the face of disaster. Among the military's expertise are explosives, communications, engineering and medical. In dealing with disasters such as floods, certain expertise will be used to perform a specific task. For example, military engineering expertise is required to build temporary bridges; and communication expertise from Signal Corps deployed to restore broken communications' networks or establish temporary communications networks to link one subunit to another. The Government also expects the military to help provide construction while also repairing the flood-damaged infrastructures. These damaged infrastructures need to be repaired and rebuilt to restore the conditions of life to normal post-flood disaster. The assistance that the military can provide includes manpower, machinery, equipment, transportation and engineering expertise.

It is no doubt that Military could provide immediate relief services to disaster victims in the event that the MAF is the first government agency to arrive at the scene and will hand over the task to other disaster relief agencies to carry out the task as required. This capability is the most significant expectation by the Government towards MAF in carrying out flood relief operations. As it is known, the military is always on high alert and ready to be deployed at any time during the short notice period. For instance, an Infantry Rifle Platoon can be deployed within the one-hour notice; an Infantry Rifle Company can be deployed within two hours' notice, while an Infantry Battalion can be deployed within six hours' notice. The military's ability to mobilize troops and assets within a short time when notice is given is one of the major factors the MAF is seen as the main agency expected to reach a disaster fully ready to operationalize. The capability to provide

air transport is also one of the Government's expectations towards MAF in carrying out flood relief operations. All three branches of the armed forces, i.e. the Army, Navy and Air Force, have an air transport capability that can be mobilized to carry out rescue operations in the event of a flood disaster. For example, in the 2014 flood disaster, there were 141 air tasking from the Air Force, involving the use of transport aircraft C-130, Nuri helicopters and EC725 Cougar helicopters (*Laporan OP MURNI 2014/2015*).

Lastly, Military is belived in providing assistance for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction programs as needed. Military engagement in flood relief operations is not limited during disasters occur only. However, even at post-disasters event, the military still has duties and responsibilities to restore the status quo such as carrying out cleaning tasks in public infrastructure like hospitals and schools, repairing public building structures damaged by floods, reopened roads that were disconnected previously, repaired public infrastructure and repaired communications networks that were lost during the floods disaster. Here the significant and important the role played by the MAF led to the government expectations to be relatively high.

WAY FORWARD

Flood relief operations can be easily carried out as the military organization has been structured where command and control remain within the military chain of command, which allows for optimization of mobilization and monitoring of operations. However, flood relief operations are operations carried out in times of peace, as part of the MAF's supportive role to the civilian authority. The military forces will be deployed to carry out a specific task, taking directions and guidance from the coordinating agency. The conduct of a flood relief operation requires efforts from other civil relief agencies as listed under NSC Directive No. 20 and the military is just to assist them when needed. To achieve the desired results in an appropriate and timely manner, both organizations must recognize the requirements and needs of the other and should wherever possible, take them into account when planning and decision making. In responding to humanitarian emergencies or disasters, the MAF will usually channel its assistance together with other civil relief agencies namely the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), Fire and Rescue Department (FRD), Malaysian Civil Defence Force (MCDF) and Public Works Department (PWD) and wherever possible with local civilian resources. The NSC will utilize military assets when the scale and timeliness of the assistance needed by vulnerable populations cannot be met by civilian resources alone.

The operating environment should be permissive and thereby enable a benign force posture to be taken (except for essential asset protection). At the strategic level, the MAF is guided by NSC Directive No. 20, The Policy and Mechanism on National Disaster and Relief Management, mandates that the role of the military is to assist and support the civil agencies in disaster relief operations and does not serve as the main effort. It is to be noted that with the enactment of NSC Act 2016 (Section 18), the NSC may declare an area that suffers from crisis attributed to natural or human-made disaster as a security area. Upon declaration, the military may be deployed within the security area to assist civil authorities in providing aid. The MAF, especially the Army troops deployed within the security area, are given legal authority to assist civil authorities within their area of operations to undertake action to carry out their assigned tasks effectively.

The operational readiness of the Army encompasses a few elements such as human resources, communications, firepower, mobility, logistics and training, forming the fundamental element that is used to carry out the primary task. Most of these elements are also used in flood relief operations, which is its secondary task. The problem arises when these elements are used in

flood relief operations, especially the military equipment, it is vulnerable to harm and damaged and will require repair and maintenance. As flood relief operations are ad-hoc, to get the budget to make such arrangements for provision, repair and maintenance are not easy. Therefore, the government should consider giving more budget allocations and provide sufficient assets to the Malaysian Army so that both the flood relief operations can be carried out effectively and at the same time their preparations to carry out the primary duty always at a high level of readiness. Another area of concern that still requires attention and strengthening is the training and joint coordination, planning and monitoring of support provided by the military and other relief agencies. It is important to ensure there is a mechanism that will strengthen the partnership of these supportive agencies and enable a high level of trust among them. Taking from the lessons learned from the 2004-2005 tsunami relief efforts, consultation, planning, and exercises between militaries and civilian agents in domestic, bilateral, and multilateral frameworks can significantly enhance the capacity for domestic and international crisis or disaster response, but the challenge is to make this work practically. These efforts require structured joint planning, training, workshops, and exercises as a way to improve cooperation in crisis response or disaster relief situations

Given that all military assets work within and at particular readiness criteria, it is essential that NSC provides the military with as much warning as possible through Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), even if they use of military assets is only anticipatory basis. Early engagement and preparedness of military assets are critical to meet potential and raising expectations, both local, national and international, which may then necessitate the employment of military assets when their use may otherwise have been unnecessary. One key point to note, for flood disaster relief operations there is a need to ensure for the logistics aspect, the requirement to carry out operations in flood condition, which will require specific equipment, transportation and asset. For examples the need of a suitable land-based vehicles. It is common for the military use to mobilize available vehicles that are meant for combat, and are not suitable in a disaster situation like flood disaster, where special vehicles are needed to transport victims and supplies that can cross the high and rapidly flowing water that is often carrying floating debris that can damage military vehicles. All the right equipment is vital in order to reduce the health-related risk during the relief operations. It does not make sense that we want to save the flood victims, but our troops are not in a safe condition to carry out operations. It is critical to ensure the safety of personnel first, before operations to save others can be conducted.

CONCLUSION

Militaries have played an important role in the various aspects of flood relief operations, such as transportation, communication, medical care, food and water supply, the rescue of flood victims, bringing flood victims to relief centres, and the reconstruction of infrastructures. The reliability of the government to the military in conducting flood relief operations is relatively high due to the capability of the military in terms of assets and troops deployed compared to other relief agencies however to ensure the operation could be conducted successfully, certain matters need to be looked into in order to ensure the safety of the nation are well look after.

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THE IMPLICATION OF UNITED STATES' INDO PACIFIC STRATEGY TOWARDS MALAYSIA'S STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

After an absence of almost 11 years, the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) returned in 2017 when President Trump unveiled it during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Da Nang, Vietnam. The Indo Pacific geographical expanse is said to range from the coast of East Africa across the Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific. This new rebalancing agenda of the United States (US) is widely seen as a reprisal, from President Obama's pivot to Asia. To further strengthen the strategy, the US introduced the Indo Pacific Strategy Report (IPSR) in June 2019. The IPSR showed a focused and coherent strategy with an implementation mechanism. Still, considering its geographical expanse, the materialization of the IPS cannot be done unilaterally by the US and can only be materialized by a series of a cohesive multilateral approach. Thus, explaining the role and tasks of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or otherwise known as Quad Nations comprising of US, Japan, Australia, and India. The Quad was also revived soon after the unveiling of IPS. Although fundamentally, the US's IPS appears to be driven by economic need, it cannot be denied that it is also to contain China's rise and dominance. For Malaysia, the response over the strategy has been lukewarm. Malaysia neither rejected nor welcome it. Malaysia's silence over the strategy raises the question of what the implications of the strategy to Malaysia are. It questions whether Malaysia is reaping benefits or instead losing out from this strategy.

Keywords: *Indo Pacific Strategy Report (IPSR), Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), Quad, Bilateral Training and Consultation Group Agreement (BITACG), Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP)*

INTRODUCTION

The Indo-Pacific concept recasts the mental map of some of the most strategically valuable parts of the globe. It recognizes that the accelerating economic and security connections between the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean by creating a single strategic system. The Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) is an extension of the Asia-Pacific security concept to the Indian Ocean region, which includes US values and principles. Following the revealing of FOIP, the US announced that it would allocate a total of USD 113 million to fund new initiatives in this region, which includes investments in the digital economy, infrastructure, and energy (Pitakdumrongkit, 2019). In 2019 the US further pledged USD 300 million in funding for security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region (Hermesauto, 2018). In June 2018, to reaffirms this strategy, the Department of Defense (DoD), published the IPSR. This document touches on the FOIP by highlighting four core principles: respect for sovereignty and independence, peaceful resolution of disputes, free, fair, and reciprocal trade and adherence to international rules and norms (DoD, 2019).

Additionally, the IPSR also layout three lines of effort that are preparedness, partnership and promoting a networked region demonstrating the need for robust collaboration with its allies and the ASEAN states. At the 2019 Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore, the then Acting Secretary

of Defense Patrick Shanahan echoed the IPSR document stressing that the US is committed to the Indo-Pacific Strategy and highlighted the United States concerns over China’s troubling activities in the region. The IPSR and Shanahan address demonstrates that the IPS, although propagates an economic interest it cannot be denied that is driven by China’s rise as a threat to the existing Western-dominated international order. However, the regional acceptance of all states and successful implementation of this US agenda will determine its success to the geopolitical order of the region. It is the fundamental reason for the US to engage its allies, notably the Quad Nation, to push the Indo Pacific agenda on its behalf because a collaborative effort might bring in more results.

THE REVIVAL OF QUAD SECURITY DIALOGUE

The Quad was revived following the announcement of the IPS after a hiatus for almost ten years. Emphasizing on principles of FOIP, Quad is based on a complex network of a bilateral and trilateral partnership between the nations and other states. Its networked system differs from the traditional ‘Hub and Spoke’ to a new multi connected networked system as shown in Figure 1. This new alliance system offers a narrative for an emerging regional order incorporating other nations through various cooperation initiatives. The first meeting between the existing Quad members was held in the side-lines of the East Asia Summit (EAS) at Manila in 2017 (Hanada, 2019). Subsequently, the members have had two meetings in 2018 and 2019, respectively. The latest meeting was in Bangkok on 4 Nov 2019 for consultation talks on a collective effort for the advancement of FOIP.

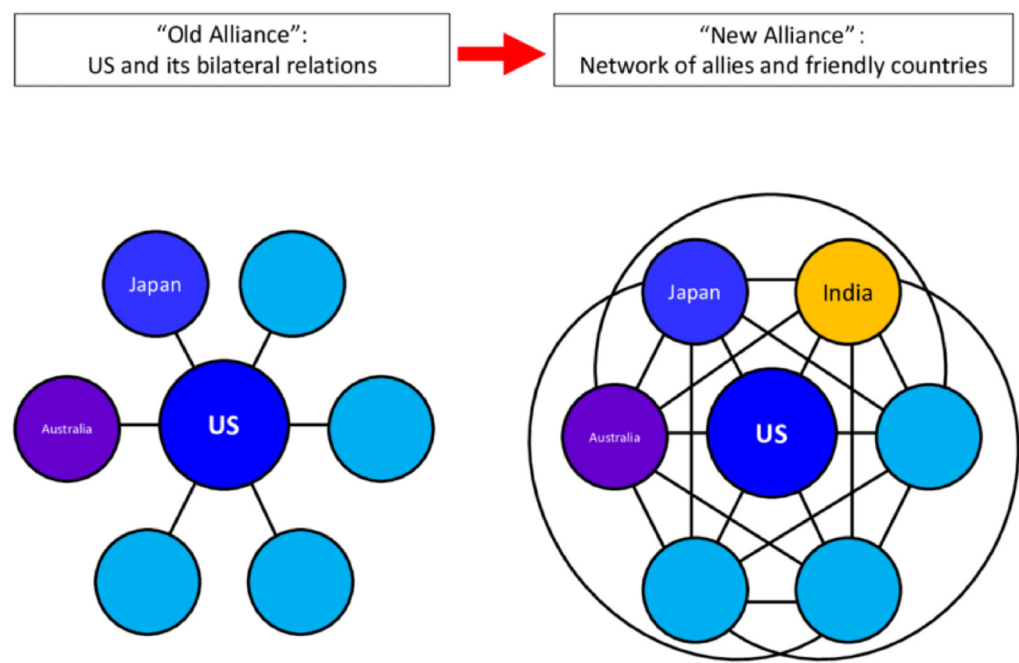


Figure 1: Old Alliance and New Alliances Networked System
Source: Nagao, 2015

Both, Australia and India have been progressing slowly and cautiously. Australia has been engaging other Southeast Asian countries to garner their support for IPS. Australia has also explicitly identified the IPS as its maritime outlook strategy in its 2017 Defense White Paper while promoting the FOIP concepts. Taking the same agenda in its outlook, India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has put the Indo Pacific in line with his Act East policy. Meanwhile Japan, whom many believe propagated the FOIP concept since 2012 has now adopted it as its foreign policy. One look at Japan foreign ministry website, one can see an extensive explanation on Japan's agenda and diplomatic bluebook on achieving FOIP in this region. Therefore, it is clear that all the Quad Nations are already playing their part in materializing the IPS, some progressively and some cautiously. As this is still the early years of their revitalization, their successes remain early to be evaluated however there are already a few mechanisms in place which can be used as a yardstick.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES AND ANALYSIS

Defense Cooperation with the US

On Defense Cooperation between Malaysia and the US, Bilateral Training and Consultation Group Agreement (BITACG), was established in 1984. BITACG is the ambit for training, courses and exercise, and other initiatives between both countries. Additionally, the US introduced the Maritime Security Initiatives (MSI). The MSI, with massive funding, has delivered some critical assets to the MAF. In 2019, the MAF received a networked intelligence system, and in 2019 it was reported that the Royal Malaysian Navy received a total of 12 Scan Eagle Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). These assets are primarily to increase Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in the SCS within Malaysian territorial waters and EEZ. Additionally, according to David Henley, Acting Assistant Secretary for Defense, Indo Pacific Security Affairs, during a Webinar by Asia Pacific Centre for Strategic Studies (APCSS)-MIDAS titled 'The Increasing Value of a Free and Open Indo Pacific', for FY2021, the US Department of Defense have allocated USD 100 million for the IPS countries within the Indo Pacific Region. These countries stand to receive assets to increase MDA and to develop a deeper partnership with the US. Moving onto bilateral exercises, it too saw improvements. In 2017, Malaysia – US Exercise Bersama Warrior was enhanced with the Washington National Guard's entrance. There were also attempts to incorporate the National Washington Guard into other platforms such as existing intelligence networked system for information sharing. Additionally, other defense cooperation such as courses, port calls, high-level visit, all saw a significant increase in the last three years.

To summarize, the IPS by the US towards Malaysia is a catalyst for the improvement of US - Malaysia relations. The total interaction between both countries for the last three years increased. At the top level in the defense portfolio, including all arms of the MAF, mutual frequent visits and correspondence have shown an increment. Malaysia has also received assets, aid and courses through the IPS. On the Intelligence side, Intelligence Exchange between both countries also saw an increase through the intelligence network system. All this progress suggests that the increase of bilateral defense relationships with the US is a subset of the IPS concerning Malaysia.

The Role of Other Quad Nations

From the research done, there is a theme emerging among the respondents that the role of Quad Nation in support of the IPS has been uncertain as a group. However unilaterally the Quad Nation has been engaging the Southeast Asian countries actively. To begin with, Australia was the

reason where the first Quad to fail under Kevin Rudd Administration in 2007 due to relationship with China. However, at present, the Australian government has been playing an essential role in IPS. First, Australia and Malaysia have a long-standing relationship with the formation of the Malaysian Australia Joint Defense Program (MAJDP), serving as a platform for the exchange of officers, courses, training, and exercises. However, there was a trend of an increase in engagement between both countries beginning in 2018. In 2018, the Australian replaced its aging AP-3C Orion with Boeing P-8A Poseidon as part of Operation Gateway, a Maritime Surveillance Operation in the SCS and the Indian Ocean. This deployment marks a significant bilateral development between both countries.

Furthermore, in 2019, the Malaysian Ministry of Defense and Australian Ministry of Defense had a series of high-level Committee meetings that paved the way for enhanced strategic cooperation, including the establishment of the Defense Industry and Innovation Working Group. Additionally, there also an increase in engagement within the Australian Defense Force (ADF) and Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF). Regional forums, symposiums, intelligence exchange, and analyst to analyst exchange also saw an increment. The Australian Intelligence arms and the Malaysian Intelligence Division agreed to increase training courses and number of participations with Malaysia. The increase in bilateral relations between Malaysia and Australia in the last three years suggests that this is a subset of the IPS.

Moving on to Japan, its relations with Malaysia has always been healthy. In 2016, Japan gave Malaysia two patrol boats, which presently are used by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) to conduct patrolling at the SCS. According to the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted, they are an acknowledgement that Japan was keen to be part of Maritime Strait Patrol and the Trilateral Sulu Sea Patrol, but Japan's offer is not welcomed as the participating nations prefer to conduct the patrol within the littoral states. Additionally, the FGD also agreed that Japan had been interested in FOIP at SCS and Taiwan Strait. This notion is supported by Japan's Defense Minister when he stated that Japan would play its part for FONOP through training exercises with the US and other allies (Choong, 2020). On India, the research found that, India's role through IPS cannot be felt in the SEA region particularly to Malaysia. India has been sensible with its approach towards IPS. This is largely due to the fact India may refrain from upsetting China when it comes to SCS territorial dispute.

Multilateral Exercise with The Quad Nations

Malaysia has always been open to engaging with other nations through multilateral exercises. For the first time in 2018, Malaysia sent a warship to participate at the Rim of Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise fully. Malaysia has been participating as an observer before this and never attempted to send a warship as full participation. According to then RMN Chief Admiral Tan Sri Ahmad Kamarulzaman, Malaysia sent the warship and whole crew of 27 people for three months of participation and disclosed that Malaysia's participation is a manifestation of its commitment to Defense Diplomacy (Fauzi, 2018). Malaysia's involvement as a full participant in the RIMPAC was also fully supported by the US under the notion of enhanced cooperation. The RIMPAC was not the only exercise that saw Malaysia involving fully. The Cobra Gold exercise debuted in 1982 is spearheaded by the US and held annually in Thailand. Malaysia first joined Cobra Gold as an observer in 2011 and became a fully participating nation in 2016. It is reported that initially, the Cobra Gold exercise in 2020 was supposed to be put on hold due to the COVID 19 outbreak, but the exercise was continued in February 2020 over the worry that the vacuum present will be

replaced by Dragon Gold exercise. Dragon gold, which is led by China with Cambodia, was held in April 2020 in Tesco Sen Chumkiri, Kampot, Cambodia.

Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP)

FONOP has been the catalyst for the IPS strategy. Trump's Administration saw more FONOP than Obama's Administration. Under President Trump administration, up to March 2019, the US has conducted a total of nine FONOP in the Spratly islands (Panda, 2020). US's FONOP's are usually carried out at the Paracel, and Spratly Island chain, 12 nm from the Chinese occupied Mischief Reef, Fiery Cross, and Scarborough Shoal. The duration for this FONOP varies from the shortest 39 days to the longest 99 days. During the FGD, the respondents agreed that most US FONOP were mostly conducted under 'Innocent Passage.' However, it is essential to note that the FONOPs have never gotten any positive responses supporting it from other claimant countries. When then Prime Minister Tun Mahathir Mohammed took the helm of 7th Premiership, he subtly has spoken that the presence of warships can lead to unnecessary conflict in the region (Prime Minister Office, 2019). Ultimately, the Chinese are also reported to maintain continuous presence of China Coast Guard (CCG) at the disputed waters, and Malaysia RMN and MMEA also patrols in the same waters (Jennings, 2019). However, every time the US conducts the FONOPs, the presence of CCG is indicated to be increased in numbers at the disputed area.

West Capella Incident

Despite challenges in the FONOPs, there is one incident that highlights the benefits of the FONOPs in the SCS. This incident ironically also tested Malaysia's neutral policy at the SCS. As early as October 2019, Malaysian state-owned oil company Petronas began oil exploration at the Malaysian ND1, and ND2 block claimed by China and Vietnam. West Capella, a Panama registered drilling ship, managed by a London based company, Seadrill conducted this oil exploration. The operation of West Capella from October 2019 was continuously harassed by the presence of the CCG Haijing 5203 and 5205. Both of the Haijing 5203 and 5204 was reported to be well-armed (Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, 2020). Within the next two months, both CCG alternated between harassing the West Capella and areas near Luconia Shoals, where Petronas were also conducting oil exploration (Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, 2020). At times the CCG presence was reported to be close enough to the rig to cause a collision, an act that can be considered intimidation to prevent Petronas from continuing the oil exploration activity. During the standoff, The RMN deployed two patrol vessel KD Jebat and KD Kelantan while the MMEA deployed KM Bagan Datuk to protect the West Capella, and other oil exploration activity the surrounding areas (Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, 2020). The issue was handled in a very subtle manner by the Malaysian politician, although there was an indication of concern by Petronas and West Capella over intimidation by the CCG Haijing 5203 and 5205. In April 2020, the US Secretary of State reiterated that China is taking advantage of current pandemic situations to engage in assertive behavior (Wong & Crowley, 2020). Subsequently, on April 13, US Navy and Australian Navy both conducted FONOP at the ND1 and ND2 block while doing force integration training and maneuvering exercise. The US sent USS America, a small carrier, USS Bunker Hill, and USS Barry as an escort while the Australian sent frigate HMAS Parramatta (Graham, 2020).

At this juncture, Malaysia's foreign minister released a statement calling for calming measures and stability in SCS (Tang, 2020). Putting the incident as a problem between big power, totally isolates Malaysia from the incident, although it happened on Malaysia's backyard. This act

is used over and over as an escaping measure by the Malaysian government. However, it cannot be denied that there were signs of relief by West Capella on the FONOPs conducted by the US and Australia. Subsequently, the Chinese CCG left the area, and the West Capella finished its exploration activities. At this juncture, during the research conducted, there was observation of approval of Malaysia's action to stay put until the oil exploration was finished despite the intimidation from China. One point to consider that this only the exploration activity, and subsequently, there will definitely be drilling activities in the area. It is inevitable that there is a possibility that the Chinese CCG might again harass the drilling activities, an act that simply challenges Malaysia's sovereignty rights.

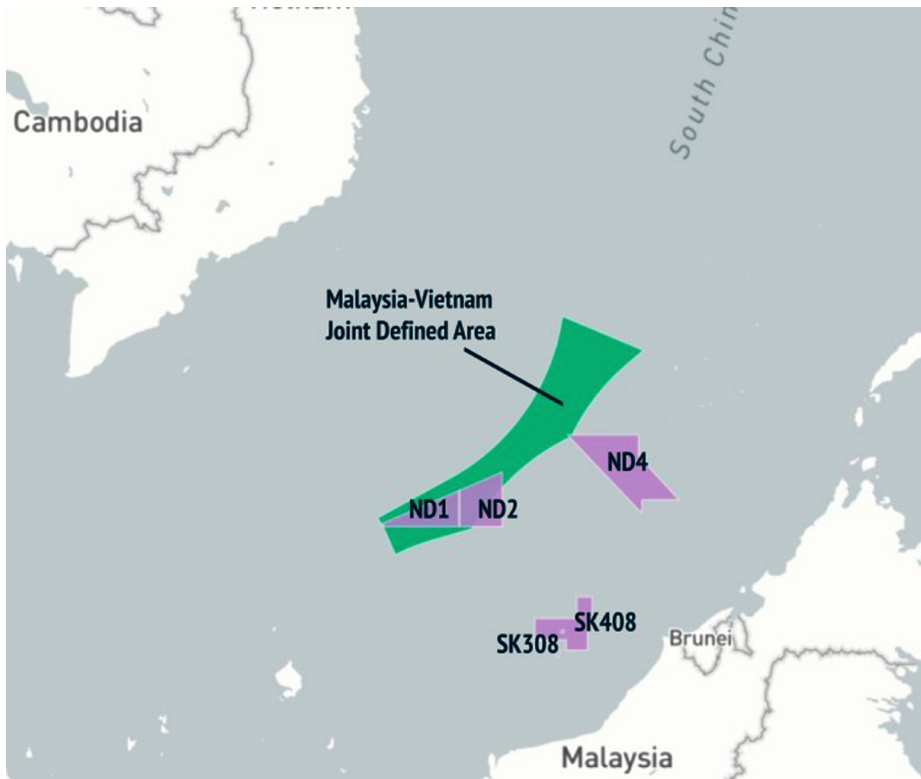


Figure 2: Location of West Capella Oil Exploration

Source: AMTI, 2020

Malaysia as the Linchpin for IPS

From the research conducted, there is a theme that suggests that Malaysia has the opportunity as a hub or playing a primary role in IPS. Malaysia's current prime minister mentioned in the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in September 2019 that he envisaged that Malaysia would play a crucial role in bridging the Indian Ocean and Pacific regions (Parameswaran, 2020). Additionally, the Malaysian Defence White Paper also points out that Malaysia is a bridging linchpin between the Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean. According to Dr. Kuik, Malaysia is the only country that is part of mainland Asia and is connected via the Borneo States to the vast island archipelago stretching from Jawa to the Philippines to Papua New Guinea. Hence strategically, Malaysia is also a gateway connecting the Indian Ocean and the

SCS (Kuik, 2020). First Admiral Rashid bin Hussain also mentioned the importance of Malaysia as a connector between both US and China. He stated that there is a perception that Malaysia is the best connector to China among the SEA nation (First Admiral Rashid bin Hussain, personal communication June 4, 2020). This is due to Malaysia's historically good relations with China. Furthermore, in his opinion, based on interaction with the US, they are more comfortable with Malaysia as the middlemen to China as compared to other SEA nations or even ASEAN as an organization. He states that Malaysia has become a front liner in the dynamics of US and China relations in this region (First Admiral Rashid bin Hussain, personal communication June 4, 2020). On another note, the potential role of Malaysia as a hub was also mentioned by the Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia, Hiroshi Oka, on February 27, 2020, where he mentioned that Japan sees Malaysia as a lynchpin connecting the Indian and Pacific region. Additionally, Japan is also supportive of enhancing connectivity through infrastructure development (David, 2020). Japan's commitment to ensuring Malaysia connectivity or a lynchpin can be seen from Japan's effort to make Malaysian Port Klang as ASEAN regional training center for vessel traffic (David, 2020).

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION - CHALLENGES AND ANALYSIS

If the US continues to increase its presence at the SCS and with the additional support from countries such as Australia, Britain, or even France in its FONOP, there is a general wariness that China will continue to grow more assertive the SCS. China's military and paramilitary activities moved south Malaysian waters surrounding areas of James Shoal and South Luconia Shoal since September 2013. At present, People Liberation Army-Navy (PLA-N) survey ships were often spotted at James and South Luconia Shoal. The location of James and South Luconia Shoal is shown in Figure 3.

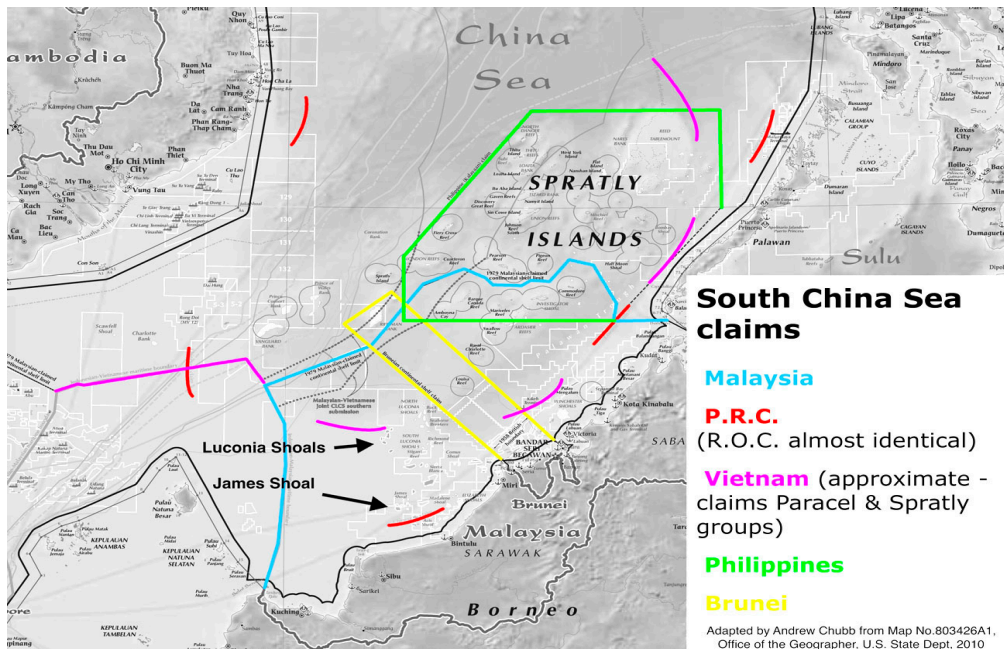


Figure 3: Location of James and South Luconia Shoal

Source: US State Department, 2010

Furthermore, a CCG was placed continuously at the disputed water to monitor Malaysian activities. This frequent presence of PLA-N and CCG paved the way for Chinese fishing vessels to begin illegal fishing activities in the Malaysian EEZ at South Luconia Shoal. This Chinese intrusions and intimidation tactics to drive away Malaysian fishing vessels from Luconia Shoals will make it difficult for Malaysia to turn a blind eye. Moreover, there are many productive Malaysian oil and gas platforms in the vicinity of Luconia Shoals, which mainly benefits East Malaysia's state in terms of continuous electrical/power energy. What is alarming is that with the increase of FONOP, the Chinese may increase their presence in SCS through their CCG and their fishing vessels.

Besides, the regular presence in the disputed area, the FGD respondents also highlighted the Chinese Blue Sea 2020 or Bihai 2020 initiative. Bihai 2020 was recently launched for Marine Environmental Protection beginning from April 1, 2020, until November 2020. From the FGD, the respondents agreed that this project although may appear innocent for environmental purpose but sounds suspicious as they corresponded with the Covid-19 Pandemic, at a time other claimant were fighting the pandemic in their own country. The FGD agreed China might be using this vulnerable situation to make their claim stronger in the SCS dispute. Ying Hui Lee also expressed this notion of wariness over that, China might use the Bihai 2020 to increase the presence of law enforcement in the SCS (Hing Hui, 2020). The FGD also responded that only the US could mitigate the Bihai 2020 initiatives through its FONOPs if it found to threatens other nations' national interests.

In another scenario, according to First Admiral Rashid, the worrying scenario would be China, and US action in the SCS escalates until China declared Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in SCS (First Admiral Rashid Hussain, personnel communication, June 4, 2020). This is a scenario that might not be in favor of Malaysia. Previously, China's declaration of ADIZ in the East China Sea (EAS) received criticism from many parties. The notion of ADIZ was supported by the FGD, which described that the Declaration of ADIZ would be the worst-case scenario. Additionally, in the first quarter of 2020, several media reported that China was planning to declare ADIZ at the SCS, quoting an official statement from Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense (MND) (Chen, 2020). According to Dr. Alex Vuving from Daniel K Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Strategic Studies (DKI-APCSS), who spoke about 'Geopolitics of the Indo Pacific in the Early 21st Century' during the Webinar session with National Defence College Philippines (NDCP) on June 10, 2020, China's plan to conduct ADIZ in SCS may take place in a year or two. He further added that if the tense situation between the US and China in the SCS escalates, both countries will make bold moves one after another like a game of chicken until there is a division of power or a comprise by both parties. This would allow an opening for one hegemony power in this region, which will be equally unhealthy for small state strategic interests and national interest like Malaysia.

RECOMMENDATION

From the research findings, the following are recommended for Malaysia to manage the IPS more effectively. First, stronger hedging for Malaysia. From the research, it was found that Malaysia is a light hedger against China. This mechanism has worked well so far for Malaysia. Malaysia has successfully increased its comprehensive partnership with the US, and concurrently enhanced its relations with China. However, in the wake of China's growing assertiveness and uncertainties in SCS, Malaysia may choose to become a heavy Hedger in order to protect its sovereignty. Many other countries in this region have taken this path to hedge heavier namely the Philippines and Vietnam. However, in order to protect Malaysia-China relations, Malaysia may

choose to hedge heavier only in the maritime issue. The notable actions to hedge stronger in the maritime issues are:

- a. **Becoming vocal against China on SCS issues or in support of FOIP.** In adapting a heavier hedge strategy, Malaysia has the choice to become more vocal against China or more vocal in support of US FOIP in the SCS issue. Malaysia may choose this opportunity to establish a new norm or new stand to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- b. **Term IPS in official documents.** Malaysia may also wish to include the term IPS in its official document such as Foreign Policy and Defense White Paper.
- c. **The Role of Academician and mass media.** Top academician from various universities could advocate for FOIP and Rule of Law. Besides the local mass media could also highlight FOIP and IPS simultaneously to create a new awareness.

Secondly is other claimant to take a multilateral approach by supporting FOIP. The smaller states who are also claimants may create a platform for a multilateral approach to support the FOIP against Chinese assertiveness. Such platforms are nothing new. Malaysia and other Southeast Asian states have created many platforms in dealing with terrorism and maritime issues. The notable platform includes Maritime Strait Patrol (MSP), 365 terrorism initiatives, Sulu, and the Celebes Seas Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA). Furthermore, under the progression of Quad plus, Vietnam was acknowledged as a possible player among the SEA countries. Vietnam, as the next, ASEAN chairman, may take the opportunity to step up its support for the FOIP. In such case, other claimant countries may also seek this opportunity to support the FOIP. Being united and showing the same response when it comes to SCS issue may be counterproductive to Malaysia or other claimant countries. Additionally, all claimant could also be more vocal in condemning any assertive action towards another claimant. Prior to this there were no response from Malaysia or Vietnam regarding the Scarborough Shoal spat between China and Philippines. Similarly, there were no response from Philippines or Vietnam regards to West Capella Incident. Setting a precedent that is supportive one another against Chinese assertiveness could be helpful when similar situation arises for another claimant country.

Thirdly, is balancing with the Quad Nations. Besides hedging heavier with China, Malaysia could also balance heavier with the Quad Nations. Supporting fundamental aspects such as Rule of Law and FOIP is a sign of balancing heavier with the Quad Nations. Similarly, increasing defense relationships with this country with enhanced participation in joint exercises, procurement of assets, high-level visits, port calls, and many more may also be a sign of balancing heavier with the Quad Nations.

Next is adherence to International Law. Malaysia should emphasize and become more rhetoric on adherence to International law, including UNCLOS. These rules apply to not only the small states but also the big power. Setting precedence and continuously being rhetoric can serve as a reminder to big states that international law applies to all parties.

Relevancy of US Presence in this Region. In the wake of the West Capella incident, it is essential for Malaysia to acknowledge that the US presence is still relevant in this region. Without the presence of the US here, there is a vacuum that could lead to hegemony for China.

CONCLUSION

From the research, it can be concluded that IPS is being implemented in Southeast Asia Region and Malaysia exclusively. Although IPS is a strategy implemented for the whole region but its implication may vary from country to country depending on a country's need. The implementation of IPS are not focused only on FOIP, but it is a multifaceted strategy ranging from traditional security concerns, nontraditional security threat to many more. Additionally, the IPS is also carried out by the Quad country at present. The research found that bilateral relations between Malaysia and the Quad country improved significantly. This improved relationship has benefitted Malaysia in many ways. Additionally, since the IPS is a work in progress, Malaysia will continue to gain an advantage when the IPS when it ventures into new areas. Malaysia also has the potential of being an economic hub connecting the Indian and Pacific nations. This will give Malaysia an opportunity for economic enhancement.

However, not all is positive for Malaysia. The IPS has created some sort of power struggle between the US and China. As the IPS progressed, it was found that China also stepped up its political game. The recent development of Chinese harassment in the SCS on Malaysia's oil exploration activities is an eye-opener for Malaysia. It indicates that things can get complicated in the disputed area. It is undeniable that Malaysia relies on the oil reserve as one of its primary sources of income. Any disruption in its drilling activity will disrupt the country's economy. Furthermore, without US presence in the SCS, China will have the hegemony to be more assertive with its militarization in the SCS. Thus, the IPS is a balancing act for Malaysia that it crucially needs. Malaysia stands to benefit more from the IPS. Therefore, perhaps one policy to manage the IPS might not fit the entire IPS since IPS is a multifaceted work in progress ranging from economy to traditional and traditional threat. Malaysia adherently also wishes to protect its relationship with China. Therefore, Malaysia may wish to pick a suitable policy case by case or in another term 'pick your battle'. The suitable case by case recommendation is given in the next part.

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CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: IMPACT TO ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

After World War II, the rivalry of two big power United State and Soviet Union's give significant impact towards the stability of regional nations' international relations. These five neighbouring countries, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, have agreed to set up regional organisations to address the political conflict in regional regions (Mansor, 2017). In 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed. The ASEAN's members growth when Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar joined in the 1980s and lastly Cambodia joined in 1999 made it the 10 of members in ASEAN. In 1991, the People's Republic of China (PRC) expressed their interest in collaborating with ASEAN countries. The relationship between China with ASEAN was established in 2003 with the signing of the "Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/ Government on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity". The cooperation was enhanced in political-security between China and ASEAN through various of mediums and summit such as ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) (Reuters, 2019). However, the emergence of China with the huge investment through "BRI" does give and impact towards ASEAN. Thus, this study will analyse and elaborate the effect in defence and security of China relationship with ASEAN countries with the implementation of BRI.

Keywords: *Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Defence, Security, Aggressiveness, Investments, Grand Strategy Initiative, UNCLOS*

INTRODUCTION

In 1949, Mao Zedong, The Chinese Communist leader, launched the People's Republic of China (PRC). Under Mao Zedong, the state was regulated and managed all the proportion of the country's economic production. The government's economic policy was to set production goals, control costs and allocate resources across the majority of the economy (Morrison, 2019). The Chinese government's central objective was to make the economy of China relatively self-sufficient. However, China's economy suffered significant economic downturns under Mao Zedong. In 1979, Mao Zedong's successor, Deng Xiaoping implemented the policy of domestic reform in the economy, turning the Chinese economy from a centrally controlled communist economy into an open-market economy (Woo, 1999). The result throughout the 1980s was a booming Chinese economy which for the first time since 1949 invited investment from the Western Countries and Japan. However, the global economic crisis which began in 2008 gave significant impact to China's economy. In order to boost the economy back on track, China came up with the Grand Strategy initiative. While President Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan and Jakarta in 2013, he announced the China Infrastructure and Investment Plan initiative to boost connectivity and cooperation across Asia, Africa and Europe (Seth, 2019). The grand strategy was known as One Belt One Road (OBOR), latest known as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI's projects which include the development of a big network of roads and railway, bridges, marine ports, electricity grids, pipelines of oil and gas as well as other related infrastructure projects. There are two concepts to this new initiative. First, known as the New Silk Road Economy Belt (SREB), using land lane of Central

and Western Asia to connect China with Europe. Second, using sea lane to connect China with the Middle East and Europe known as 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR). The connecting lane is via the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

THE EFFECT ON ASEAN COUNTRIES WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BRI

There was a various issue regarding BRI impact towards ASEAN countries on trade and investment. BRI's implementation towards ASEAN would meet the infrastructure needs of the region and support the success of ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and ASEAN Connectivity Master Plan 2025 initiatives. However, a huge investment of infrastructure created concern on security such as the majority of the company involve Chinese companies, the debt-trade and less human capital development (Vinales,2019). Philippines' people urged the government regarding the influx of Chinese workers inside the country. Its created security concerns among the public. However, the government stays open to the initiative (Darlene, 2018). Zhao Hongtu (2019) stated that China using the BRI to translate its industrial transfer by transferring their labour-intensive industry along with the infrastructure projects. The construction and projects under BRI are essential to raise China's name as the most reliable economic power. CIMB ASEAN Research Institute in 2018 reported that most of the investment agreements were one-sided concession agreements, long tax concession periods and exemptions from foreign workers' quota. From 68 countries listed as the potential of BRI's participating, eight are at risk of debt distress. Grener (2018) stated that the expansion of the Communist Party of China's (CCP) attempts to abolish the security and economic structures of international order. Thus, these literatures are essential to identify the effect of the implementation of BRI towards ASEAN countries.

BENEFICIAL TOWARDS ASEAN IN TERM OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY

China National Defence Policy stated that it would uphold the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and participates in independent military exchanges and cooperation stated. The policy also notes that the military is only for peace and stability of the country. Duchâtel (2019) raised concerns that China would extend its military power over those countries that agreed to participate with the BRI. Rolland (2019) mentioned that the development of BRI allows China to expand its global military capabilities. China is strengthening its security presence in Tajikistan and the Afghan Wakhan Corridor to sustain Tajikistan's domestic security and avoid the spill of chaos from Afghanistan to Tajikistan and then to Xinjiang (Kley,2019). China has further increased its military projection capabilities by implementing the Belt and Road Initiative. Besides, most of the BRI's participating countries have limited their security cooperation with the United State (Ratner, 2019). Even though involve territorial disputes with China, most of the developing countries are depending on China to improve their economic growth. The aggressiveness of China's military in SCS created security concerned to the disputed countries Centre Strategies and International Studies (CSIS), 2019). Kumar (2018) stated that BRI projects could contribute to the region's militarisation, which could contribute to a confrontation between state and non-state actors. Besides, China's strategy protects its economic and strategic interests instead of claimed as an economic venture. Wuthnow (2017) stated that the principal elements and BRI's vital strategic advantages are improving regional stability, enhancing China's energy security, and expanding influence in Eurasia. Besides, to counter perceived threats to the long-term effectiveness of the BRI, China will need the military, intelligence, diplomatic and economic tools.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY ISSUE ARISE WITH BRI

It is stated that China used economic power toward countries like Europe Union (EU), India, Pakistan, and Russia to gain support and build influence in recognition of new great power adopted with the John Mackinder's theory. During the Han Dynasty, China developed the trade network belt known as the Silk Road, which links the Middle East and Europe with China. To this day, the network belt has been an important economic link. This ancient Silk Road has had a tremendous influence on the trade, history, culture, and economy of the countries lies in the silk road (Editors, 2017). China further enhances his economic power by established the Maritime Silk Road, which links South-East Asia, the subcontinent of India, the Middle East and Europe with China. Using this maritime commercial connection, China can extend its economy projection via the SCS, especially to the South East Asia region by exporting and importing goods and raw materials from and to the respective countries (Kelly, 2018).



Figure 1: Nine-Dash-Line and Disputed Islands

Source : <https://www.dw.com/en/chinas-nine-dashed-line>

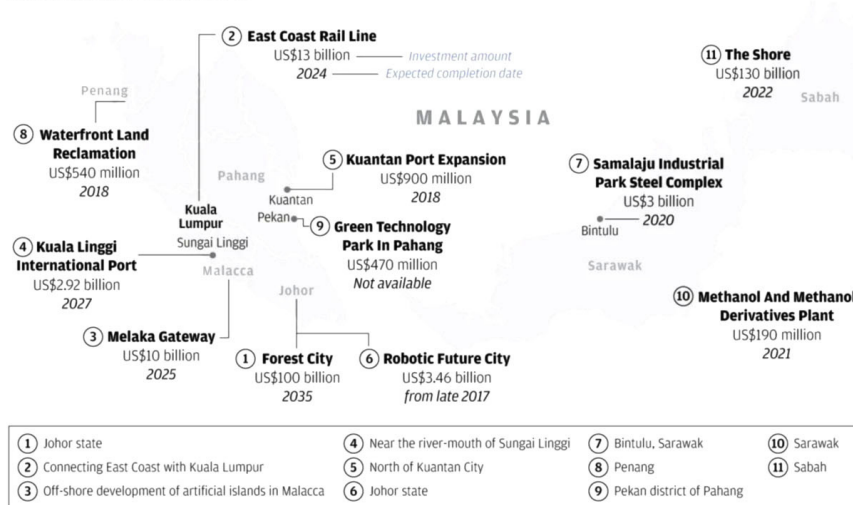
The SCS is a vital ocean route for Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC) and a significant gateway for West to East trade shipping, and vice versa. The SCS also contains a wealth of natural resources such as fisheries, oil and gas, and drives high trade value for international shipping's industry. Therefore, China took that opportunity by claiming that 85 per cent of SCS waters belong to its territory and establish its maritime territory's line known as nine-dash-line. China used historical maritime rights to claimed its maritime's territory by established nine-dash-line, as shown in Figure 1. Nevertheless, the claim not recognised by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Nine-dash-line is a line spreading down Vietnam's coast to Malaysian Borneo and neighbouring Brunei, then up the west coast of the Philippines to Taiwan. The line is about 2000 km away from the mainland of China and consists of 3.5 million square kilometres of the sea area (Jenning, 2017). Within the line, the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands and Scarborough Shoal are some conflicts area with Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia (Zhen, 2016). Emphasising the stand claiming its territory and violating the UNCLOS, China has constructed the artificial island at that particular area and stationed the island with a military base. In 2013, these ancient Maritime Silk Road was rebranding known as 21th Century Maritime Silk Road under

Belt and Road Initiative plan by China. The sea route encompasses the SCS, Malacca Straits, Indian Ocean, Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. With the new identity, China had enhanced the use of the maritime road by making enormous investments to build maritime infrastructure for the country that lies within the connecting route. China had been promoting its infrastructure investments around the maritime path towards the developing countries. Despite the investment of infrastructure in Djibouti, China built its first military base outside its mainland (Lauren and Sarah, 2019). Therefore, its generated international concern relates China's economic expansion in BRI with issues of defence and security. Without planning any military bases in ASEAN countries with BRI projects; nevertheless, the aggressive Chinese military movements at the SCS have created regional concern in defence and security for the respective countries. This section will analyse the defence and security issue arise with the implementation of BRI focusing in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam.

Malaysia

During Economic Forum 2019 on 8 August 2019, YB Lim Guang Eng, Minister of Finance Malaysia mentioned in his opening speech, *"By becoming one of the signatories to the BRI signed in May 2017, Malaysia have voiced support for the plan. Malaysia also one of the founding members of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), established throughout the Asia-Pacific region to support infrastructure development."* China becomes Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2008 and flourishes every year. Data collected from Department of Statistic Malaysia, RM 313.8 Billion total trade value recorded in 2018 with China (Eng, 2019). There are eleven of megaprojects that China invests under BRI plan in Malaysia, as shown in Figure 2. Most of the controversial projects are ECRL, MCKIP, Malacca Gateway and Forest City in Johor Bahru.

Chinese investment projects in Malaysia



Source

Figure 2: BRI Projects in Malaysia

Source: <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article>

The cooperation between Malaysia and China in the ECRL project back in October 2016 when Dato Sri Najib Razak signed a 648 km rail network contract. ECRL is linking Malaysia's eastern coast via Kuantan Port to Port Klang (Arumugam, 2020). The project worth RM 65.5

billion and was reduced to RM 44.0 billion when the new government took over in 2018 by cutting some lane for cost reduction. The project was joined venture with China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) with a local company, Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRLSB). The deal reported a 60 per cent contractor ratio from China and 40 per cent from a local contractor with a majority of workers from China. Nevertheless, this agreement viewed as biased because of the reliance on the expertise of contractors and workers from China (Reuters, 2017). MCKIP is an industrial area that wholly owned by China. Almost all workers are Chinese citizens. The locals were given only jobs that do not involve inside core areas. This industrial area equipped with all kinds of facilities such as a city for workers including accommodation, business areas and fully covered walls. Almost 3 600 of Chinese workers live there. The industrial sector has gazetted as a restricted area for outsiders. The locals were alarmed by the existence of a large amount of Chinese workers and lack of unknown activity in the area. Many incidents have reported involving Chinese workers and local people that have ignited the issue of public security (Abdullah, 2017). Malacca Gateway is one of the problematic large scale projects under BRI. The RM 42 billion projects will have the biggest marina port in South East Asia, which will replace Singapore as a shipping hub by 2025 when it was completed. However, the project delayed by land reclamation process. The port to be built is, nevertheless, not an urgent project and is not even part of the national development program (Hutchinson, 2019). Malacca Gateway lies at Malacca Strait's geo-strategic position. Thus, the project is China's way of expanding military influence in the Straits of Malacca (Patrick, 2017). Malacca Gateway and Forest City are among the developers built on the BRI plan. The area developed as a modern and luxurious residential area. The developers are focusing more on selling to the foreigner for high profits. The locals can't afford to buy the place and own it. Owning a significant amount of property to a foreign country would result in ownership of the land property. The problem of enormous property ownership to foreigners is a serious national security issue (Vrountas, 1990). James K. Jackson, in his article, cautioned the country relies more on foreigners for high-value investments and higher Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) incomes. If the FDI as the primary essential resource for economic growth, this dependence will affect economic security if the investments do not meet the expectations of the government (Jackson, 2014). Malaysia's involvement and support with the BRI project are links to the great power of China that will improve ties between the two countries in terms of diplomacy and economy and generate national income. In the case of island conflicts such as Spratly Island, Beting Patinggi Ali and Luconia Shoal, however, Malaysia does not consider the dispute over this area as a cause of great oppression. The stance of Malaysia is apparent in all its efforts to safeguard the sovereignty of maritime territories under the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea of the United Nations (UNCLOS) (Zainuddin, 2019). Sovereignty and territorial integrity are the cornerstone of nation-states life within international society.

Indonesia

By participating and supporting the BRI plan, Indonesia finds an excellent prospect to improve its networking, technology and enhance the global market place of Indonesia, but still in cautioned support. China has been one of Indonesia's biggest trading partners. Good business ties and good diplomatic relations have made Indonesia very cautious in choosing projects that need to work with China. Indonesia tries to avoid the incident of Sri Lanka's port takes place in any it's collaboration projects with China (Yose, Vidhyandika and Fajar, 2019). One of the most significant investment BRI projects is Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Rail (JBHSR). The project began in 2016 and should be completed in 2019. However, the project yet not completed due to budget constraints and some other issue. Due to the construction delay, it will risk increment the financial budget for the projects. Indonesia's government concern about financial risk and trying to solve it wisely. Indonesia government did not want to put another risk for taking another loan

with China (Reuters, 2015). Despite strong economic ties and diplomatic relations with China, Indonesia also has a dispute in the SCS island with China. Natuna Island, located in the heart of the SCS, as shown in Figure 3. Natuna Island's 200 nm Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claimed inside its nine-dash-line by China. China is using its nine-dash-line to extend its fishing operations and conduct routine maritime patrols around the conflict zone December 2019, when vast numbers of China fishing vessels with escorted vessels from the China Coast Guard penetrated the conflict zone, the conflict became intense. Indonesia responds by sending the fighter and warship fleet to patrol the area (Grossman, 2020). The reaction by Indonesia showed that if territorial sovereignty breached, Indonesia's stance, like Malaysia, will defend it by other means.



Figure 3: Location of Natuna Island in the SCS

(Source: <http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication>)

Thailand

The Prime Minister of Thailand, Prayut Chan-o-cha describe the grand strategy of China to introduce BRI in this region as an initiative that promotes economic connectivity among the ASEAN country with China through the various investment of development and increase the volume of trade. In 2019, at the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, Prayut mentioned that *“Thailand shares BRI objectives, which are similarly included in our 20-year National Strategy, our Thailand 4.0 policy, and cooperation frameworks at the sub-regional and regional levels in which Thailand has played an active role.”*. In January 2017, Thailand established Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). The industrial zone with 13 000km square feet, which encompasses three provinces; Chachoengsao, Chonburi and Rayong are to promote industrial and economic growth. The industries that joined the EEC are Bio-economy, Automotive, Electronics and Robotics, Aviation, transport and medical hub. The aim of EEC to integrate new infrastructure networks with existed ones and link mode of transportation domestically and internationally (Nirut and Thanita, 2019). China took this excellent opportunity to invest and develop infrastructure in EEC as part of BRI plan. Thailand had signed Bt500 Billion for the High-Speed Railway connecting Thailand to China via Cambodia, as shown in Figure 4. China showed great interest by sending 500 members of corporate sector visited Thailand and participate in 6th Thailand-China Joint Committee Meeting and *“Thailand – China Business Forum 2018: Strategic Partnership through the Belt and Road Initiative and the EEC”* seminar (Reuters, 2020).

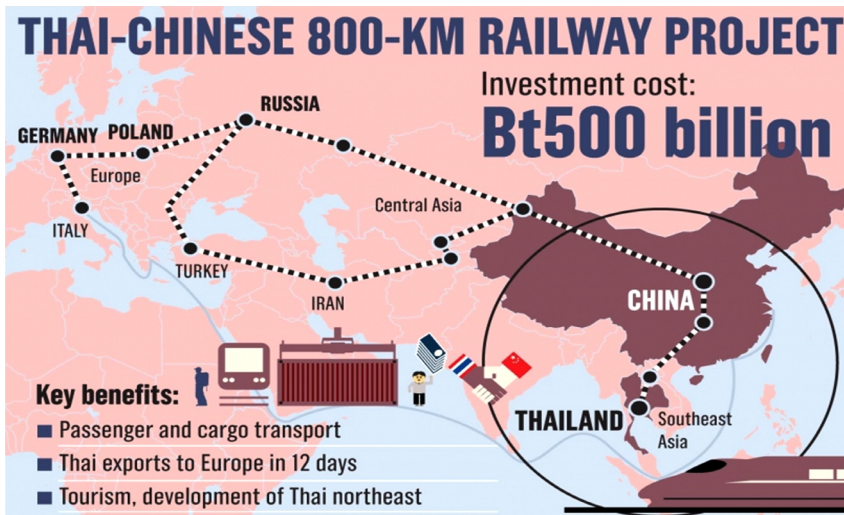


Figure 4: High-Speed Railway China Invest in Thailand in EEC

Source: <https://www.thailandchina.net/china>

However, several investment infrastructure and projects developed by China in conjunctions with EEC, create safety and security concern of the local people regards the amount of China contractors involved with a large number of Chinese workers (Pongsudhirak, 2018). The flux of Chinese community increasing significantly at those provinces. Thailand took the step forward in enhancing its military capabilities by signed \$430 million with China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC) to purchase submarines for the Royal Thai Navy. The contract was signed in May 2017, and the constructions were started in September 2018. The Royal Thai Navy expected to receive the submarine by the middle of 2023. It was reported that it was an enormous investment ever made by the Thai government for the military asset. It was reported that the last purchases of the submarine by the Thailand government were 60 years ago (Reuters, 2019). Admiral Luechai Riddit, Chief of Staff of the Thai Navy, mentioned that the procurement of this S26T Submarines is a must to equip the Navy capabilities with high technologies and new brand asset in order to strengthen and safeguard Thailand maritime territorial. He added that the Navy justify the Thailand government to purchase the submarine because they must compete with their neighbouring countries since they faced the disputed maritime territory with them. Also, the purchases come with a lot of benefits and favourable towards Thailand. The contract also comes with the three years training in China for Thai submariner (Vavasseur, 2019). However, looking for the benefit and favourable that received by Royal Thai Navy, it seems like hiding strategy by China to expand its defence technology and strengthen military influence in ASEAN regions as part of BRI strategic plan. By having China's asset and technology used by another country, China was seen using such an approach to expand its influence on the SCS.

Philippines

May 2016, the remarkable date for Rodrigo Duterte when he won the Philippines's presidential election. The relationship between China and the Philippines under the previous president, Aquino, was intense because of SCS disputes. However, the approach towards China was switch when Rodrigo Duterte took over the government. Thus, 13 bilateral collaboration contracts signed with China worth USD 24 billion and Duterte showed interest to join the AIIB for funding the development and infrastructure projects in the Philippines (Estrada, 2017). When he took the

position, Duterte announced to strengthen the economy and enhance the industry development by introducing “Built, Built, Built” program to achieve the ‘Golden Age of Infrastructure’. From the record of World Economic Forum Competitiveness Rankings, Philippines ranked at the lowest among the ASEAN countries since 2010. Duterte sees the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road suited with the “Built, Built, Built” program and will be competitiveness in ASEAN of economic and infrastructure development (Estrada, 2018). Duterte attended both First and Second Belt and Road Forums for International Cooperation in Beijing to demonstrate the Philippines’ commitment, and he signed a Memorandum of Understanding between China and the Philippines on BRI cooperation in November 2018. Under the massive infrastructure development by China; two bridges over Pasig River in Manila, the Chico River Pump Irrigation Projects, New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam project and the Philippine National Railway South Long Haul (Xia, 2016). The massive infrastructure development plan conjunction with China’s BRI by Duterte creates concern for some economic analyst to describe it’s as the debt-trap. There are some cases of concern that the lender country is unable to repay the loan efficiently caused by high-interest rates and impractical payment mechanism likewise of Sri Lanka’s Port (Camba, 2019). The ambitious of Philippines by “Construct Building” (Built, Built, Built) plan, which expected to use up to eight per cent of GDP in the next five years to finance others significant infrastructures development which worth US\$ 183 billion. Philippines’ economic analysis describes Chinese funding as an economy “incursion” that endangers the country’s sovereignty (Camba, 2019).

Vietnam

The relationship between China and Vietnam is dynamic. These two neighbouring countries shared the common culture, religion and ideology. However, the relations were turned upside down even though the united of Vietnam in 1975. The fall of the Soviet Union’s made a significant change in their relationship. In 1991, the official diplomatic relations had succeeded when Vietnam’s Foreign Minister visited China and followed by Prime Minister of Vietnam in the same year. Despite the strengthening in diplomatic ties, however, the island conflict at the SCS and territorial boundaries remain unresolved and create substantial mistrust between the two countries and increasing anti-China sentiments in Vietnam especially after the oil rig crisis in 2014 (Guan, 2015). Vietnam has supported the BRI but is sceptical about this initiative’s cultural, political, and strategic implications even though joined as a member of China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The increasing demand for development investments to boost the economic growth of the country lead Vietnam to feel the benefit of BRI to them (Hiap, 2018). Nevertheless, the reactions Vietnam towards the initiative remain mostly doubtful and full of cautiousness due to both countries have complicated political, economic and strategic relations. The conflict over the SCS and 2014’s oil rig incident are the contributor to that factor. China also imposes restrictions on its preferential loans, including the use of Chinese technology, machinery, and contractors. The emergence of the enormous amount of Chinese labour in Vietnam’s main projects generates many management problems and cultural conflicts. Thus, the economic analyst describes it can contribute to the economic depended towards China and will impact the security and sovereignty of the country (Reuters, 2020). Hoang Viet, the Professional Legal of SCS researcher, was mentioned: *“Not only do these projects impact a nation’s economic and strategic security, but they also affect society based on how Chinese companies run their operations and what Beijing’s goals are.”*

BENEFICIAL IN TERM OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BRI

Defence Budget

The defence budget of the country depends on how does the country take the countermeasure towards the threat as well as to equip with the capability needed to maintain the sovereignty of that country (Grey, 2016). Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released the data that showed, ASEAN countries have a significant increment of defence spending over the years (Abuza, 2016) This budget increments relate to the modernisation development program as well as to strengthen the military capabilities to protect its national interest and sovereignty of the country. Most of the defence equipment purchased and the technology used are from China. Countries had relied on the United States to procure military equipment before this have begun to draw closer towards China despite regional overlap with China. The aggressiveness of China to dominate the SCS by developing an artificial island and placing military capabilities on the island create defence and security concern among the disputed countries. This section will analyse impact towards defence budget each of the countries, development of defence technology each of countries and awareness of China present at SCS regards with supporting and participating in the countries in the BRI.

Malaysia

Malaysia's budget for the Defence Ministry was stagnant since 2009 until now (Ong and Darshan, 2018). The budget allocation for defence's budget received by the Defence Ministry overall not below than 1.5 percent from GDP. In 2019, the Defence Ministry received RM 15.5 billion from a total allocation of RM 314.5 billion which falls of 6 percent from total allocation (Ministry of Finance, 2020). According to the economic analyst, Malaysia as a developing country need to invest more in public requirements such as health, education, transportation, agriculture and industrial rather than defence sector. Thus, the budget allocation for the defence industry seems to be stagnant as per Figure 5. After the Independence of Malaysia, the primary threat of the country was fighting the Communist Terrorist. However, the communist regime diminished in late 1989. There was no more intrusion until 2013 where the Sulu terrorist intrusion at Lahad Datu. Until then, Malaysia faced only non-traditional threat such as kidnapping for ransom (KFR), smuggling and human trafficking. All these threats are handle by inter-security agencies. MAF remain controlling and securing the border territory.

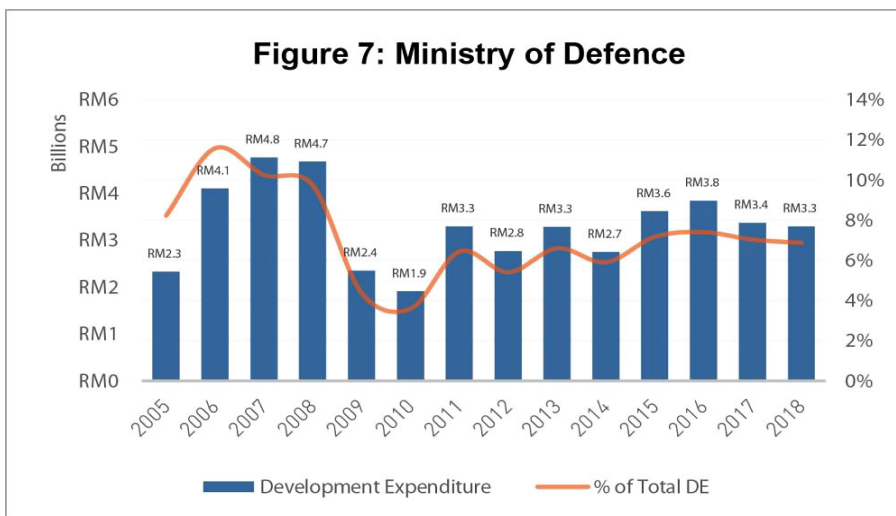


Figure 5: Malaysia Defence Budget from The Year 2005 Until 2018

Source: Ministry of Finance, <http://www.treasury.gov.m>

Indonesia

Indonesia has shown an increasing percentage of GDP per year. The defence budget has also been affected by the strong economic growth in Indonesia under President Jokowi. In 2019, the defence ministry of Indonesia received 5 percent from the total allocation, but the vast increment of 16 percent compared to the last year (Ministry of Finance, 2019). This overwhelming increase is aligning with the Minimum Essential Forces Modernisation program that been planned by the Indonesia military's reform program, as shown in Figure 6.

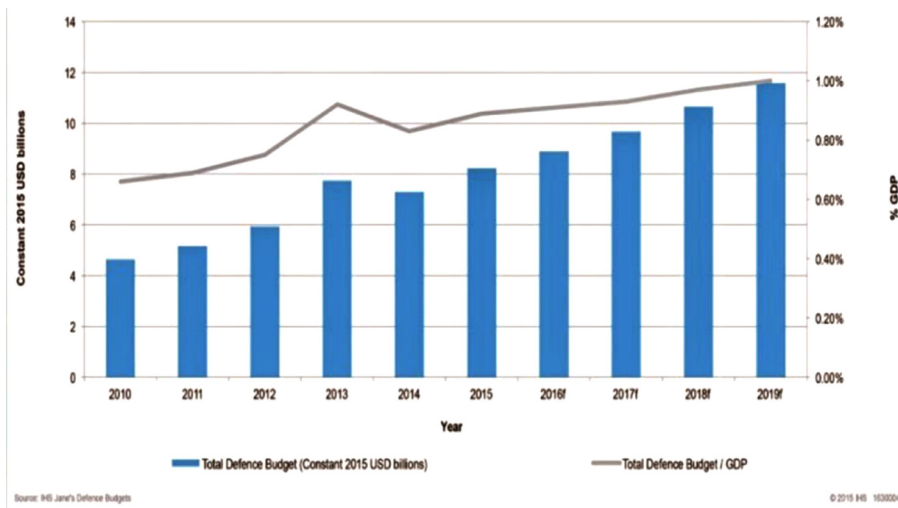


Figure 6: Indonesia Defence Budget from 2010 to 2018 (USD billion)

Source: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/indonesia/budget.htm>

An incredibly broad area of operation to safeguard and uphold the national interest for the Indonesian army is a significant challenge. Indonesia's geography with hundreds of islands and sharing the strategic SLOC boundaries with the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore need a massive military force with advanced military assets. China's aggressiveness to extend its maritime territory into the SCS, especially on Natuna Island, poses significant challenges for the Indonesian military to preserve its maritime territory's security and sovereignty. President Jokowi is now focusing on strengthening the military capabilities at Natuna Island, thus making defence spending was increased to accommodate the military presence at the island (Darling, 2019).

Thailand

Thailand defence spending in 2018 recorded was the third-largest in South East Asia. It showed almost 15 percent of increment over five years from 2013 to 2018, as shown in Figure 7 The military budget of Thailand focused on maintaining the monarchy, carrying out counter-insurgency operations in southern Thailand and purchasing new territorial military capabilities (Department of Defence, 2017). The increment aligned with the transformation ten years of Thailand military modernisation programme started in 2018 known as "Modernisation Plan: Vision 2026" (Abuza, 2019). This strategy aims to upgrade by increasing the capability of three services while promoting the local defence industry by offsetting requirements and transfer of technology in international procurement. Thailand has spent a significant amount of money on military asset purchase history when agreeing to improve maritime capabilities by purchasing three diesel-electric submarines from China. The procurement according to Prawit Wongsuwan, the Deputy Prime Minister and

Defence Minister General (retired) in 2017 mentioned that The need to align military powers in the region and Keep relations with the United State and China respectively (Storey, 2019).

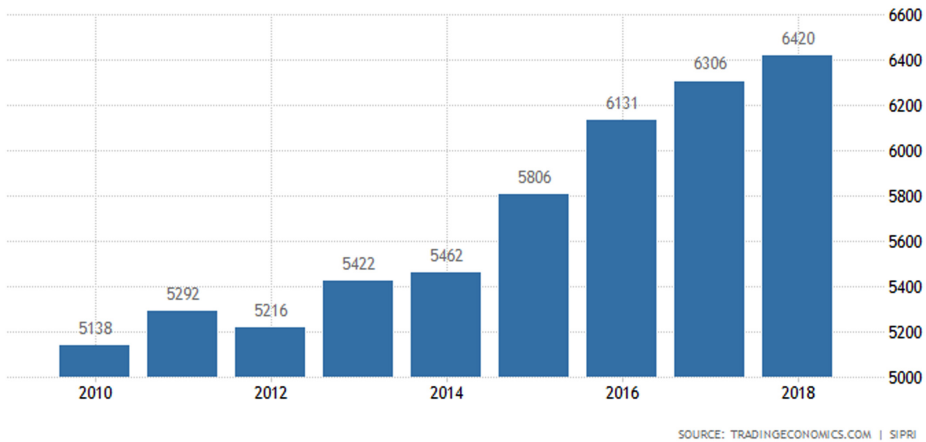


Figure 7: Thailand Defence Budget from 2010 to 2018 (USD million)

Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/thailand/military-expenditure>

Vietnam

Vietnam in November 2019 published the defence white paper expressing the government's steadfast commitment to strengthening its military capabilities, especially in restraining and maintaining the sovereignty of their country's maritime territory (Bhavan and Bac, 2019). Vietnam has spent almost USD 7.2 billion to equip its military capabilities with the new military equipment between 2015 to 2018, as shown in Figure 8. This vast procurement is in conjunction with the Vietnam military Modernisation plan started in the year of 2010.

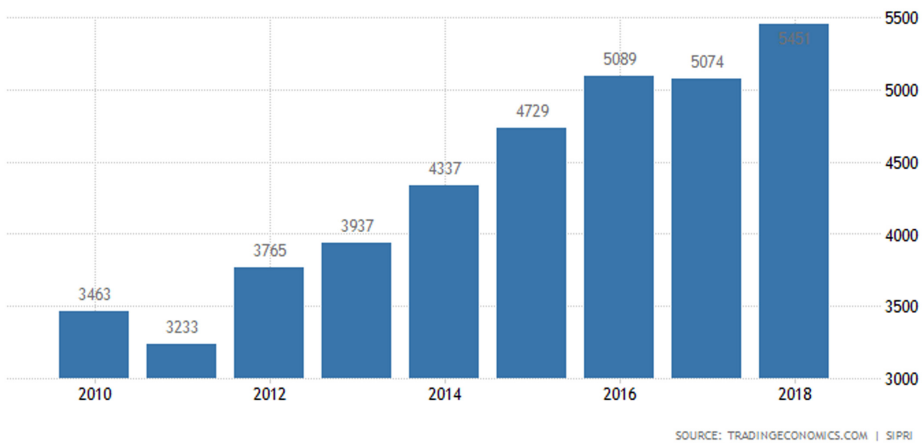


Figure 8: Vietnam Defence Budget from 2010 to 2018 (USD million)

Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/vietnam/military-expenditure>

The military modernisation plan is an effort by the Vietnamese government to upgrade its military capability to curb China's aggression in the SCS. In 2019, Vietnam's Defence Ministry received

USD 5.1 billion for the total defence expenditure and 32.5% from that allocation was purposely for the new procurement defence asset (Reuters, 2019). Most of the distribution was focusing on the Vietnam People Navy (VPN) to carry out the counter-amphibious operations. China increasing its military presence at the SCS are the significant factors for Vietnam looking for military modernisation.

Philippines

Philippines defence spending showed significant increment from 2010 until 2016, as shown in Figure 9. However, since then the figure was slightly decreased for the past three years. Increasing spending in line with the modernisation program initiated by the Philippine Armed Forces (AFP) began from 2013. Overall, the allocation budget received for the Department of National Defence (DND) was five percent of the total government expenditure. In 2019, DND received 34 percent increment compared to the last year allocation (Department of Budget and Management, 2018).

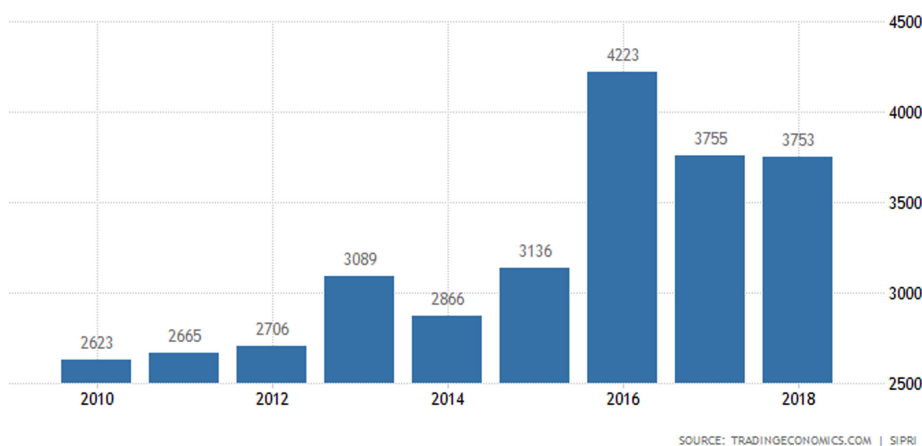


Figure 9: Philippines Defence Budget from 2010 To 2018 (USD Million)

Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/philippines/military-expenditure>

The AFP modernisation program divided into three phases and each phases lasting five years. The first phase started in 2013, spending more focusing on internal security as well as upgrading and procure a new weapon system. The second phase commences in 2018 until 2022 focusing towards air and maritime assets and last phase AFP looking for the acquisition of submarines (Castro, 2018). The primary need for military modernisation program was to protecting the territorial sovereignty of the state, offsetting the emerging challenges of foreign defence, and preserving of strategic maritime interests, especially concerning disputes in the SCS (Chalk, 2014). The Philippines' geography location surrounded by several seas has forced the Philippines's government to strengthen their military capabilities, especially for Navy Army (NA). One of the primary roles of the Philippines NA is to curb the expansion of China's power over the SCS. Since the Philippines has an island claim that overlaps with China in Paracel and Spratly Islands, Scarborough Shoal and Macclesfield Bank, strengthening the maritime capabilities is vital to maintain sovereignty over the claim. Based on the analysis data, it showed that there had been a significant increment based on the budget and the military spending of those countries. The increase in military assets is due to several factors such as the need for military modernisation plans, strengthen regional security capabilities, increasing the security threats in the region and enhancing

security's abilities to protect the sovereignty of the nation (Subhan, 2018). Poor conditions of regional security also lead to increased military spending for the government. The effect of the sudden increase in military expenditure between the regional countries would also endanger them if not manage it wisely (Huxley, 2018). China's encroachment maritime territory EEZ some of the countries in the SCS using nine-dash-line for power expansion is violating the UNCLOS. The encroachment influenced the countries involved to enhance and develop the military capability to protect and defend the rights and sovereignty of the maritime territory of that nation. The Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia are examples of countries investing large sums of money for defence spending to preserve and maintain sovereignty over territory disputes with China.

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

In modernising its military capability, Malaysia sees the procurement of China's military assets as a more competitive option than the western ones (Bernama, 2019). Malaysia sees developments in China's defence industry and the rapidly evolving military technology making it one of the factors in Malaysia's choice of equipment. Malaysia signed a significant procurement with China worth RM 1.17 billion of four LMS for the Navy. It was joint-ventures program between China Shipbuilding and Offshore Company (CSOC) with Malaysia's Boustead Naval Shipyard (BNS) (Jaipragas, 2017). Through this joint venture, Malaysia can gain knowledge of China's technology system and enhance the skills of the local defence industry.

Indonesia also sees China's technology as an alternative to developing defence technology. Since 2005, Indonesia used military equipment manufactured by China, such as C-802 anti-ship missiles, mobile surface-to-air missiles and radar system. While little of China's military assets, Indonesia sees cooperation with China in defence technology would help Indonesia's defence industry. At the fifth anniversary of the Indonesia-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in Jakarta in 2018, One of the issues discussed at the seminar was to create a platform for defence-military exchanges, bilateral exploration and military equipment acquisition (Agnes, 2018). Further agreements were made by both defence minister in December 2019, improving exchanges at the highest level, strengthening strategic mutual trust, improving multilateral collaboration and enhancing ties and cooperation in the defence industry (Xinhua, 2019). Thailand also sees China's defence technology enhancing its defence capabilities. With a limited budget in defence, China could offer a cheaper option to some weapons than the US. Thailand has made the biggest investment in history by agreeing to invest more than \$1.5 billion on three submarines and high amount of Chinese armoured vehicles (Reuters, 2019). Royal Thai Army also procures a total 28 of VT4 main battle tanks from China worth US\$147 million to replace the old model made by the US. Thailand, under Prayut after 2014 military coup, had tightened their relationship with China, especially in defence relations. In meeting with Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe in Bangkok in December 2109, the Thai government had expressed confidence to strengthen the defence collaboration with both sides commemorating the 45th anniversary of their diplomatic relation (Parameswaran, 2019).

The Philippines, under President Rodrigo Duterte, has drawn closer attention to China from its close allies, the US in its administration. In October 2017, as a token of warm and good relationships, the Philippine National Police received 3,000 of the weapon from China. Duterte also allowed the Chinese Naval ship visited the Philippines for the first time since 2010. In 2017, Philippines had sent 20 of Coast Guard's officer to train at China, and the Philippines Navy took part in the international fleet review in Qingdao, China by sending their amphibious warfare ship BRP Tarlac. Despite overlapping claim with China, Duterte has softened the approach towards China (Huang, 2017). The defence collaboration between China, according to Philippine Defence

Secretary Delfin Lorenzana is “committed to the resolution of disputes through peaceful means.” From the analysis data, it showed that Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand had invested huge amounts of money to procure China’s military assets for enhancing their defence capabilities. Even though all of the countries had the overlapping claim and disputed area at SCS with China, the purchase was seen as an act of reconciliation between small and large states. The analyst said that the strategy of China to expand its defence technology towards the South East Region to soothing the conflicts of overlapping claimed at SCS.

CONCLUSION

China uses SCS as the sea route as an important trade route to expand its economic power. Nearly 60 percent of China’s trade value via sea thus made the SCS is an important trade route for them. International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that China’s overall trade transited by the SCS in 2016 approaching 40 per cent from the total trade value (Reuters, 2017). The figure was increasing year by year, as shown in Figure 10. The economy trade and its maritime resources are essential to safeguard, protect as well as to preserve. China as the world’s second-largest economy using that statement to maintained and develop maritime security by placing the military capabilities at the SCS (Wang, 2015).

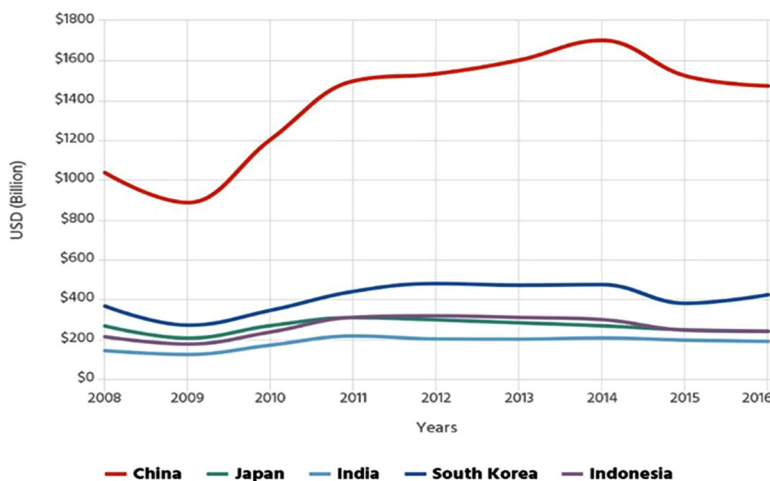


Figure 10: Trade of Key Countries Through the SCS

Source: <https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-se/>

The expansion of China’s military power in SCS created security concerned of the disputed countries. Besides, being involved in the BRI plan, economic partnership with China has been strengthened by collaboration in defence. Most countries are beginning to acquire defence equipment from China and using Chinese defence technologies to increase the country’s security and defence. Thus, the expansion of China power in the region do give an impact towards the defence and security of ASEAN

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MANAGING DISASTER: HOW ASEAN RESPONDS TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

When COVID-19 cases first appeared in the ASEAN region early in 2020, there were fears that public health systems would be overwhelmed. Responses around the region have varied. But while much has been made of divergent national responses, ASEAN's collective action in response to the pandemic has been appreciated. ASEAN's experience with previous pandemics such as SARS and avian and swine influenzas has led member states and their citizens to take COVID-19 seriously. The emphasis on sharing information and best practices at every ASEAN COVID-19 meeting is producing valuable exchanges and enabling national agencies to act against virus importation and disinformation, and select appropriate treatment protocols. With economic downturn caused by domestic containment measures and global disruption to trade, tourism and production, the region is now facing the prospects of a global financial shock and recession. This paper provides a summary of the socio-economic impact, challenges and policy responses employed by the ASEAN Member States to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and analyzed how ASEAN member states respond to COVID-19.

Keywords: *Public Health, Pandemic, Challenges, World Health Organization (WHO), Welfare, Strategic Level, Public Health, Multi-Stakeholder*

INTRODUCTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to plague the world, countries are in the midst of dealing with the second and third waves of infection, which threaten to undo all the progress that has been underway to contain the virus. As mentioned by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Tan Sri Dato' Hj Muhyiddin bin Yassin during the 37th ASEAN SUMMIT on the 12th November 2020, ASEAN continues to play a critical role in carrying out the many initiatives discussed through various ASEAN-led mechanisms. What is required now is ensuring that these initiatives serve as the platform for ASEAN to work collectively, with external partners and other interested parties in alleviating and countering the impacts of COVID-19 in the region. Among the points highlighted by the Prime Minister was that ASEAN must work hand-in-hand with relevant international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and other countries to ensure that the vaccine, once approved, is affordable, accessible and equitably shared by all. As a regional bloc comprising mainly of developing states, it is imperative for ASEAN to focus on the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework.

ASEAN COUNTRY SPECIFIC RESPONSES

Many ASEAN countries have taken similar necessary steps to contain the pandemic such as closing all the country borders, imposing travel ban for all citizens to go abroad, making it compulsory for people to take the COVID-19 test, not to mention canceling all religious festivals and celebrations. Steps have also been taken to ban all the gathering activities, restrict public gathering, close mosques and other places of worship, impose working from home and undergo compulsory quarantine to those who come or return from abroad. Despite that, there are countries that have adopted special measures and orders to address this outbreak and disaster such as

those implemented by the Malaysian Government namely the Movement Control Order under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 and the Police Act 1967. Malaysia has also designated more than 400 new sites across the country including public universities, community colleges, training centers, polytechnics and hotels owned by the government, as the quarantine zones for COVID-19 patients. Cambodia, established a special taskforce known as the National Taskforce Committee for COVID-19 Prevention. Laos issued Order No. 06/PM on the Reinforcement of Measures for the Containment, Prevention and Full Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Next, the government of Philippines focuses on three core areas which are granting ‘special temporary power’ to the President by congress, imposing a lockdown on the entire island of Luzon, employing the military and police to enforce the President’s orders and lockdown measures. They also implement the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases responsible for containing the spread of the coronavirus. Not only that, the congress and the government also make the effort to control private utilities, telecoms and transport operators or businesses in the public interest and turn hotels and other venues into the medical grounds for the frontlines or people in quarantine.

To look after the welfare of the citizens, the government of Brunei has issued a directive to all employers to pay the salaries of their employees even in the quarantine period. On April 1st, it introduced an economic stimulus for micro, small and medium enterprises for BND250 million (USD 175million). In Thailand, on 12th March, the government set up a Command Centre for the Management of the COVID-19 Situation in order to respond to the COVID-19 situation, chaired by the Prime Minister. Thailand government also disbursed their economic stimulus and also focused on supporting businesses in the form of low-interest loans, deductions in withholding tax, and VAT refunds.

The Vietnamese government demonstrated its prompt and aggressive response in this battle, where Vietnam was the first nation after China to place a large residential area into the isolation zone to curb the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. By isolating infected people and tracking down their contacts, or the communities who were at risk since they have had close contact with the infected persons, the virus might be able to be contained. As of 4 May 2020, nine out of ten ASEAN Member States closed their borders, while five imposed lock down.



Figure 1. Containment measures in ASEAN Member States

Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

IMPACT TOWARDS ASEAN REGION

The impact of the pandemic has brought an immediate interruption in all sectors of the economy and adversely impacts tourism, trade and production. The economic impact on the tourism sector in Southeast Asia is also devastating as the virus spreads globally to other countries and regions. Travel restrictions imposed by some Southeast Asian countries to and from Europe and North America further distresses the tourism trade. The economic shock gives more medium-term impacts on poverty and welfare, especially among the more vulnerable in the society and those who work in the informal economy. The informal sector is also affected by the containment measures taken by governments. For instance, lockdown measures have placed them in a more vulnerable position with no income and no savings to stock-up on subsistence goods and no access to the social safety net designed to compensate for lost income.

Within the informal sector, the presence of migrant workers poses another challenge, as the lockdown measures and stricter transport and border controls would make it difficult for them to repatriate. Without work and money, the immigrant workers do exert a national threat to the country. Women also face particular challenges as they are at the core of the COVID-19 response. The pandemic risks curtail income generation opportunities for women, as they tend to be more frequently employed in the informal sector. The public health system is increasingly struggling to cope with the growing demand and the medical sector is overstretched, calling for targeted policy responses. A number of countries in the region have implemented a variety of measures, such as cash delivery to medical personnel or World Bank loans to purchase medical equipment.

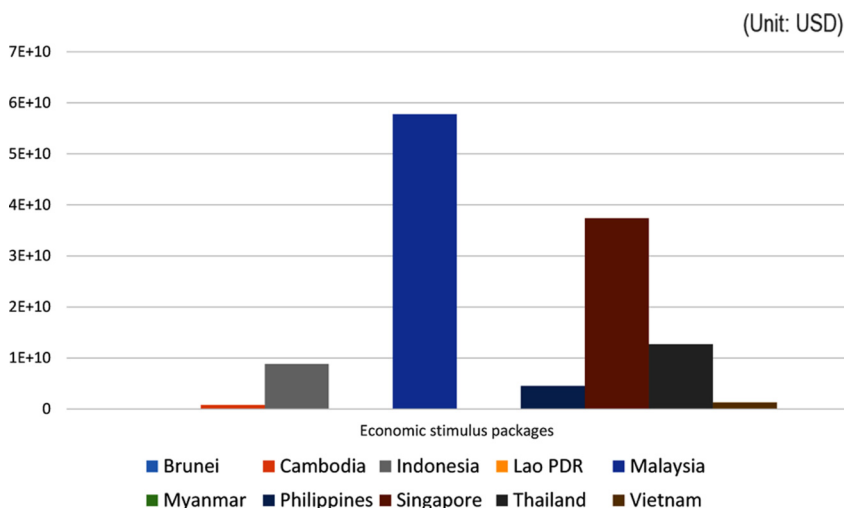


Figure 2. Economic Stimulus Measures by ASEAN Member States

Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

ASEAN'S COORDINATED INITIATIVES

Strategic Level

More recently, there has been an increasing policy convergence and a more united regional response by ASEAN leaders. Communication is exchanged through online meetings as an effort to prevent, detect and respond to COVID-19. As an example, the ASEAN Health Minister (AHHM) Conference chaired by Indonesian Health Minister on 7th April 2020 aimed to intensify regional

cooperation in addressing and dealing with the issue. Among the consensus agreed upon was further strengthening of regional cooperation on risk communication to avert misinformation and fake news, continuing to share information, research and studies in real-time in an open and transparent way, coordinating cross-border health responses; scaling-up the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence for efficient information exchanges and strengthening and institutionalizing the preparedness, surveillance, prevention, detection and response mechanisms of ASEAN with other partners. ASEAN Foreign Ministers held an ASEAN Coordinating Council meeting on COVID-19 to discuss and exchange views on the ASEAN collective response to the rapid outbreak of COVID-19. As a result, ASEAN proposed to establish a COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. Further action has been agreed by the leaders; which issued a declaration of the ASEAN special summit proposing to establish the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund to boost the emergency stockpiles for future outbreaks (Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 2020c). ASEAN has invited ASEAN Plus 3 (Japan, South Korea and China) to contribute to this fund.

Furthermore, the Economic Ministers of ASEAN and Japan had a meeting on 22nd April and released a Joint Statement on Initiatives on Economic Resilience in Response to the COVID-19 outbreak, affirming their commitment to prepare an “ASEAN-Japan Economic Resilience Action Plan.” On the following day, the ASEAN-U.S. Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on COVID-19 took place via video conference to discuss ASEAN-U.S. collaboration in public health emergencies, particularly in the post-pandemic recovery and in countering the longer-term socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

During the 26th ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) retreat in Da Nang, Viet Nam on 10th March 2020, AEM agreed on this agenda “Strengthening ASEAN’s Economic Resilience in Response to the Outbreak of the COVID-19,” which called for a collective action to mitigate the impact of the virus by working with external and development partners. The statement focuses on leveraging technology, digital trade, and trade facilitation platforms such as the ASEAN ‘Single Window’, to foster supply chain connectivity. The statement further includes the need to improve long-term supply chain resilience and sustainability particularly through the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. AEM seeks to continue to address non-tariff barriers, particularly those that impede the smooth flow of goods and services in supply chains and refrain from imposing new and unnecessary non-tariff measures.

Operational and Implementation Level

At the operational and implementation level, several initiatives and actions have been set up by the ASEAN health sector to share technical expertise, risk reports, data analyses and to ensure the maintenance of international regulations and standards. Among the mechanisms that have been taken are through the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre Network for Public Health Emergencies (ASEAN PHEOC Network) that has taken the initiative in sharing daily situational updates on the diseases. ASEAN PHEOC Network for the public led by the Ministry of Health of Malaysia provides a platform among ASEAN member state officials working at the respective crisis centers for disease prevention and control to share information in a timely manner through various mechanisms of communication. WhatsApp mobile application was established for that purpose. PHEOC network also produces a compilation on National/Local Hotline/Call Centre in ASEAN Member State which is then shared with the public on the social media. Next, the ASEAN BioDioaspora Regional Virtual Centre (ABVC) for big data analytics and visualization complemented this by providing a report on the national risk assessments, readiness and response planning efforts. This center also publishes a Risk Assessment Report for an international

dissemination of COVID-19 to the ASEAN region to provide highlights, responses, the overview of the situation, also the number of cases and deaths in ASEAN countries.

As for public health, the finance and resource mobilization are crucial to assist the member states in procuring medical supplies and equipment as they are currently lacking in some regions. The strengthening collaboration has been called by the declaration of the special ASEAN summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (14 April 2020). *Some measures have been agreed by the declaration which are* first, further strengthening public health cooperation measures to contain the pandemic and protect the people. Second, preserving supply chain connectivity. Third, cultivating multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral, and comprehensive approaches to effectively respond to Covid-19 and future public health emergencies. Fourth, collectively mitigating the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic while safeguarding public well-being as a basis for (political) stability. Fifth, enhancing the transparent and public dissemination of important health and safety information via mixed media platforms. Sixth, providing appropriate assistance to support pandemic-affected nationals of ASEAN countries in third countries and last one, reallocating existing available funds to support the establishment of the Covid-19 ASEAN Response Fund. By August 2020, however, a United Nations report found that poor internet connectivity (55% of Southeast Asia's population lacks regular internet access) and weak health systems remain critical obstacles to effectively dealing with Covid-19, with the World Health Organization ranking Southeast Asia's universal health coverage on a median index of just 61 out of 100. Finally the measures also include reallocating existing available funds and encouraging technical and financial support from ASEAN partners to facilitate cooperation.

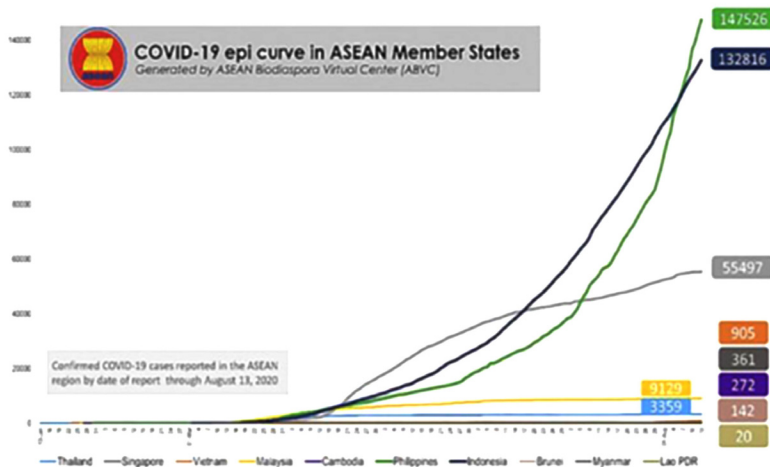


Figure 3: COVID 19 Curve Confirmed Cases
Source: ASEAN Biodiaspora Virtual Center 2020

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ASEAN COUNTRY RESPONSES

The policy sciences framework first proposed by Lasswell (1956) is useful to understanding government responses to Covid-19 as it prompts critical examination of different contextual conditions and changing policy environments that shape decision-making processes and policy outcomes. To assess the efficacy of governance responses to Covid-19, few categories have been identified as a components of a framework for analysis to compare ASEAN and member country pandemic responses.

Policy Perspectives. At the ASEAN level, efforts to negotiate coordinated actions between countries have been organized around the concept of “inclusive regionalism” to combine resources and energies into the resolution of collective challenges. One manifestation of this inclusive regionalism has taken the form of stimulus packages in every ASEAN country. Agreement was also reached in April 2020 to establish an ASEAN COVID-19 Response fund, which has included efforts to diffuse and transfer ideas between national governments within the limits of ASEAN’s mandate of non-interference with respect to national values and cultures. As a key node in global supply chains, ASEAN countries have also begun to explore opportunities to recover from the pandemic recession by relocating production centers away from China and back to countries in Southeast Asia.

Crisis Response and Management. ASEAN member country responses to the pandemic have covered the entire policy spectrum, ranging from aggressive contact tracing, lockdowns and social distancing measures through to business as usual. These responses have varied over time and continue to change as different countries in the region experience second waves of viral outbreaks or recover from major bouts of infection. Even within the same country, responses to the pandemic diverge between jurisdictions and along rural-urban and socioeconomic lines (for instance, densely populated slums and informal urban settlements are more vulnerable to the spread of infection but are less likely to receive adequate healthcare).

Policy Making. The organization of Covid-19 responses also differs markedly between countries, ranging from ministerial level centralized responses (for example, Brunei, Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia) through to decentralized task forces (such as Indonesia and Lao DPR) that comprise public-private, private-societal and co-governance partnerships between medical service providers, government agencies, private and corporate financiers and civil society organizations. Many response efforts have been mired in public controversies, power asymmetries and blame games. Mirroring the global dilemma, ASEAN countries with mounting national debts and unprecedented economic contractions continue to struggle internally with questions of whether public health or economic recovery should take precedence. This dilemma becomes more pronounced the longer national borders remain closed and supply chains remain disrupted. Political instability is also a growing risk across the region due to protracted levels of high unemployment, restrictions on movement and food insecurity, especially in Southeast Asia’s large informal sector. In this context of accumulating political and economic pressure, communication failures, political values and identities, and weak mandates can further undermine efforts to achieve a collective crisis response.

Transnational Administration. Growing socioeconomic inequality across the ASEAN region has affected the spread of COVID-19 and divergent responses to its containment. Poverty is one reason some ASEAN countries could not implement strict lockdown such as in Indonesia and Philippines. In addition, vulnerable groups such as migrant workers continue to benefit less from development in ASEAN. It showed that they are proven vulnerable to get more infections of COVID-19 than any other groups or society for example the cases of infection in Singapore surged in migrant workers clusters. While in ASEAN the response of COVID-19 is more emphasis on extensive measures of member states in the first place. Regional cooperation is emerging in later stages with exchange information and information sharing among member states and ASEAN Respond Fund COVID-19 to assist member states that need funding. COVID-19 is disrupting tourism and travel, supply chains and labor supply. Among ASEAN countries, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are heavily integrated in regional supply chains and will be the most affected by a reduction in demand for the goods produced within them. Indonesia and the Philippines have been increasing supply chain engagement and will also not be immune. Vietnam is the only new

ASEAN member integrated into supply chains with China and is already suffering severe supply disruptions.

Implementation and Administration. Response of COVID-19 needs inter-agency collaboration across fragmented and sectoral bureaucracy. Some of ASEAN countries had difficulties to have interagency collaboration due to sectoral ego. Hierarchical coordination, power struggle between levels of government such as in Indonesia decentralization complicate the effective response of COVID-19. The pandemic has disrupted the daily lives routine in all ten ASEAN countries. In slowing down the spread of COVID-19 behavior changes are needed. People were forced to stay at home for months or more to prevent the further spread of the virus. Work, study and even prayer activities have been affected and should do these activities at home instead and conducted online. The effort of social distancing has been applied to all ten Member countries. Malaysia for example has implemented a Movement Control Order (MCO) since 18 March 2020. This MCO has extended to April 28, 2020. Similarly, in Indonesia Indonesian President Jokowi appeals to citizens to work, study and pray at home on 15 of March 2020. This social distancing has been continued with the order of large-scale social restriction in major cities in Indonesia in Jakarta for example adopted until 23 April 2020 and this has been extended. In Singapore, closure of the workplace has to be implemented for 28 days “circuit breakers” from April 3, 2020. The Philippines also implemented community quarantine in metro Manila on 13 of March 2020 and in other parts of its region. The community needs to comply with strict measures. Social distancing was also adopted in 12 cities in Vietnam.

Emotions and Public Policy. Succeed in changing behavior during COVID-19 include establishing trust in health authorities, recommendation and information. Citizen willingness to cooperate to social distancing and understanding the threat with maintaining good hygiene and immune systems have been the key to cope with pandemic. However, for many social distancing is not an option. For example, in Philippine as they struggle to meet daily needs, they fear death from hunger and anxiety rather than from infection. *Similarly*, with Indonesia when fulfilling the daily needs are more important than staying at home. In addition, wearing a mask in some countries has become mandatory as recently in Indonesia Jokowi appealed to citizens to wear masks in the public. Fear of the virus spread also created some unacceptable discriminatory behaviors such as in Cambodia where member of the public posted hateful Facebook comments in reaction to the Health Ministry’s original statement, blaming Cambodia’s Muslim communities of or the spread of the virus in the country. Similarly, in Indonesia, people in some local region has rejected the death because of victims were going to be buried in their areas because of infection fear. They need more education and awareness of the community on the threat, to massively campaign particularly what should do and not do at local community level.

Narratives and Messaging. Governments that communicate sufficient and accurate information in a timely and transparent manner can gain public trust during the pandemic. Governments that provide unclear rules end up creating opportunities for abuse and cause unwanted public fear and panic. In general, governments want to project force and model good governance to their constituents by showing them that ‘the government is taking action’. However, when poorly communicated it can threaten that public and drive them to unwanted behaviors. For instance, when the confirmed cases of COVID-19 were first announced in ASEAN, many reacted by engaging in mass panic buying. This occurred in several countries including Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia. The first time the Philippine President addressed the public, he was flanked by top-ranking military and police officials, which gave the impression that the government is ‘militarizing’ the government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Public perceptions and sentiments need to be managed carefully. Greater compliance to government directives such as wearing masks in public

requires building and maintaining public trust. Narratives and messaging play a key role in shaping and influencing public trust. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam have been models of effective communication and transparency. While Indonesia has been accused of providing too little information and lack of transparency in handling the pandemic.

Technical Experts and Information. Scientific, medical and public health experts are evidently central in policy responses to COVID 19. Indonesia proposed the establishment of ASEAN-China Ad-Hoc Health Ministers Joint Task Force during the Special Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN and People's Republic of China (PRC) on February 20, 2020. The Task Force is expected to focus on the exchange of information and data, especially in handling the COVID-19 outbreak, organizing expert team meetings, and encouraging joint research and production for virus detection and vaccine. More recently, during the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit, April 14, 2020, the Indonesian President called for leaders to provide guidance to the Health Ministers to strengthen research collaboration to create anti viruses and vaccines. In anticipation of a pandemic going forward, Indonesia also proposed the establishment of an APT country special task force for a pandemic whose task would be to provide comprehensive steps to strengthen the resilience of the APT Region in the face of a future pandemic. The pandemic however actually has exposed disparity in terms of capacity, role and influence of communities of scientific and technical experts across ASEAN countries. Across the region, governments who made decisions based on medical and scientific evidence relying on public health and medical officials have come out on top. Governments who have made their decisions based on short-term economic and political calculations have not been able to get ahead of the situation. In ASEAN countries where the pandemic responses have been more effective, scientific, medical and public health experts have played important roles in decision-making processes.

Science and Learning. Lessons learned from their own nations and other neighbors when dealing with the previous epidemic could provide valuable insight into the combat with this current pandemic. In parallel with SARS and MERS, COVID-19 was found to share a similar characteristic of origin, symptoms and host immune response (5). Thus, it creates a change to boost the national responses to combat the infection and prepares for an outbreak of similar coronavirus in the future. Several triggers need to be urgently improved including surge healthcare capacity, infection prevention and control and update information for the whole public. To improve healthcare capacities, various supports were allocated from their own national budget or even sent from international organizations and nearby nations. Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Philippines activated their economic stimulus package for healthcare spending. Besides, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank also supported Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos to the purchase of medical supplies. Whereas, Singapore, Vietnam and other nations (China, South Korea, Japan, USA) also aid their neighboring ASEAN countries by training medical workers, medical supplies or even sending medical experts. Further, the COVID-19 public information campaign existed in all nations as assessed from the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker. This brings the benefits of the digital evolution to broaden and daily update information for the whole population.

ASEAN AND A WAY FORWARD

There are similarities and differences in the crisis response and management in every southeast ASEAN country to COVID-19; however, there are many valued lessons that have been learnt by them. ASEAN countries should look into sharing the expertise in broader perspectives such as sharing and training their medical workers, doctors, paramedics, supporting staff or sharing

even more information about the medical supplies. Thus, it creates a change to boost the national responses to combat the infection and prepare for an outbreak of similar coronaviruses in the future. Several actions need to be urgently improved including the surge in the healthcare capacity, infection prevention and control and update information for the whole public.

Countries in ASEAN also learn from other successful countries in dealing with this pandemic such as mitigating the impacts with partial closure for example in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia where they are starting to shift their policy to stricter measures such as lockdown or larger scale quarantine following the surge of infection in their countries. During COVID-19 onset during January - February 2020, ASEAN's "One ASEAN - One Response" (OAOR) and One Vision, One Identity, One Community framework was put to the test. Despite being proven to be relatively successful as the main focus is on natural hazards, the ASEAN's coordinated response seemed less visible in the first quarter of 2020. Therefore, fuller understanding of ASEAN's response to COVID-19 should be further examined in future.

ASEAN also delves into certain policies and protocols that ASEAN has, but unsure of, in terms of the success of the implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic such as Protocol for Communication and Information Sharing on Emerging Infectious Diseases, with a standardized Protocol for Communication and Information Sharing on Emerging Infectious Diseases that encourages member states to report all cases of diseases categorized as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Past programs include the cooperation of Disaster Safety of Health Facilities and the ASEAN + 3 Field Epidemiology Training Network as well as the ASEAN Regional Public Health Laboratories Network (RPHL) through the Global Health Security Agenda platform. It is not clear how such networks contribute to effective policy making amid this COVID-19 pandemic.

WHAT CAN ASEAN DO BETTER?

ASEAN members stand to gain collectively and individually from a more coordinated and collective response. Given intra-regional interconnectedness, South-east Asia's resilience to the coronavirus is only as strong as its weakest link. Emergency measures that keep nations isolated from one another may curb further virus-infected arrivals, but they do not necessarily secure effective treatment and alleviate the public health crisis afflicting every ASEAN member state, and on a collective level the South-east Asian region. If all ASEAN members jointly put up a good fight in containing the disease, they could aid in a faster region-wide recovery and pave the way for a faster rebound of intra-ASEAN travel, trade and investments. As South-east Asia is prone to natural disasters, ASEAN has built up its disaster response capacity. Its Disaster Emergency Logistics System with three strategic stockpiles in Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand allows for the swift provision of disaster relief items. This capacity should be urgently extended to pandemic response, and Covid-19 medical supplies, such as face masks and test kits, added to Asean's emergency stockpiles. Even though that may be difficult in the present circumstances with shortages all round, ASEAN should seriously look to prioritise such a stockpile when the pandemic pressure subsides.

Also more could be done to "retool" several existing defence-related ASEAN mechanisms and facilities dealing with disaster response to supporting regional preparedness and responses to public health threats. These include the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group and the ASEAN Military Medical Centre based in Bangkok. Other disaster response protocols, including the One ASEAN, One Response guidelines, could be used as a template to adapt to health emergencies. These regional standby arrangements would come in handy in the early phase of an outbreak in

a limited locale. While there may be differences in the technicalities and political sensitivities of managing natural disasters and health emergencies, they both require “speed, scale and solidarity” in deploying assets and personnel to the affected country.

ASEAN can also make a difference in the ongoing crisis by ensuring timely sharing of information and coordination among its member states to facilitate the return of ASEAN nationals to their home countries as well as supporting those who get stranded because of lockdowns. For example, Singapore has provided accommodation support for Malaysian workers in the city-state affected by Malaysia’s lockdown. Likewise, the Malaysian Embassy in Teheran recently helped evacuate Singaporeans from Iran, giving effect to the ASEAN guidelines on consular assistance to the nationals of other ASEAN members in times of crisis in third countries. The gap between ASEAN talk and its tangible impact on the people in South-east Asian countries has long been a source of concern and criticism. ASEAN should rise to the challenge and show critics that it has both the resolve and instruments to help its people in this pandemic. The unfolding Covid-19 crisis is a test of ASEAN’s resilience and credibility. It is also through this trial that Vietnam must live up to the theme that it has set out for its chairmanship this year - a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN.

CONCLUSION

ASEAN and its whole communities need to build a resilient health system that is also fair, green and sustainable. Extensive early measures taken by each member state are the key to the successful control of the virus. Although during March and April 2020, ASEAN has reconvened and utilized its existing health regional mechanism to try to have a coherent response to the impacts, COVID-19 shows that shock and changes can occur any time and at different scales, and health systems need to have the ability to absorb, adapt and transform in dealing with the shock. As a regional bloc, ASEAN must work hand-in-hand in focusing on the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. Strengthening future collaboration should be the very next agenda by recognizing that there is a more coherent, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholders and comprehensive ASEAN community approach in ensuring a timely and effective response to the pandemic.

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Henderson, D.A., The looming threat of bioterrorism, *Sci.*,283: 1279-1283, 1999.

Online Sources

Hurlbert, R.E., Chapter XV, Addendum: Biological Weapons, Malignant Biology, Available from <http://www.wsu.edu/~hurlbert/pages/101biologicalweapons.html>. (Accessed on 30 January 2010).

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