CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF
THE TRACK II NETWORK OF ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS (NADI)
WORKSHOP ON "COUNTERING EXTREMIST NARRATIVES: INTEGRATED EFFORTS AND
APPROACHES WITHIN ASEAN"
18 – 22 April 2017
Chachoengsao, Thailand

1. The Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) Workshop on "**Countering Extremist Narratives: Integrated Efforts and Approaches within ASEAN**" was organized by Strategic Studies Center, National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI), at Suntara Wellness Resort and Hotel, Chacheongsao, Thailand, from 18 to 22 April 2017.

2. Representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam attended the Workshop. The list of participants is attached in Annex I. Colonel Kitti Kongsombat, Deputy Director of Strategic Studies Center, The National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI), chaired the Workshop.

Welcome Remarks by Lieutenant General Jerdwut Kraprayoon, Deputy Commander of National Defence Studies Institute, Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters

3. Lieutenant General Jerdwut thanked all distinguished guests for dedicating their time, effort and attention to this Workshop. This topic of "Countering Extremist Narratives" is very important because the world today seems to suffer from increasing conflicts driven by extremist ideologies. The incidents happen at all levels, from global to region level. To resolve the conflicts, NADI tries to come up with non-violent mechanism by understanding how to better prevent conflicts and change the minds. NADI is one step ahead of typical security practices within ASEAN. Since Thailand is working on reconciliation in the Southern part, the discussion and suggestions from this Workshop can be helpful for this matter. It will create the way forward to have a successful mechanism and lessen the violence in the future.

Opening Remarks by Colonel Kitti Kongsombat, Deputy Director of Strategic Studies Center, The National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI)

4. Colonel Kitti welcomed all participants for joining the Workshop. He stated that the world and ASEAN are facing formidable challenges, and one of them was the spreading of violent extremist narratives, based on propaganda and misguided interpretation and exploiting the poor and misinformed public. Some extremists might return home and bring back potential seeds of violence to the societies. This might threaten regional security and become more difficult to handle in the future. Therefore, an integrated effort within ASEAN should be considered. That is why this Workshop aimed to explore counter-narratives to find better solutions in deterring the violent extremists in the region.

Adoption of Agenda:

5. The workshop adopted the agenda and the programme, which are attached in Annex II and Annex III respectively.

Keynote Speaker: Assistant Professor Punchada Sirivunnabood, Ph.D., Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University

6. Assistant Professor Punchada mentioned that the extremist narrative is a concept to promote ideology and recruit new members. The modern terrorism was divided into four waves, namely anarchism (1880-1920), anti-colonialism (1920-1960), new-left movement (1960-1990), and religious fundamentalism (1990 – present). The "waves" are characterized by a cycle of activities revealing both expansion and contraction phases, which cover multiple nations, and are "driven by a common predominant energy that shapes the participating groups' characteristics and mutual relationships". The last wave uses religious fundamentalism to spread ideology all over the world and deploys new technology, especially social media, to attract people. According to Roger's diffusion of innovation theory, information traverses the stages of knowledge (exposure to the idea), persuasion (attitude formation), decision (activities of choice), implementation (application), and confirmation (seeking reinforcement for choices).

7. The key players include leaders, facilitators, champions, linking agents, and change agents. To deliver message, terrorists prefer showing pictures or VDO clips. Therefore, a narrative is a system of stories that share themes, forms, and archetypes. The terrorists mostly use 13 master narratives to motivate people because they present an alternate form of rationality. According to Scott Ruston, an extremist narrative is a system of stories that hang together to provide a coherent view of the world for the purpose of supporting individuals, groups, or movements to further illegal violence and violence-assisting activities. To contest extremist narratives, the related parties need a better understanding of what the extremists' rhetorical tactics are and why they are often very effective. This will lead to options for contesting the arguments by using comparisons and alternative framing. Terrorists use advanced technology and social media such as VDO clips on YouTube, Twitter and applications that are hard to access. Asst. Prof. Punchada suggested that the governments should show their side of stories instead of closing terrorist websites only. This will solve the problem in a long term. However, it is difficult because they use technologies. The more technologies they know, the more difficult it is for governments to prevent that.

SESSION TWO:
Brunei Darussalam
Presentation by Ms. Selina Farahiyah Teo, Research Officer, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam

8. Ms. Selina Farahiyah Teo, in her presentation, highlighted that extremist narratives from Brunei's perspective is perceived as any acts that threaten Brunei's core values of being loyal to the Sultan and the State and ensuring social harmony and traditional practices of friendship and neighbourliness as espoused in the national philosophy and any forms of acts that deviates from the belief in Islamic values that is in line with the faith of *Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah* and Shafi'e jurisprudence.

9. In countering extremist narratives, she highlighted that it is critical to deter various extremist elements from its infancy stage. Brunei's counter measures strongly emphasise on preventive measures that is focused on whole of government and nation approach. This includes a strong foundation in religious and formal education, a centralised authority on religious

related matters and a wide-ranging community outreach programmes focusing on its youth. Having said that, she also identified the cyberspace as the fastest growing challenge not only for Brunei but regionally and globally, as extremists increasingly capitalise the platform to spread their ideology and thinking. In moving forward, there is an increasing need for the region to focus on the preventive measures. It is recommended that ASEAN in particular the ADMM to explore further into learning and sharing of best practices of national preventive measures and work towards promoting preventive cooperation at regional level through utilization of existing platforms.

Kingdom of Cambodia
Presentation by Lieutenant Hek Lygenta, Assistant to General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence (GDRI), Cambodia

10. Lieutenant Hek Lygenta delivered a presentation on the topic of "Cambodia in the context of global terrorist threat". Currently, in Cambodia, there is no sign of linkage with the extremist or other terrorist group, but the Cambodia government is concerned about the terrorist threat that might happen to disturb the peace and stability in the country as well as in the region.

11. Although the Cambodian people has no sign of linkage with the extremist or other terrorist group, the Royal Government of Cambodia is firmly committed to enact laws and mechanisms to prevent and crack down on terrorism in full cooperation with other countries regionally and internationally. In response to growing threats of terrorism, the Royal Government of Cambodia has established the National Counter-Terrorism committee .Then, the Royal Government of Cambodia should work hand in hand with the AMS to respond to terrorism threats through intelligence sharing as well as information, sharing effective and successful counter-terrorism experiences so as to detect and to deter terrorism plots and suspects. Moreover, there should be a close watch on returned fighters and educate Cambodian people about the truth of Islam to counter extremist ideology and to build human resource capability on counter-terrorism.

Republic of Indonesia
Presentation by Lieutenant Colonel Hadi Purnama, Staff of the Center for Strategic Studies of Indonesian Armed Forces (CSS, TNI), Indonesia

12. Lieutenant Colonel Hadi Purnama stated that the ASEAN region is a strategic area inhabited by over 600 million people with diverse background in political, economic and socio-cultural. ASEAN region is vulnerable to the security threats that require cooperative responses. The examples of such incidents were the hijacking of aircraft DC-9 Woyla on March 28th, 1981 in Thailand; and the hijacking of tug boat Brahma 12 on March 26th, 2016 in the Philippines. From those two cases, the terrorists can be drawn by characteristics that are well organized, militant, trained and indoctrinated. In achieving their goal they always use a new way and selecting the iconic target as well as use of mass media. In the era of technological advancement and the ease of access to the internet today, AMS should be vigilant about the possibility of new forms of terrorism, especially the employment of weapons of mass destruction. Internet is now widely used as a medium for recruitment and brainwashing by the terrorists in strengthening the organization.

13. AMS needs to build strong synergy among all agencies (military, intelligence, law enforcement, immigration, politicians, psychologists, economics, media, academia, NGOs, general public, etc.)

Presentation by Colonel Budi Pramono, Chief of Collaboration Center of Indonesian Defence University (IDU), Indonesia

14. Colonel Budi Pramono stated that counter-terrorism in Indonesia has undergone a change which has relation with strategic environment and it has been influenced by domestic politics situations. The spirit of terrorism in Indonesia since the New Order indicates no significant changes from the initial goal to set up a theocratic state within Islamic law. Meanwhile, in the Old Order, counter-terrorism act was handled entirely by the armed forces as War Model, which looks at attacking the extremist groups in some areas of Indonesia during the period from 1940s to 1960s. The difference was in the way the New Order government embraced radical Islamic organizations such as *Komando Jihad* for government to ultimately terminate its existence.

15. The most noticeable change from the Old Order to the Reform Era is the leading role of the national police and armed forces as a supporting force in counter-terrorism. The spectrum of threats today requires stakeholders to choose more comprehensive preventive measures by involving the public and international support as well as early detection and early prevention by involving the military. Defining the duties of the national police and the Indonesian Armed Forces in combating terrorism is also important. Assignment of the military in combating terrorism in a period of reform should be involved again in training, intelligence or support facilities in tackling the terrorists in the past were quite successful. Besides, the national police could work more effectively and efficiently by using the technique of de-radicalization. In this case, de-radicalization should involve religious leaders, traditional leaders, community leader, Indonesian National Police, central government, local government and Indonesian National Army, to tackle the activities of terrorism through ideology, economy, socio-culture and defence and security field.

Lao People's Democratic Republic
Presentation by Lieutenant Colonel Souksan Khaiphom, Deputy Director of the Office of Military Science and History Department, Ministry of National Defence, Lao PDR

16. Lt. Col. Souksan briefed the participants of the workshop on the types of extremist narratives in Southeast Asia and some of the integrated efforts and approaches that could be feasibly applied to counter extremist acts in ASEAN. He pointed out that the types of extremist narratives that the Southeast Asia has most experienced are linked to religious, ideological, political, economic and social-heroic narratives. The glorification of violent acts, terrorism, perpetrators and popular sympathy of radicalism, for instance, are all interrelated to the extremist narratives.

17. In order to address these threats, it is necessary to conduct a careful analysis and assessment of all influential factors leading to extremist acts and the main drivers of radicalisation and recruitment at a local level before developing a counter-narrative response. Identifying target

groups of people susceptible to extremism; and setting a counter-narrative plan that encompasses clear goals and objectives with appropriate timeline, stakeholders, necessary resources, relevant contents and messages to be transmitted to the audience via mainstream social media platforms and other means of communication are also critical for countering extremist narratives in ASEAN. To help ensure such a strategic plan, the AMS should evaluate its performances, so as to set up or further enhance national and regional centres where concerned authorities can work together against all forms of terrorism.

Malaysia
Presentation by Lieutenant Colonel Wan Azni bin Hj Wan Muhammad, Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS), Malaysia

18. Lieutenant Colonel Wan Azni bin Hj Wan Muhammad presented the proposal in three parts. The first part dwelled on the historical background of Daesh penetration in Malaysia followed by the analysis on the method of narratives utilized by the terrorist group. The main and last part of the presentation detailed various recommendations to counter terrorist narratives in the country and the whole region.

19. The presentation covered the holistic measures that involve the offensive and defensive approaches, the need to identify and address the targets groups and platforms that can be used in countering extremist narratives, government and non-governmental organisations to be involved in countering extremist narratives. This includes the new milestone of Malaysian government approach by highlighting Malaysia's initiatives to promote the understanding on the concept of *Wasatiyyah* particularly Moderation, by establishing the King Salman Centre for International Peace (KSCIP) in cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. KSCIP will become an important institution in conducting research and advocating the appropriate initiatives to combating any form of extremism and terrorism around the globe.

The Republic of the Philippines
Presentation by Captain Florante N Gagua, Executive Officer, Office of Strategic Studies and Strategies Management (OSSSM), Armed Forces of the Philippines

20. Captain Florante N Gagua, in his presentation, gave a brief rundown of the types of extremism currently operating in the Philippines: specifically communist extremism as typified by the CPP-NPA-NDF, and Islamic/Moro extremism as typified by several extremist groups both local, such as the Abu Sayyaf, and foreign groups such as ISIS/Daesh.

21. To engage and counter extremism, he emphasized the importance of a whole-of-nation approach that involves all stakeholders, as well as a people-centered approach that respects human rights and rules of law. In the experience of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, these approaches were demonstrated in the implementation of its Internal Peace and Security Plan "*Bayanihan*", which encompassed political-security operations, socio-cultural engagements, and economic development support operations as part of a multi-pronged strategy. Even as the Armed Forces of the Philippines moves to sustain its initiatives with a new campaign plan towards "sustaining the peace," there is a recognition of the need for further activities to defeat violent radicalism. As a way ahead, he recommended full support and implementation of measures to make the region inhospitable to radicalism as laid out in

the ASEAN Community Blueprints. It was also recommended that AMS increase bilateral and/or multi-lateral military-to-military cooperation to further information sharing, operational coordination and intellectual-knowledge exchange.

The Republic of Singapore

Presentation by Madame Nur Azlin Mohamed Yasin, Associate Research Fellow, International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore

22. Mdm Nur Azlin Mohamed Yasin described that online extremism is a second world for terrorist groups, its members, supporters and sympathisers. It does not only complement operations in the real-world, but most importantly, provides a safe haven when terrorists' physical capabilities are dismantled. We see this in the many cases including that of the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE), Far Right terrorist movements, Al Qaeda and UN designated terrorist group which calls itself the Islamic State (IS). Terrorists online presence allow them to pursue their objectives and also to expand their influence, reach and physical capability at a global level. This is done especially through online recruitment, fundraising and geographically interlinked networks. As much as it is a bane and one of the primary drivers of online radicalisation and lone wolf attacks, online extremism also serves as a gold mine of information for the tracking of networks and detection of attack plots.

23. Developing assessments from large amount of data has many challenges. However, with the human will, determination and expertise, coupled with the assistance of technology, it is not impossible to track terrorist networks. Here, lexicon and checklists derived from online extremism are useful in developing algorithms to build the technology to detect networks and categorise the different stages of radicalisation. Such a technology would be useful not only to identify intelligence. It can also be used as a tool aimed at injecting the right counter narratives and messages to the right groups of target audience.

24. Countering extremist narratives needs a holistic approach involving different expertise from different fields. This includes specialists from the fields of psychology, communication, academia and also from agencies at the grassroots level, amongst others. The above are only one of the many efforts essential for an effective communication strategy against extremist narratives. It is recommended that efforts should be made to develop both counter narratives and alternative messages, to respond to extremist narratives.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Presentation by Senior Colonel Pham Ngoc Thanh, Institute for Defense Strategy, Ministry of National Defence, Vietnam

25. Senior Colonel Pham Ngoc Thanh stated that the basic features of extremism are fraudulently conceptual exchange and denial of most fundamental values of human beings and universal norms. The extremism is often recognized by activities irrespective of morality and rules to attain objectives, in which violence is always encouraged.

26. Roots and conditions for the emergence and development of extremism include starvation, poverty and backwardness, bad effects of the development, ethnic and religious conflicts, reverse of regional and international integration, limitation of international cooperation against terrorism and extremism, and the bad effects of social media.

27. In order to effectively deal with the development of extremism in the region, each AMS should proactively resolve its own internal issues combining with comprehensive integrated efforts, which should be considered and implemented in all three pillars of the ASEAN Community in which prevention should be placed on top of the priorities.

Kingdom of Thailand

Presentation by Colonel Pratuang Piyakapho, Director of Regional Studies Division, Strategic Studies Center (SSC), The National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI), Thailand

28. Colonel Pratuang stated that in recruiting and turning people to be the extremists, there are factors worth considering. For the push factor, inequalities of wealth and standard of living are pushing people away from each other. For the pull factors, some people, without sufficiently educated minds and deep understanding, are possibly attracted by fancy thoughts or promises of rewards in the afterlife, mostly based on the extremist propagandas. Additionally, the recent wide spread of extremist ideologies and propagandas are obviously aided by ICT such as social media and other similar platforms.

29. By ASEAN norm and traditions, ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) stated that the AMS should fulfill their obligations in a manner consistent with the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and that of non-interference in the internal affairs of others. It is recognized that sometimes innocent people become victims of the extremist propagandas and violent ideologies through their narratives spreading widely in the local through those terrorist networks and infiltrators, therefore, AMS have agreed on such advance and admirable approach in helping those exploited victims by emphasizing on rehabilitation rather than harsh punishments.

SESSION THREE:

Summary of Discussions

30. The participants have had an active exchange of views as to why extremist narratives are so appealing. Factors include economic inequality, social grievances and ignorance which are exploited by extremists. AMS have thus been increasingly concerned about the spread of extremist narratives. Participants agreed on the importance of ensuring that extremist narratives do not spread unchecked, including the online monitoring of websites to root out such narratives. However, the methods used should not just be restricted to law enforcement and military ones. Holistic approaches are needed to ensure that the governments of AMS engage with various sections of the general public, including the development and circulation of overarching counter narratives to fight the spread of extremist ones.

Recommendations

31. Terrorism and extremism are quickly becoming mounting concerns throughout the region. One of the major enablers of terrorism is violent extremist narrative that has been propagated by terrorist groups to indoctrinate and recruit new followers. Notably, all terrorist groups in AMS share similar extremist narratives. As such, the AMS need to give priority to cooperation on the kinds of counter-narratives to deal with these issues in order to halt the spread of extremist narratives. To do so, the following recommendations are proposed for consideration:

a) ASEAN should pay more attention to counter violent extremist narratives by providing alternative messages. Effective countermeasures will require deep understanding of the issue, reaching the heart and soul of the people, including improving the well-being of the poor.

b) There should be an overarching narrative to counter the extremist ones at the national and regional levels. Counter narratives, which include alternative messages, could be utilized as a proactive way of countering extremist narratives. Such measures include national education and rehabilitation efforts. This must also include the correct content of narratives for the region, identifying the different groups of target audience and appropriate medium of communication.

c) AMS should give priority to enhancing cooperation on cyber security, as the internet and social media are the key ways in which extremist narratives are spread.

d) Whole-of-government efforts and integrated approaches are required to create the economic, political and social conditions that are not conducive to the spread of extremist narratives. This involves multiple agencies, ministries and the national defence establishment of every AMS.

e) AMS should also share information and best practices, so as to come up with concerted efforts to develop narratives for countering extremist ones. However, each AMS should deal with this problem in its own unique way and collaborative measures should respect the sovereignty and national integrity of individual AMS and adhere to the principle of non-interference.

f) Track I should hold workshops or meetings involving AMS security agencies, militaries and police to exchange intelligence and plan counter narratives as well as appropriate alternative messages to counter extremist narratives and terrorist activities. Civil society organisations (CSOs) can also be involved in some of these meetings or workshops.

Other matters

32. Forthcoming NADI activities
   The meeting noted the updates on upcoming NADI activities:
   a) Singapore (RSIS) will host the NADI 10th Anniversary Commemorative Workshop on 2-5 May 2017 at the Holiday Inn Atrium, Singapore.
   b) Indonesia (IDU) will organise a NADI workshop in the last week of July 2017. Further detailed topic will be confirmed in May 2017.
   c) Malaysia (MiDAS / NDUM) will organise a workshop on "Evaluating ASEAN Relations with Dialogue Partners" in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 14-17 August 2017.
   d) The Philippines (NDCP / AFP-OSSSM) will organise the NADI Retreat and workshop in 4th quarter of 2017 (date TBC).

Conclusion

33. The Chairman of NADI workshop extended his sincere appreciation and thanks to all the delegates for their participation in and constructive contribution to the workshop.

34. The NADI participants expressed their appreciation to the SSC for their warm hospitality and successful hosting of the workshop.