

The 11th Tokyo Defense Forum (TDF)
Summary by the Chair
(Tokyo, 25 October 2006)

1. Introduction

The 11th Tokyo Defense Forum (Forum for Defense Authorities in the Asia-Pacific Region) was held in Tokyo from October 24th through 25th 2006, with the participation of twenty-three countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Kingdom of Cambodia, Canada, People's Republic of China, India, Republic of Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Union of Myanmar, New Zealand, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Republic of Singapore, Kingdom of Thailand, Timor-Leste, the United States of America and Vietnam) and European Union. UN OCHA and ASEAN Secretariat were also invited to this Forum.

The Forum was chaired by Mr. Kenjiro Monji, Director-General for International Affairs, Japan Defense Agency.

The agenda of the Forum was "Efforts to Develop Strategies and Procedures for International Cooperation and Civil-Military Coordination in Disaster Relief Operations". It was discussed in three sessions; Session I "Efforts to develop strategies and procedures at intergovernmental level", Session II "Efforts to promote military cooperation and coordination at operational level" and Session III "Efforts to develop strategies and procedures for civil-military coordination in disaster relief operations".

Participants expressed their condolences and sympathy for the victims of natural disasters in 2006, including the landslide in the Philippine island of Leyte and the earthquake in central Java island.

Mr. Shigeo Omae, Parliamentary Secretary for Defense, Japan Defense Agency, made opening remarks. In his speech, Mr. Omae pointed out that it is significant how the international community will cooperate in relief activities after large-scale natural disasters. He expected that the Forum would identify necessary strategies/procedures for international cooperation and civil-military

coordination which are considered to be important in light of our past disaster relief experiences.

The Chair pointed out that the issue of international disaster relief has been discussed recently in various multilateral fora including ARF and Tokyo Defense Forum. He clarified the aim of the Forum; to sort out necessary strategies and procedures for international cooperation and civil-military coordination, and how to develop those efforts.

2. Presentation by participants

At the outset, a participant from the host country, Japan, reviewed various proposals for international cooperation made in previous meetings of Tokyo Defense Forum and ARF which are classified according to the level (government-government /military-military /civil-military) and the time-frame (pre-disaster preparation /pre-deployment preparation /disaster relief response) of cooperation. With respect to these proposals, he explained existing/on-going efforts and possible new efforts to be pursued.

Participants expressed the view that the national military plays an important role for quick response against disaster relief operations, although civil authorities generally have the principal responsibility for addressing disasters. Participants shared the view that foreign militaries may play an important supporting role upon requests by affected countries when requirements exceed the capacity of the affected countries and international humanitarian community. Participants reconfirmed the principles of international disaster relief operation, such as respect for national sovereignty, neutrality, impartiality and humanity.

(1) Efforts to develop strategies and procedures at intergovernmental level

Participants made presentations on existing/on-going strategies and procedures at intergovernmental level, including those under UN such as Oslo Guidelines(1994) and MCDA Guidelines(2003), and under ASEAN such as ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), and activities taken by EU. The Forum shared the view that in developing new efforts, existing/on-going strategies should be taken into

consideration to avoid duplications and to promote synergy.

The following points were also discussed;

- Establishment of points of Contact: The list of governmental offices in each capital provided by the ARF Points of contacts is useful. Making lists of liaison officers and defense attaches in each embassy can be useful for quick and smooth communication.
- Information sharing and coordination in pre-disaster preparation: Developing a regional database for assets and capabilities to be provided through ARF process will be useful. Making handbooks on procedures/regulations of each country may be beneficial in dispatching or accepting relief units. A common understanding on elements to be included in arrangements to facilitate operations of military forces in affected foreign country is desirable.
- Information sharing and coordination of dispatch/acceptance in pre-deployment preparation: Developing guidelines/SOPs(Standard Operating Procedures) is necessary for information sharing to cover such items as situation in affected areas, needs and availability of assets, and for coordination of dispatch/acceptance of relief units including determination of relief activities, entry/immigration and territorial air passage.
- Information sharing and coordination of activities in disaster relief response: Developing guidelines/SOPs for information sharing may be necessary to cover such items as the situation of relief activities, needs, and coordination of relief activities.

(2) Efforts to promote military cooperation and coordination at operational level

The Forum reviewed the experiences and lessons learned from disaster relief operations for a series of large-scale disasters that took place in 2004 and 2005, emphasizing the importance of military cooperation and coordination at operational level.

Participants overviewed MNF/SOP (Multinational Force Standing Operating Procedures), focusing on humanitarian assistance/disaster relief in emergency phase.

Some participants suggested that lessons learned from national disaster management should contribute to developing SOPs. The Forum was informed of a proposed Australia-Indonesia ARF disaster relief desk-top exercise to focus on military to military cooperation.

The following points are also discussed;

- Joint trainings, exercises & workshops: Existing/on-going activities such as Cobra Gold, ARF Workshops, ARF disaster relief desk-top Exercise (Proposed), MCAP by JGSDF and ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Exercise (ARDEX) should be encouraged.
- Information sharing in pre-deployment preparation: Developing guidelines/SOPs for information sharing may be necessary to cover such items as needs and availability of military assets
- Military to military coordination in disaster relief response: Understanding of common procedures for military-military coordination such as MNF/SOP should be promoted.

(3) Efforts to develop strategies and procedures for civil-military coordination in disaster relief operations

Participants presented the experiences of civil-military coordination during disaster relief activities after the earthquake in Indonesia and the subsequent tsunami in the Indian Ocean and the landslide in the Philippine island of Leyte etc..

A summary of MCAP 06 concerning the importance of civil-military cooperation in international disaster relief activities was also presented.

Participants suggested that information sharing, such as posting assets and capabilities of each country on a website would be useful.

Some participants pointed out that national civil-military disaster response plans could offer valuable suggestions for the improvement of international civil-military coordination.

The following points are also discussed;

- Information sharing in pre-disaster preparation: Developing a database for civil-military assets and capabilities such as OCHA Central Register and the ASEAN regional stand-by arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response should be fostered.
- Joint trainings, exercises & workshops: Existing activities such as workshops hosted by UN OCHA and ASEAN should be promoted.
- Information sharing in pre-deployment preparation: Developing guidelines/SOPs for information sharing may be necessary to cover such items as situation in affected areas, and needs and availability of civil-military assets.
- Information sharing and civil-military coordination in disaster relief response:

Developing guidelines/SOPs for information sharing and civil-military coordination may be necessary to facilitate appropriate mechanisms including a HIC (Humanitarian Information Center) and CIMIC Meetings.

3. Closing Remarks

Participants shared the view that the discussions which have been conducted in various international fora on disaster relief are very useful in sharing experiences and lessons learned and in drawing proposals for promoting international cooperation in this field. Participants also shared the view that it is time to make further efforts to materialize those proposals into concrete results such as guidelines/SOPs.

In this respect, participants agreed that efforts in the area of disaster relief within the framework of ARF should be further pursued. Participants welcomed the ARF initiatives taken by participating members including Australia, Indonesia and EU.

The host country expressed its willingness to actively pursue efforts concerning disaster relief in the ARF fora and hoped that the discussion so far conducted in this Forum would contribute to the work being done within the ARF. Participants expressed their appreciation for the host country of organizing this Forum to deepen the understanding of necessary strategies and procedures for international disaster relief operations.

It was agreed that the outcome of this Forum will be reported by the host country to the next ARF-ISG on CBM/PD, which will be held on 1-3 November in Batam, Indonesia, the next ARF-ISM on Disaster Relief to be hosted by the EU, and other ARF meetings.

Participants look forward to 6th Sub-committee of Tokyo Defense Forum, which will be held in January 2007 in Tokyo.