

The 16th Tokyo Defense Forum (TDF)
Summary by the Chair
(Tokyo, March 15, 2012)

I. Introduction

1. The 16th Tokyo Defense Forum (Forum for Defense Authorities in the Asia-Pacific Region) was held in Tokyo, on March 15, 2012, with the participation of 24 countries (Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Canada, People's Republic of China, India, Republic of Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, New Zealand, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Singapore, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Kingdom of Thailand, The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the United States of America, and Socialist Republic of Vietnam). The European Union (EU), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) also participated in this Forum.
2. The Forum was chaired by Mr. Kazuo SUNAGA, Director-General for International Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Japan.
3. The focus of the Forum was twofold: "Civil-Military Cooperation in Disaster Relief Operations" for Session I, and "Efforts to Ensure Maritime Security" for Session II.
4. Mr. Naoki Tanaka, Minister of Defense of Japan, made the opening remarks. In his statement, Minister Tanaka expressed his deepest condolences for the large number of victims of a multitude of disasters which recently occurred in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, he expressed sincere gratitude to each country for giving Japan the enormous support after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Moreover, he expressed his hope that the 16th Tokyo Defense Forum would serve to strengthen the regional security cooperation as much as possible through

focused discussions on disaster relief and maritime security, which are frequently discussed in the regional frameworks, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus, and the East Asia Summit. He also expressed his intention to make efforts to realize the concrete proposals made during the discussions. Furthermore, he expressed that the Ministry of Defense of Japan and Self-Defense Forces intended to actively provide capacity building support in non-traditional security fields in order to realize the stabilization of the Asia-Pacific region.

II. Session I: Civil-Military Cooperation in Disaster Relief Operations

5. Bangladesh, Kingdom of Cambodia, Canada, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, EU, and UNOCHA made presentations on this topic.
6. Participants observed that the military can and often does play a major role in HA/DR activities. It was also pointed out that civil-military cooperation was indispensable in responding to HA/DR activities and that it was important to share information and have coordination mechanisms in place among countries concerned in the early stages of a disaster.
7. Participants agreed that it was critical for both sides to be informed of each other's capabilities and working methods through information sharing and joint training in order to ensure swift and effective civil-military cooperation in disaster relief operations. It was observed that such efforts would be also effective in establishing trust and cooperative relationship between the military and civil actors including humanitarian agencies and other government agencies.
8. Some participants pointed out that it would be useful to create common procedures for offering support to a disaster-hit country to be shared by major actors beforehand in order to enable each country to carry out HA/DR cooperation smoothly.

9. Some participants also mentioned the difficulty in ensuring the safety of volunteers participating in HA/DR activities in disaster-hit areas.
10. Some participants discussed the meaning of the concept “the military as the last resort” in the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines) and the Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (MCDA Guidelines). During this discussion, it was observed that the word “last” could be misleading in the context of HA/DR and should not be misinterpreted as “the military arrives at disaster-hit areas last or later than other agencies.” On the contrary, it was noted that the military can often respond to large-scale disasters more rapidly than some civilian actors, and therefore, should always be considered as a possible response tool when civilian capabilities are overwhelmed or inadequate. A participant emphasized that the principle of last resort is intended to apply to the use of *foreign* military assets to support humanitarian operations, and not to national first responders. A participant announced that following extensive inter-governmental consultations, it is publishing a pamphlet that will hopefully improve understanding of the principle of ‘last resort’.
11. Some participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that foreign military assets are deployed to support humanitarian operations on a pull rather than a push basis. Ideally, foreign military assets should only be deployed to meet specific identified requirements.
12. Some participants pointed out that capacity building through multilateral and multi-agency exercises and training was important in order to improve the HA/DR capabilities.

III. Session II: Efforts to Ensure Maritime Security

13. Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Singapore, and Viet Nam made comprehensive presentations on this topic.

14. Participants acknowledged that maritime security covered the wide range of challenges including piracy, terrorism, smuggling, environmental pollution, and territorial issues. Therefore, it was shared that each country had its specific security environment and challenges and there was no standardized solution for solving these issues.
15. On the other hand, participants agreed that no single country could ensure maritime security single-handedly, and thus bilateral, multilateral, and regional cooperation in practical activities such as holding dialogues and joint trainings were indispensable. It was also noted that improving the transparency of each country's military forces and sharing the "Good seamanship," customary maritime manners were significant in building confidence among countries concerned. Japan expressed its intention to compile the "Good seamanship" and then report it to the 4th ADMM Plus Maritime Security EWG.
16. Participants also agreed that regional frameworks and dialogues such as ADMM plus, ARF, and WPNS were particularly important in order to carry out aforementioned international cooperation. Some participants mentioned that the beneficial synergy among those frameworks and dialogues could be expected.
17. Some participants observed that it was important for each country concerned to respect each other's standpoint and observe international laws, including United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) and DOC (Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea), while continuing to work on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) among countries concerned in order to deal with the issues concerning the South China Sea.
18. Some participants mentioned that mutual understanding and interoperability, which was crucial for tackling maritime security challenges, could be fostered significantly through active bilateral and multilateral exchanges and cooperation including joint exercises and information sharing among the navies.

IV. Closing Remarks

19. During the sessions, participants shared the view that regional security environment and future direction of defense cooperation should be discussed continuously in the Forum.
20. The Chair believed that the discussions conducted in this Forum would also contribute to the work within the ARF. He expressed his intention, as supported by the participants, that the outcome of this Forum would be reported by Japan to the next appropriate ARF meeting.
21. The Chair thanked all participants for their support and valuable contributions to the Forum. Participants expressed their appreciation to Japan as the host to organize this Forum for the promotion of regional defense cooperation and exchanges, and for the future direction of the roles of defense authorities in the ARF.