

The 18th Tokyo Defense Forum (TDF)
Summary by the Chair
Tokyo, 29 and 30 October 2013

I. Introduction

1. The 18th Tokyo Defense Forum (Forum for Defense Authorities in the Asia-Pacific Region: TDF) was held in Tokyo, on 29 and 30 October 2013, with the participation of 21 countries (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Canada, India, Republic of Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, New Zealand, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Singapore, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Kingdom of Thailand, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the United States of America, and Socialist Republic of Vietnam). Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, European Union (EU), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also attended the Forum.
2. The Forum was chaired by Mr. Jota YAMAMOTO, Director-General for International Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Japan.
3. The Forum addressed two agendas: "Peace-time Military Efforts to Prepare for Large-scale Disasters" and "Regional Frameworks' Roles in HA/DR".
4. Mr. Ryota Takeda, Parliamentary Senior Vice-Minister of Defense of Japan, made the opening remark. The Senior Vice Minister welcomed the participants to the Forum, which provided an opportunity for high officials of defense authorities in the Asia-Pacific region to meet and exchange candid views on security and defense issues. He stressed that cooperation in the field of HA/DR not only attracted a great deal of attention in the region, but has been a driving force to further strengthen partnership and relations in non-traditional security field. The Senior Vice Minister also mentioned the Ministry of Defense's interim report of

the review of the National Defense Program Guidelines, which recommends to foster partnership and security cooperation within the Asia-Pacific region. As a part of such efforts, he stated that, Japan will actively contribute to enhancing capacity of HA/DR in the region, as a co-chair of the HA/DR EWG of ADMM-Plus with Laos, from next April.

II. Session I: Peace-time Military Efforts to Prepare for Large-scale Disasters

5. Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, the United States, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and OCHA made presentations on this topic, focusing on their preparations for both domestic and regional large-scale disasters.
6. The session focused on various means to prepare for domestic and regional large-scale disasters, such as establishing and maintaining domestic legal basis and organizations, conducting trainings involving military and civilian actors, establishing disaster response plans, building capabilities and boosting budgets for disaster response.
7. Regarding training or exercises during peace-time, one participant discussed the need to familiarize deploying troops with existing plans in accordance with standardized and validated pre-deployment certification of troops. Another participant also mentioned that its annual exercise involving local governments, polices, fire-fighters and local residents played a crucial role in responding to a large-scale disaster that actually happened recently. It was argued that such exercises contribute to trust-building and relationships between civilian and military actors during the peace time, realizing the close cooperation between military actors with national authority of affected state and the civilian community.
8. The meeting also discussed the importance of participating in regional engagement opportunities *before* an actual disaster happens. One participant introduced its recent efforts for increasing overseas cooperation, such as supporting the establishment of disaster early

warning system and disaster prevention research center in Asian nations vulnerable to disaster, while providing training to disaster management personnel from these nations.

9. The meeting also reiterated the importance of establishing multilateral coordination in engaging with HA/DR operations. From this context, the forum noted that establishing standardized guidelines, such as Oslo Guidelines and APC-MADRO (Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for The Use of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response Operations), is useful to govern the use of foreign military assets and civil-military interaction. Such guidelines can also help to establish a predictable approach to the use of military assets by closely working with Member States.
10. During discussion, the meeting raised some important issues such as: how to take a balance between domestic and international HA/DR activities; how to establish the command and control system when the crisis happens; and how to accept overseas assistances, which are sometimes overwhelming.

III. Session II: Regional Frameworks' Roles in HA/DR

11. Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, EU, Australia and Japan made presentations on this topic, focusing on various multilateral regional frameworks' such as ADMM Plus, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and East Asia Summit (EAS).
12. Some participants discussed the future of ADMM plus based on the 2nd ADMM-Plus meeting held this August. In the last three years, the ADMM plus, as a platform for further cooperation, had a remarkable progress in making all the 18 members engaged in strategic dialogue and practical cooperation. The ADMM plus not only contributes to confidence-building in the region, but also effectively acts as a preventive measure to keep tensions or flashpoints from flaring and turning into armed conflicts. On the other hand, there are some areas, such as HA/DR or Maritime Security, in which ADMM plus members

should further strengthen their collaboration.

13. The Forum reviewed results of the ADMM-Plus HADR/MM Exercise held last June. The forum noted that the exercise was generally successful and achieved all its goals with absolute safety. Specifically, it emphasized that the exercise set a basis for ADMM plus to head towards a standard operation procedure (SOP) for cooperation among ADMM plus armed forces in HADR, and established model for future exercises among ASEAN armed forces with dialogue partner countries in HADR. It was also recognized that the exercise was a step forward to a more coordinated regional response in addressing common challenges.
14. Regarding lessons learned, one participant pointed out that good preparation and practical, detailed and reasonable contents and conduct of the exercise were key factors for the success. It also demonstrated some points to be further improved, including the importance of earlier notice of operation plans from participants to the host country, the need of liaison officers in each participating team, and the importance of the integrated training period.
15. The forum also reviewed the third ARF DiREx, which was held in May of this year. One participant explained that the ARF Direx contributed to identifying gaps, challenges and recommendations, strengthening HA/DR collaboration, and increasing understanding of civil and military coordination mechanisms. It also introduced some important lessons learned from the exercise, such as the importance of a scenario based on a real situation, the importance of debrief to participating units and personnel, and the need to develop SOP for better and effective cooperation.
16. One representative pointed out that an regional institution in Europe had a mandate to assist populations, countries and regions stricken by natural or man-made disasters; as a result, today the institution, together with the individual contributions of its Member States, represent the biggest humanitarian donor community worldwide. He gave assurance of the institution's commitment to supporting ASEAN in

developing a more effective emergency response and early warning / situational awareness capability, and especially in establishing a regional network of information sharing and early warning system for emergencies. Eventually, he stated that the institution's substantial participation in DiREx 2013 and 2011 is a demonstration of its commitment to the improvement of ARF and ASEAN capabilities in responding to disasters.

17. The forum discussed cooperation between different frameworks in order to formulate better HA/DR strategy for the region as a whole. Some participants proposed that more integrated effort such as sharing information or lessons learned from exercises between ADMM plus and ARF should be done to save limited resources. Other participants raised the issue on how to de-conflict or connect dates or scenarios of different multilateral exercises. It was emphasized that, by taking advantage of an opportunity like the TDF, countries and organizations should seek a more effective and cost-efficient way to hold multilateral military exercises under severe budgetary constraints.
18. The meeting noted that a part of the discussion of this forum will be reflected to the next EWG on HA/DR, co-chaired by Japan and Laos from next April. One participant gave its view that the EWG can provide countries with an opportunity for a comprehensive review of various political means, such as capacity-building, SOP, and ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). Specifically, “three pillars” for improving HADR operations—speeding-up initial response, sharing needs assessment and streamlining partners’ assistance, and seamless support during transition phase—were introduced as core objects for the next HA/DR EWG.
19. The Forum shared the view that, while acknowledging the benefit of bilateral approach, multilateral cooperation is necessary for effective HA/DR activities. The participants noted that accumulating lessons learned from past experiences is particularly important for further developing multilateral frameworks.

IV. Closing Remarks

20. During the sessions, participants shared the view that regional security environment and future direction of defense cooperation should be discussed continuously in the Forum.
21. 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.
22. 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 dialogue and cooperation.