

The 5th Sub-committee of the Tokyo Defense Forum (TDF) Summary by the Chair

(Tokyo, 1 February 2006)

1. Introduction

The 5th Sub-committee of the Tokyo Defense Forum (Forum for Defense Authorities in the Asia-Pacific Region) was held in Tokyo from January 30th through February 1st 2006, with participation from twenty-one countries (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, 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 and United States of America) and three organizations (EU, UN OCHA and ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat).

The Sub-committee was chaired by Mr. Yoshiya Muto, Director of International Policy Planning Division, Defense Policy Bureau, Japan Defense Agency.

The agenda of the Sub-committee was 'Efforts to Build a Basis for International Cooperation during Disaster Relief'. It was discussed in a series of four parts, Session I "An Image of Efforts to Build the Basis for International Cooperation", Session II "Efforts to Develop Strategies and Procedures for Regional Cooperation", Session III "Operational and Practical Efforts for Regional Cooperation" and Session IV "Other Important Issues".

The participants expressed their condolences for the victims of natural disasters in 2005, such as the South Asia Earthquake and Hurricane Katrina.

2. Opening Remarks

Mr. Kenjiro Monji, Director-General for International Affairs, Japan Defense Agency, made opening remarks. In his speech, Mr. Monji clarified why participants should deepen discussions on international disaster relief cooperation after the 10th Tokyo Defense Forum in June 2005. He hoped that

participants would discuss ‘how to’ utilize lessons learned during past natural disaster relief operations for the development of multinational cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region.

3. Outline of discussion

Session 1: An Image of Efforts to Build the Basis for International Cooperation

The Sub-committee reviewed lessons learned and recommendations made in the 10th Tokyo Defense Forum and previous ARF meetings. The participants agreed that materializing those lessons and recommendations into actual development of multinational cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region is important.

The Sub-committee discussed a ‘Platform or Basis for Cooperation’ needed for a smooth international cooperation during real disaster operations. Some pointed out that developing strategies and procedures in advance is important for a fast response in the face of disaster. The participants agreed that in order to construct regional cooperation, it would be beneficial to link ‘strategic and procedural efforts’ and ‘operational and practical efforts’ through feedback (ANNEX).

Session 2: Efforts to Develop Strategies and Procedures for Regional Cooperation

The participants shared the view that for a quick and smooth response to disasters the following steps are indispensable: development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which are widely distributed, establishing coordination centers, information sharing by producing reference materials, establishing a database of assets and capabilities, and finally the consistent update of related contact points. The participants noted that both regional forums, including ARF meetings, and voluntary individual countries could contribute to the implementation of those procedural and information management efforts.

They also agreed that a comprehensive SOP covering both the military sector and civilian sector should be established. The Sub-committee suggested the Defense Officials Dialogue (DOD) in ARF could be a good

framework to discuss and develop the contents of the military part of that SOP. Here, forming a working group of limited number of countries may be a good way for preparing draft military SOP. Others suggested that guidelines could be developed under the framework of TDF and proposed to ARF. The participants shared the view that existing SOPs focusing on the military side, such as those of PACOM, would be useful as a reference in this effort. They also indicated that UN guidelines should be incorporated into the SOP. Some participants pointed out that a real secretariat in ARF is indispensable for the realization of such widely shared SOPs, but others indicated that there is still a long way to go for the establishment of a secretariat in ARF.

It was also reported that the establishment of an ARF Virtual Task Force on Disaster Response Management is now under consideration to promote exchange of contact points and other relevant information.

Session 3: Operational and Practical Efforts for Regional Cooperation

The Sub-committee agreed that the promotion of capacity-building, regular exchange of information, joint exercises, workshops, seminars, education as well as table top exercises should be encouraged. The participants agreed that the continuation of individual efforts, such as Cobra Gold, ARF workshops, workshops by PACOM and MPAT, exercises by ASEAN and MCAP by Japan, will be beneficial.

The participants shared the view that the lessons learned from the various operational and practical efforts by voluntary individual actors could contribute to the improvement of strategic and procedural efforts.

The Sub-committee agreed that actual use of the outcome of strategic and procedural efforts, such as SOPs, database/reference materials and contact points, in those operational and practical efforts is important as well. In-turn, they shared the view that the result of examining these strategic and procedural efforts in operational and practical efforts could be used for the further improvement of strategic and procedural efforts.

Session 4: Other Important Issues

The Sub-committee confirmed that the sovereignty of a state should be respected and that the disaster-hit state should take the leadership role in coordinating incoming actors. There was a suggestion that countries should

take leadership by rotation in the preparatory phase, which may or may not serve as a basis for possible leadership in the actual phase.

There was also a proposal for a staff of 5-10 personnel to work these preparatory issues. However the location, funding and management remained in question. The group agreed with reservation should such a staff exist, they should combine regional military and civilian disaster response and tap into the UN, PACOM, and other Asian disaster relief resources in the region. At this point, the group could not agree if this was the appropriate next step or if small institutional changes are needed first. However, there was consensus on the need for a tangible next step.

The Sub-committee agreed that coordination among the various actors, such as military forces and civilian organizations including NGOs is indispensable in disaster relief operations.

4. Closing Remarks

The participants approved of putting the discussion of the Sub-committee to good use in both multinational and individual efforts.

It was agreed that the outcome of this Sub-committee will be reported by the Chair country to the next ARF-ISG on CBM/PD, which will be held on 1-3 March in Manila, in the Philippines, and ARF-ISM on DR to be held in the last half of this year. The group hopes what has been discussed here will also be taken up in the DOD meeting in Manila. Also, it was encouraged that if there should be any idea to change the draft of 'ARF Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response', they should work with their Foreign Ministries to make such comments.

The participants look forward to and promote participation in the 11th Tokyo Defense Forum, which will be held in 2006 in Tokyo.