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“Environmental Security Cooperation” USARPAC’s: Defense Environmental and International Cooperation (DEIC) Conference

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Conference Explores Counter Terrorist Activities

The U.S. Counterterrorism (CT) program for Southeast Asia received important support in June when attendees at the United States Defense Environmental and International Cooperation (DEIC) Conference developed a military-based model for identifying and preventing the causes of environmental terrorism, preventing attacks on critical infrastructure, and providing consequence management and mitigation of man-made and natural disasters.

The United States Army, Pacific (USARPAC), the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security and the Center for Strategic Leadership of the United States Army War College conducted an Environmental Security Cooperation conference for Southeast Asia June 17-19, 2003, in Bangkok, Thailand. The purpose of the Conference was to promote “Multilateral Security Cooperation on Environmental Issues” vital to regional security and stability and economic growth, and to elicit regional perspectives on the most valuable approaches to addressing these issues. The three central themes of the conference were Environmental Terrorism, Disaster Response and Consequence Management, and Medical Aspects of Environmental Security.

The conference brought together military and civilian professionals from Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States, including international academics, the private sector, governmental and military subject matter experts, and non-governmental organizations, to recommend ways to promote multilateral defense cooperation on regional environmental issues. The conference had three objectives:

- Examine the multiple dimensions of military roles in addressing environmental terrorism and in protecting critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks;
- Clarify the importance of successful disaster response and consequence management in maintaining governmental legitimacy, and examine salient military roles in preventing, responding to, and mitigating natural and man-made disasters;
- Identify the role of environmental factors in the spread of diseases and suggest appropriate roles for the military in supporting civil authority in this area.



Colonel Le Trinh, Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Socialist Republic of Vietnam addresses participants

In order to provide the background essential for the workshop, the conference plenary sessions explored the three topics, the best practices of the five countries' for responding to natural and manmade disasters, and opportunities for multilateral cooperation. Presentations during the plenary sessions were provided by representatives of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Science-Ministry of Defense-Vietnam; United Nations Development Programme—Disaster Management Unit; Royal Thailand Army Medical Center; Planning and Development Branch of Malaysian Army Headquarters; Royal Thailand Army Institute of Advanced Military Studies; Assistant to the Chief, National Guard Bureau, for Civil Support and Weapons of Mass Destruction; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and the Center for Strategic Leadership, U.S. Army War College.

The Terrorist Dimension

The conference occurred during a period of heightened counterterrorist (CT) activity in Southeast Asia, with the international and local newspapers running daily front page articles on the renewed Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) Terrorist threat and government CT responses. Thailand was particularly involved, conducting raids of suspected JI cells in the south, and intercepting 30 kilograms (66 pounds) of the highly radioactive Cesium-137 (the critical constituent of a possible "Dirty Bomb") in Bangkok.



Colonel Roslun discussing Malaysian Armed Forces Roles in Disaster Response

The military has a well-defined CT role in *defeating* terrorism as collectors of intelligence on terrorist activities and as participants in the capture of terrorists. However, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) has created the potential for catastrophic environmental attacks and broadened the military's environmental security role in CT.

Southeast Asia is composed of multi-ethnic states and non-homogenous populations. Economic disparities between the rural and urban populations and between ethnic and religious groups create a complex policymaking milieu and complicate efforts to maintain governmental legitimacy. This maldistribution of wealth constitutes the taproot of terrorism, with terrorist groups using developmental differences, environmental degradation, and disease to allege governmental indifference and to appeal to minority or disempowered populations.

Conference presenters identified many issues of environmental degradation, health risks, and reduced economic capacity in minority and frontier areas, such as over logging—often illegal—of mountainous, slide-prone terrain on the Philippine Island of Mindanao. Several countries, Thailand and the Philippines in particular, have recognized the importance of addressing these root causes of terrorism with the military element of power. The curbing of illegal logging, disaster response planning, disease vector and erosion control, and developmental activities are areas of military support to civil authority that *assure* those segments of the population with ethnic, religious, or economic grievances that the state government cares for their economic welfare and health. Moreover, the military has a major role in protecting critical infrastructure such as dams, power plants, and water supplies and conducting consequence management operations for terrorist attacks.



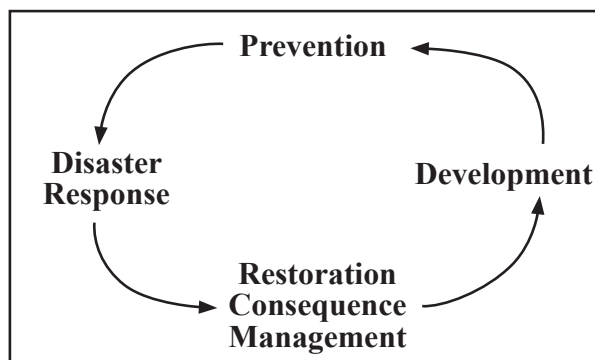
Armed Forces of the Philippines Brigadier General Santiago R. Casauay Jr. briefs results of Workshop

Multilateral Approaches to International Cooperation on Environmental Issues Workshop

During the conference, the Southeast Asian states' representatives participated in a workshop that identified areas for multilateral defense cooperation, barriers to cooperation, and a model for conceptualizing the management of Environmental Security issues.

The workgroup identified several issues for cooperation. They felt that a window of opportunity for multilateral Environmental Security cooperation is opening in Southeast Asia for several reasons:

- Environmental Security (especially the response to man-made and natural disasters) is seen as important to stability and as an area for possible multilateral and bilateral military cooperation;
- Southeast Asian countries face a common and growing challenge to stability from environmental and medical threats, terrorism, and disasters (though particulars may differ from country to country);
- Haze, deforestation, and flooding are of general concern to all countries represented, and marine resource degradation, water, and air pollution are also key concerns to many countries;
- Militaries have strong organizational, , communications, engineering, and human resources capacities, relative to civilian authorities, and could provide valuable support to civil authority in addressing these environmental threats;
- There is a growing public awareness of regional terrorist threats and the need for the military to undertake prevention, response, and consequence management missions in the area of environmental terrorism.



Environmental Security Management Cycle

The participants identified numerous obstacles to cooperation in addressing these threats. The militaries must work with lead governmental agencies in a supporting role after approval from the Ministry of Defense; interagency sensitivities often interfere with new roles of Military Support to Civil Authority (MSCA). Differences also exist between the environmental security policies of the region’s states. Another major obstacle is the lack of modern technology, equipment, and financial resources. The region lacks modern equipment and the financial resources to obtain the equipment. Several countries requested assistance for hazard and risk assessment training and equipment.

Given these facts, the participants developed recommendations for the Southeast Asian Armed Forces and USARPAC on ways to enhance environmental security cooperation in the region. They identified three approaches to overcome these barriers: involve the Association of South East Asian Nations/ ASEAN Regional Forum in order to develop a high-level political coordinating mechanism; establish transparency by involving other governmental agencies; and recognize the need for shared responsibility. The participants agreed that in order to achieve lasting cooperation there is a need to involve higher-level political leaders, increase military-civilian agency cooperation, and schedule follow-on activities that will achieve tangible results.

The participants developed a model for identifying areas suitable for cooperation and the management of the environmental terrorist and natural disaster threats. Their recommendation is a conceptual, four-phase “Environmental Security Management Cycle” (For each of the four phases, three areas should be addressed: Training and Education; Technology Transfer; and Financial Assistance).

All too often the military conducts disaster response in an ad hoc fashion. The regional states are realizing that a proactive approach to addressing environmental security issues pays large dividends in reducing the appeal for terrorist organizations; enhancing governmental legitimacy—particularly in distant border areas; reducing the impact of disasters, and reducing disaster mitigation costs. In Thailand and the Philippines for example, the military is involved in all four management areas of this cycle; and in Malaysia, the military has a significant marine disaster and spill response mission. This comprehensive approach to environmental MSCA creates many opportunities for regional cooperation. The workgroup suggested making this model the basis for organizing future regional environmental security activities, emphasizing



Colonel Julsri Puranasamriddhi describes Royal Thai Army's Military Support to Civil Authorities

the training and education, technology transfer, and financial assistance dimensions of each phase, and allowing each country to discuss its best practices.

The Way Ahead

To achieve these actions, the participants agreed to conduct a follow-on trilateral conference in Manila in December of 2003. The purpose of the conference is to promote multilateral defense counterterrorism cooperation by conducting a trilateral Environmental Security Conference that addresses prevention, consequence management, and response to and mitigation of man-made and natural disasters. The participants will identify best practices and focus on ways to reduce vulnerability to terrorism—capacity building, multilateral regional cooperation, interoperability among the military-civilian agencies, and resource conservation.

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ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY COOPERATION USARPAC'S: DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (DEIC) CONFERENCE

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