

**SECURITY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
4-9 OCTOBER 2009
HONOLULU, HAWAII**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION.

On October 4-9, 2009, the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) hosted its first multinational workshop “Security Sector Development: National Priorities and Regional Approaches” in Honolulu. Participating in the workshop were senior interagency cohort teams from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal, and Timor-Leste. Invited to provide expert opinions to the participants, along with the Center’s own faculty, were senior members of the United Nation’s Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions, African Security Sector Network, Asia Foundation and Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. The five national teams developed and presented their recommended national action plans for security sector reform.

2. BACKGROUND.

In the last few years, APCSS conducted a number of nation-specific Security Sector Development (SSD) workshops in the region and in Honolulu in response to a growing regional demand for the redefinition, restructuring and optimization of Asia-Pacific national security sectors. While security sector development is a common challenge for all states, large or small, developed or developing, each country has its own unique historic, cultural, socio-economic and political features and security priorities shaping the development of their security sector. The focus of SSD thus varies from long-term cases of structural optimization to immediate requirements of post-conflict reconstruction and nation-building. There is, therefore, no template for security sector reform. At the same time, national security sector development can benefit from international best practices and often directly depends on international support and cooperation.

3. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES.

The workshop was designed to promote a common and better understanding of a nation’s security sector, its governance, evolution, development, and reform potential, as well as related roles and responsibilities of security sector forces and institutions. It was intended to provide a broad learning opportunity for the participants through subject matter experts’ presentations as well as sharing of experiences and best practices among the participants. The workshop provided an opportunity for each participating team to apply the acquired knowledge and professional experience to draft a recommended national action plan for security sector development.

4. WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY.

The workshop started off with an electronic survey of the participants and discussion of their priority security concerns and perspectives on security sector’s evolving definition,

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role and change. The survey results provided the basis for identification of common challenges and gaps and are reflected in the workshop findings. The workshop included panel presentations by subject matter experts, facilitated break out group discussions, plenary meetings to review the consolidated break-out group reports as well as facilitated national action plan development and backbriefs. Although the majority of participants were active duty security or government officials, they were provided with an opportunity to discuss issues informally by following the APCSS's guiding principles of mutual respect, transparency and non-attribution. According to one of the participants, the workshop was conducted in an atmosphere of "disciplined informality."

5. KEY WORKSHOP FINDINGS.

The workshop did not attempt to homogenize the participants' perspectives or develop a common regional road map for security sector development. It, however, identified several major issues and challenges that most countries in the Asia-Pacific region are and will be grappling with.

- While security is almost unanimously viewed in the region as broad and comprehensive, the security sector definition remains narrow and focused primarily on the uniformed forces. This greatly inhibits its adaptation to dealing with security challenges of the 21st century. The apparent dissonance indicates a significant gap between overall security awareness and political or bureaucratic willingness to self-reform as well as a fear among the security forces to lose preeminence in security affairs.

-Authoritarian and corrupt democratic regimes significantly obstruct or delay the reformation of security forces. Democratization sometimes leads to the politicization of security forces through unauthorized political intervention in security forces' internal affairs. One of the workshop debates revolved around the concept of democratization of security forces and its potential damage to the professionalism and capabilities of security forces if the traditional command and control functions were affected.

- Inclusion of civil society, especially the non-governmental organizations, in the security sector remains problematic. Non-governmental organizations are viewed by many security practitioners as politicized, incompetent and often manipulated by foreign interests. At the same time, it was argued that civil society should not be viewed narrowly as non-governmental organizations only. The broadly defined civil society, including media and academic institutions, is often the best hope for the reformation of security sector because of the inflexible internal security sector hierarchies.

- The legal basis for the functioning of security forces remains weak and incomplete. Challenges include controversial provisions in constitutions or gaps between constitutional and legal frameworks as well as agency specific norms. Sequencing between legal and policy decisions is another conundrum. The interagency discourse, generally very weak in the region, is almost absent at the stage of law formulation.

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- Correlation between the military and police forces is changing with the relative decline of military and the rise of police. Many regional countries seem unprepared to deal with this reality. Attempts to retain strong militaries often lead to tasking them with duties outside of traditional defense role. Professionalization of police meanwhile is lagging far behind that of the military.

- National security forces are increasingly involved in international and regional security operations. And yet the regional sharing of information on security sector development is very modest and well below the radar. It has to do with traditional sense of sovereignty, lack of trust with neighbors as well as limited role of regional institutions.

- A successful development (with terms reform and transformation used interchangeably) of the security sector requires political will, strong national ownership and competent change management. It should include incentives for innovation and disincentives for sticking with status quo. Effective SSD is an ongoing process and not a one-time reform.

5. FOLLOW-UP STEPS

The participating national cohort teams agreed to promote their recommended national action plans with their governments and broader society. They intend to form for that purpose “Core Groups” or use the already existing SSD “Core Groups” for follow-up discussions of their initiatives. APCSS will assess the results of the workshop to define the optimal participation, format and methodology for the next multinational security sector development workshop.