DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE RESILIENCE, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY (3R) CONCEPT OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Introduction

1. Terrorism is a long-standing transnational threat. No country is immune to the threat and no country can effectively deal with terrorism alone.\(^1\) Terrorist groups often work through networks spanning various countries within and beyond Southeast Asia.

2. The threat of terrorism in our region is growing in scale and complexity. Most recently, the Marawi Crisis and Surabaya bombings have demonstrated regional terrorists’ use of new tactics and capabilities that returning foreign fighters have learnt from ISIS in the Middle East. These include protracted fighting in an urbanised environment, family-wide radicalisation and suicide bombings, and the use of technology to support cyberspace operations, recruitment and financing. More generally, these groups are also acquiring more advanced state-like capabilities, especially in the chemical, biological, and radiological (CBR) domains.

3. It is critical for ASEAN Member States (AMS) to recognise these new threats, and to work closely together to counter terrorism in a comprehensive manner. The ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 includes the latest broad guidelines for cooperation in counter-terrorism (CT). AMS have also started and maintained many useful CT initiatives since the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, and adopted instruments related to CT, particularly the 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism. The Joint Statement by the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Countering Terrorism in ASEAN in February 2018 agreed to enhance CT cooperation among ASEAN defence establishments. Regional information-sharing platforms such as the 365-Platform and the “Our Eyes” Initiative (OEI) are also being operationalised to provide early warning and analyse emerging trends.

4. To complement the existing cooperation in the region on countering terrorism, such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), possible areas for cooperation which could be developed are, among others, sharing niche areas of expertise and information sharing, which would provide a positive multiplier for all AMS. More could also be done both upstream and downstream to prevent incidents or to better mitigate the consequences,

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\(^1\) Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
through non-military means such as strengthening societal resilience and recovery efforts.

**Objective**

5. This discussion paper sets out a holistic conceptual frame for further discussion among AMS on enhancing regional CT cooperation. By stepping up cooperation in areas in which ASEAN defence establishments currently already possess strong CT capabilities, as well as identifying gaps in existing collaboration, AMS can better address the rising threat of terrorism.

**The “3R” of CT – Resilience, Response, Recovery**

6. All CT initiatives seek to fulfil one or more of three broad thrusts – Resilience, Response and Recovery, or “3R”. The 3R Concept encapsulates the comprehensive range of actions required to tackle the terrorist threat.

   a. **Resilience.** Effective early warning systems and strong, cohesive societies are crucial in targeting the root causes of terrorism and reducing the number of attacks that take place. This pillar covers actions that strengthen the region’s ability to deter and prevent terrorist activities. One aspect includes enhancing information sharing linkages such as the “Our Eyes” Initiative and the 365-Platform. Another area includes efforts to communicate counter-extremism narratives to populations in order to strengthen psychological resilience and reduce the likelihood of radicalisation. The Track 1.5 Southeast Asia CT Symposium that will be held in Singapore in October 2018 will also contribute towards CT capability development.

   b. **Response.** Should an attack happen, swift and decisive responses would limit loss of lives and damage to property. As the terrorist threat may transcend borders, this pillar covers actions that strengthen the region’s existing collective capability and capacity to address terrorist actions. Initiatives such as the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement’s patrols in the Sulu Sea as well as the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure are examples of how we can pool resources to better address common terrorism issues.

   c. **Recovery.** Restoring communities after an attack requires comprehensive efforts to rebuild both the physical and the socioeconomic environment, in order to prevent a downward cycle
of vulnerability and radicalisation. This pillar covers actions that strengthen regional cooperation for post-incident recovery and rebuilding efforts (this includes the provision of humanitarian assistance to terrorist-hit areas, such as coordination of relief efforts which is in line with the spirit of the ASEAN Declaration of One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region, to achieve faster response, mobilise greater resources and establish stronger coordination to ensure ASEAN’s collective response to emergencies and disasters). This pillar also includes de-radicalisation efforts at both the communal and individual levels. Ongoing national efforts and bilateral cooperation in these areas would contribute toward the outcomes of this pillar.

7. The 3R Concept serves as a lens through which AMS can think about regional CT cooperation holistically and identify synergies between related initiatives. With a common conceptual framework in place, this would also help AMS to spot broad patterns in terrorist threats and enact appropriate countermeasures. The consolidation of AMS’ collective experiences and expertise would provide valuable guidance and lessons for further efforts, and lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Conclusion

8. The transnational threat of terrorism must be addressed holistically through cooperation among AMS and among relevant ASEAN bodies. AMS have done well in responding to the rising security threat posed by terrorism. The 3R Concept serves as one of the important avenues to foster useful discussions for furthering our collective CT efforts for the benefit of the people of ASEAN.