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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
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EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

PEACEKEEPING: SHOULD BRUNEI JUMP ONTO THE BANDWAGON?

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ABSTRACT

The Bruneian Ministry of Defence has recently published two important documents last year – the Brunei Darussalam Defence White Paper 2004 and the Ministry of Defence Strategic Plan. Both documents stated that Brunei has made a voluntary commitment to participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions.

So far, Brunei has participated in a small role in United Nations Transitional Authority Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992/1993 and currently, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) is engaged in a military observer mission in Southern Philippines. The RBAF had also contributed to the humanitarian relief efforts in Sumatra post December tsunami disaster.

This paper will explore the issues Brunei and the RBAF will likely face in their commitment to participation in UN peacekeeping operations. It will also discuss the benefits and risks that will likely be encountered. Finally, the paper concludes by affirming the reasons why Brunei and the RBAF should consider participating in more UN peacekeeping missions in the future.

“For the last sixteen years, Brunei Darussalam has participated in the United Nations as a full member of the international community of nations. We have strongly supported the UN’s role in international affairs. We have done what we could to promote the principles and processes of the UN Charter. Despite our small size, we have provided equipment and participated in UN peacekeeping operations. We are committed to continuing this within the limits of our resources”.¹

In conjunction with its 43rd anniversary in May 2004, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) published two important documents - the Brunei Darussalam Defence White Paper 2004 and the Ministry of Defence Strategic Plan. This was the first time such papers were published and simultaneously launched on the World Wide Web. These documents were published and promulgated as a result of a wider plan to align and focus the efforts of the ministries under the Government of Brunei Darussalam to create a “nation that is always safe, peaceful and prosperous.”²

The Defence White Paper was published in the midst of an ever challenging and complex environment that aim to address the challenges of regional and global security. The pressing threats posed by terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal immigrants and weapons of mass destruction not only affect the security and stability of Brunei but also the region and beyond. The White Paper not only describes the role that the RBAF must play, most importantly, it also provides a “clear statement” of the policies that the RBAF will adopt and pursue to “maintain security.”³ Additionally, the White Paper also provides

¹ United Nations, “Speech made by His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu’izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar’Ali Saifuddien Sa’adul Khairi Waddien, the Sultan of Brunei at the United Nations Millenium Summit on 8 September 2000,” <http://www.un.org/millennium/webcast/statements/brunei.htm>; Internet; accessed 28 Nov 2004.

² Ministry of Defence, *Brunei Darussalam Defence White Paper 2004*, (Brunei: Ministry of Defence, May 2004); available from <http://www.mindef.gov.bn/>; Internet; accessed 28 Nov 2004.

³ *Ibid.*, 10.

“transparency” and contributes to regional “confidence building.”⁴ It also outlines the “key policy priorities” for defence for the next decade.⁵

On the other hand, the Ministry of Defence Strategic Plan takes into account the security threats, and “identifies” and “focuses” the tasks needed by the Ministry of Defence and the RBAF to shape its future defence capability in order to support the national policies.⁶ In other words, the Strategic Plan presents a blueprint and sets the mechanism for implementing the tasks that will bring the White Paper into fruition.

Some of the tasks that will be undertaken by the RBAF will be a step out of the national arena and into the regional or international domain. Specifically, the Strategic Plan document identifies the involvement and participation of the RBAF in peacekeeping operations, regionally or further a field as a likely “political priority for defence.”⁷ However, before committing any troops on the ground, the Bruneian Government will continue to “evaluate the strategic and political implications” of such participation.⁸

The RBAF has participated in a small role in a peacekeeping operation in the past but is now considering a much greater involvement. Last year, there were 120,000 military and civilian police personnel involved in 17 peacekeeping missions.⁹ Indeed more troops have been deployed on peacekeeping missions than there has ever been in

⁴ Ministry of Defence, *Brunei Darussalam Defence White Paper 2004*, (Brunei: Ministry of Defence, May 2004): 10; available from <http://www.mindef.gov.bn/>; Internet; accessed 28 Nov 2004.

⁵ Ministry of Defence, *Ministry of Defence Strategic Plan*, (Brunei: Ministry of Defence, May 2004): 11; available from <http://www.mindef.gov.bn/>; Internet; accessed 28 Nov 2004.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹ United Nations Peacekeeping, “The Surge in UN Peacekeeping,” <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/pub/exhibition/>; Internet; accessed 22 Apr 2005.

the past. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) had also forecasted that there would be an increase or “surge” in the number of peacekeeping operations in the near future because it believes that some of the “world’s most intractable wars” are coming to an end.¹⁰

Brunei has participated in one UN peacekeeping operation in 1992. Last year, 102 countries participated in peacekeeping missions. In 2001, there were 87 on the list of contributors.¹¹ Statistically, there is an increasing number of peacekeeping missions and number of troop contributing countries. Is there a rush of countries contributing troops for peacekeeping operations? Should Brunei jump onto the peacekeeping “bandwagon”?

The purpose of this paper is to examine if Brunei should play a more active role in UN peacekeeping missions. It asserts that on the balance of arguments, Brunei could consider playing a greater role in peacekeeping operations in the future. To this end, the paper will first provide a brief description on Brunei Darussalam and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces. It will then examine the peacekeeping role and the arguments why Brunei should and should not consider taking on a more active role in this area. It will then explore what the RBAF should do if it was to consider playing a greater role. The paper will conclude by affirming Brunei’s commitment to participation in UN peacekeeping missions.

Brunei Darussalam or the “Abode of Peace” is a peace-loving nation and is a small country situated in the northwestern corner of the island of Borneo occupying an area of 2,228 square miles and has a population of around 350,000. Brunei was colonised

¹⁰ United Nations Peacekeeping, “The Surge in UN Peacekeeping,” <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/pub/exhibition/>; Internet; accessed 22 Apr 2005.

¹¹ Ibid.

by the British in 1888 and only gained her independence in 1984. On gaining her independence, Brunei became a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United Nations (UN), the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and is also part of the Commonwealth. Brunei is a constitutional monarchical state and ruled by the Sultan of Brunei. The Sultan is also the Supreme Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

The Royal Brunei Armed Forces was formerly known as the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment (RBMR) and was formed on 31st May 1961. Coinciding with Brunei's independence, the name was changed to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.¹² In the past, the RBAF was dependent on British Loan Service personnel for the workforce especially in specialist areas. Through a programme of "localization", much of that workforce has been taken over by Bruneians. Compared to the militaries around the region, the RBAF is relatively young and small. It has five major units, the Royal Brunei Land Force, the Royal Brunei Navy, the Royal Brunei Air Force, the Service Support (formerly the Royal Brunei Service Force) and the Training Institute (formerly the RBAF Training Centre). In line with the set goals defined by the Defence White Paper and the Strategic Plan documents, the RBAF is currently undergoing a phase of transformation.

The RBAF is not an expeditionary force and has never been at war or deployed its forces to an area of conflict. However, the RBAF has a capable defence capability in order to defend the "sovereignty, territorial integrity and uphold the Malay Islamic Monarchy philosophy" of the country.¹³ Hence, any potential contribution made by the

¹² Ministry of Defence, "History," <http://www.mindef.gov.bn/>; Internet; accessed 28 Nov 2004.

RBAF would necessarily be confined to peacekeeping missions given the rather limited capabilities of the RBAF.

Peacekeeping is defined as “an operation involving military personnel, but without enforcement powers, established by the United Nations to help maintain or restore peace in areas of conflict”¹⁴ and is a useful instrument used for the “prevention of conflict” and the “making of peace.”¹⁵ Peacekeepers are usually deployed to an area of post-conflict to help create a stabilized zone in order to prevent the conflict from igniting which may threaten the peace, security and stability of the region.

It is important to note that peacekeeping is not solely done by or exclusively the role of the military. The operation has now involved a lot of civilians including civilian police officers, political officers, human rights monitor, electoral officials, and refugee and humanitarian specialists.¹⁶ Although developed during the Cold War, the number of peacekeeping operations is significantly more after the Cold War. To date, there are a total of 41 peacekeeping operations since 1948. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, there were 18 peacekeeping missions between 1948 and 1990. Since 1991, there were 23 new missions. In July 2004, there were 17 on-going peacekeeping missions throughout the world.¹⁷

¹³ Ministry of Defence, “Our Mission,” <http://www.mindef.gov.bn/>; Internet; accessed 28 Nov 2004.

¹⁴ Walter Gary Sharp, *UN Peace Operations* (New York: American Heritage Custom Publishing Group, 1995), 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁷ United Nations Peacekeeping, “Timeline,” <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/timeline/pages/timeline.html>; Internet; accessed 21 April 2005.

Furthermore, the nature of peacekeeping operations has also changed. In “traditional peacekeeping”, peacekeepers maintain the fragile peace or ceasefire between two warring states, which was common in the Cold War era.¹⁸ Presently however, peacekeepers are usually deployed into failed states devastated by ethnic or religious conflicts to monitor breaches of peace agreement, working in a multi-national peacekeeping force providing humanitarian aid, monitoring elections and restoring civil order in the country.¹⁹ Afghanistan is a prime example of this type of operation – the “second generation” peacekeeping operations.

Brunei has so far participated in one UN peacekeeping operation. Brunei sent three military officers and twelve police officers as part of Brunei’s contribution to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). They were deployed for eleven months from November 1992 to October 1993.²⁰ Brunei also sent a team of officials including several military officers to the Joint International Observers Group to observe the elections in Cambodia in 1998. Although the RBAF did not participate directly in the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) or the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), it bore the cost of sending a company of British Ghurkhas stationed in Brunei to East Timor. The Brunei Government also contributed US\$0.598 million to the INTERFET Trust Fund.²¹

¹⁸ Michael Bothe and Thomas Dorschel. *UN Peacekeeping: A Documentary Introduction*, (Kluwer Law International Ltd: London, 1999), xi.

¹⁹ Hugo Slim, “Military Humanitarianism and the New Peacekeeping: An Agenda for Peace?,” *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, available from <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a003.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 April 2005.

²⁰ Editorial, *Pelita Brunei*, 25 November 1992.

Participation in any UN peacekeeping mission will benefit Brunei by reinforcing our national interests, generate greater international awareness on Brunei, as well as level up the operational experiences of the RBAF to contribute to Brunei's security. Brunei's national interests encompasses three main objectives; namely the "maintainance of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity"; the "enhancement of prosperity, economic and social well-being" of the country; and lastly the "preservation of the political, cultural and religious identity" of the country.²² These factors are important for the survival and security of the state. As such, Brunei is also committed to promoting regional and global peace, security, stability and prosperity. Hence, the RBAF not only realises that the protection of Brunei's land and maritime borders as important, but supporting the stability of the region and cooperation with other ASEAN members on issues such as terrorism, trans-national crime and illegal immigrants are also an integral part of the policy priorities for defence.²³

As stated earlier, the RBAF is premised on defence of Brunei. Apart from the roles of the maintenance of security, the RBAF also provides assistance to the Royal Brunei Police Force in internal security operations, conducts continuous land and river patrols, assists in search and rescue operations, provides personnel for ceremonial functions and conducts hearts and minds projects or charity works to foster and

²¹ Department of Defence, *Management of Australian Defence Force Deployments to East Timor*, (Canberra: Australian Defence Force, 2002); available from <http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/4A256AE90015F69BCA256B810076F2F5>; Internet; accessed 12 October 2004.

²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Foreign Policy," http://www.mfa.gov.bn/foreign_policy/reg.htm; Internet; accessed 10 August 2004.

²³ Ministry of Defence, *Brunei Darussalam Defence White Paper 2004*, (Brunei: Ministry of Defence, May 2004): 12; available from <http://www.mindef.gov.bn/>; Internet; accessed 28 Nov 2004.

strengthen the relationships between the RBAF and the community. Most importantly, the RBAF is to provide the capability in times of crisis and national emergencies. Having Bruneian troops participating in peacekeeping missions abroad thus provides an additional sense of pride and belonging to the ordinary citizen. Indeed, participation in UN peacekeeping operations will serve to foster greater confidence in the RBAF and bolster its image amongst Bruneians.

Brunei is also likely to participate in a peacekeeping operation regionally before embarking on an operation in a distant conflict area.²⁴ This is understandable as not only the cost of deployment would be reduced, but also working regionally provides a few advantages. Brunei is likely to be helping “thy neighbour” where cultural and language barriers may not be as problematic if involved in a distant region. Deploying regionally means that the possibility of working with ASEAN partners is almost a certainty, thus fostering regional cooperation and confidence building. Not only politicians will be working closely together but provides the chance for the militaries to work to a common goal – peace, stability and security in the region. Participation in a peacekeeping operation regionally also sends a signal to other ASEAN members that Brunei is serious about maintaining the security and stability in the region.

Additionally, ASEAN neighbours and other countries bordering the region will likely respect and understand Brunei’s philosophy and true intentions. Brunei recognizes that instability and conflict can have destabilizing effects to the immediate neighbours and the region in terms of economy and security. The fact that the ASEAN region is stable with no animosity or arms race between states means Brunei does not need to

²⁴ Ministry of Defence, *Ministry of Defence Strategic Plan*, (Brunei: Ministry of Defence, May 2004): 25; available from <http://www.mindef.gov.bn/>; Internet; accessed 28 Nov 2004.

compete with her neighbours for any peacekeeping participation glory, unlike India and Pakistan. These countries, which have been at war with each other several times, rival each other in many aspects such as trade, economics, regional power, Western attention, the fight against terrorism and the nuclear race.²⁵

Brunei is part of the global community and realises that events in a distant and faraway country can have devastating and destabilizing impacts to the region and the country. Although any peacekeeping operations that Brunei may participate are small compared to contributions from other larger and traditional contributor countries, nevertheless, participation affirms Brunei's commitment to global peace and security. It also provides another platform for closer cooperation with the United Nations and troop contributing countries. This is likely to enhance Brunei's political presence regionally and globally. The bottom line is that participation in maintaining global peace and security provides Brunei and the region enhanced prosperity.

Increasing Brunei's participation would enhance the professionalism of the RBAF, thereby, further contributing to the security of Brunei. In addition, exposure to international partners would also project Brunei as a responsible world citizen. Besides participating in peacekeeping missions, countries contributing to peace and security in the form of troops and equipment to a peacekeeping operation will experience that "feel-good" factor. For Brunei, it will be no different. Currently, ten military observers are in Southern Philippines since October last year as part of the International Monitoring Team to observe the ceasefire between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao. Brunei is proud to be invited as part of the team to

²⁵ Kabilan Krishnasamy, "Pakistan's Peacekeeping Experiences," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 9, No. 3 (Autumn 2002): 103-120.

observe the peace. This sentiment has also been echoed by the troops involved in that operation.²⁶ Bruneians as a whole are proud that their fellow countrymen are serving towards creating peace and stability in the region.

Brunei's participation will likely bring increased international awareness and recognition to the country. Many people seem to hear about the Sultan of Brunei but not many know where the country is and what kind of people lives there. Having Bruneian troops on the ground provides the chance for Bruneians to give an insight to the country and first hand accounts of the people and life in Brunei. This is likely to increase international awareness of Brunei's security and stability concerns and also enhance the projection of Brunei as a willing and voluntary player to regional and global peace.

The RBAF conducts several regular exercises per year with neighbouring and friendly countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. These exercises not only help to develop the skills and professionalism of the soldiers, but also provides soldiers the chance and exposure to "work and play" with other friendly troops. On the political level, these exercises provide the stimulus and platform to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and understanding. Similarly, the benefits of Bruneians working together with other troops in a peacekeeping operation are greatly magnified. Exercises usually last a week or two but peacekeeping operations may last for quite some time. The potentially longer duration brings not only a better understanding between individual troops at the working level, but also a new degree of appreciation and cooperation between the armed forces at the professional level and closer ties between the participating countries at the strategic level. Currently, Bruneian

²⁶ Lt Col Hj Aminuddin, the Brunei Contingent Commander in the International Monitoring Team telephone conversation, 2 April 2005.

military observers in Southern Philippines are working closely with their Malaysian counterparts and also the Philippine host. During UNTAC in 1993, RBAF personnel worked with peacekeepers from 46 different countries including Argentina, Japan, Canada, Poland, Egypt, Sweden, Morocco and other ASEAN countries.

The RBAF has never been involved in any conflict and has yet to exercise its power within the country in times of crisis. However, the RBAF has been involved in security operations related to big and significant events such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in 2000, the South East Asian (SEA) Games in 1999 and the “Y2K phenomenon” at the turn of the millennium. Being involved in any peacekeeping operation provides RBAF personnel the much-needed “operational exposure.”²⁷ This might expose the RBAF to unfamiliar territories. A peacekeeping operation may not be a combat operation, but this will be a good and realistic introduction to one of the roads of operational exposure. This will also introduce the Bruneian peacekeepers to the realities and calamities of war and instability. Upon their return, these personnel will learn from the experiences and apply them to uphold the stability and peace of the country. Peacekeeping should also not be seen to erode the combat defence capability of the RBAF. On the contrary, it is likely to enhance it further. Additionally, the experiences offered by such missions will be helpful in giving RBAF personnel realities of “mental and physical readiness” in operations – although not in combat-type operations.

The United Nation feels that its peacekeeping operations are cost effective and certainly a lot cheaper than war. That figure is also a lot less from the amount spent by

²⁷ Trevor Findlay, *Challenges for the New Peacekeepers*, SIPRI Research Report No. 12, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996), 10-11.

governments on their arms programme.²⁸ As a full member, Brunei contributes to the regular budget of the United Nations and also to the cost of peacekeeping operations, which varies depending on the operation.²⁹ Unfortunately, figures for Bruneian contributions are not available.

However, Brunei does not expect any or is motivated by financial gains from participating in UN peacekeeping operations and is committed to participation regardless of financial rewards.³⁰ How much will peacekeeping operations likely to cost Brunei? It will be difficult to put an exact figure as the structure of such a force has yet to be determined. However, with one or two assumptions, the calculations detailed below will show that Brunei will bear the additional costs of taking on peacekeeping missions.

It is likely that Brunei will send a maximum of a platoon of about 30 personnel in a peacekeeping operation at a time.³¹ The average soldier on a mission will not only receive his monthly wage but also a deployment allowance. This amount currently stands at US\$100 per day.³² Therefore, the total allowance paid by the government during a one-year deployment for the thirty personnel would total US\$1,080,000. The UN reimburses countries contributing troops at a rate of about US\$1000 per soldier per

²⁸ United Nations, United Nations Peacekeeping, *Meeting New Challenges*, (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, July 2004): 8; available from http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/faq/qa_english.pdf; Internet; accessed 3 April 2005.

²⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Foreign Policy," http://www.mfa.gov.bn/foreign_policy/reg.htm; Internet; accessed 10 August 2004.

³⁰ Pehin Datu Inderasugara Dato Paduka Brig Gen Hj Mohammad Yusof, Commandant, Support Services, Royal Brunei Armed Forces telephone conversation, 28 November 2004.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Pay Office personnel, Bolkliah Pay Office telephone conversation, 19 April 2005.

month.³³ Therefore, for that same operation, the UN will reimburse the Brunei Government a total of US\$360,000.

From the calculations, the cost to the Brunei Government in terms of allowance alone outweighs the projected total reimbursed by the UN by three folds. Other hidden costs such as training cost, travel expenditure and logistical support have not been factored into the calculation. Although personnel involved in the operation will earn more than their monthly wages, the government actually does not gain any profit from the UN reimbursement programme.

Therefore, the UN reimbursement is unlikely to contribute great financial benefits to the Brunei Government or the RBAF. Fiji, on the other hand, has enjoyed substantial benefits from participating in peacekeeping missions. Peacekeeping involvement has enlarged the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF), provided 1000 new jobs annually for the population and the military has received equipment to replace old and obsolete ones.³⁴ Pakistan, a large contributor of troops to the UN peacekeeping operations, is “highly likely” motivated by financial gains. However, the impact of those financial gains on the overall impact on budget and revenues to Pakistan is debatable.³⁵

Brunei will also soon learn that sending troops for peacekeeping missions is expensive. Annually, Brunei pays about US\$380,000 to the regular United Nations

³³ United Nations, United Nations Peacekeeping, *Meeting New Challenges*, (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, July 2004): 8; available from http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/faq/qa_english.pdf; Internet; accessed 3 April 2005.

³⁴ Katsumi Ishizuka, “Fiji: A Micro State and its Peacekeeping Contribution,” available from <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=2&did=000000043401587&SrchMode=1&sid=2>; Internet; accessed 27 August 2004.

³⁵ Kabilan Krishnasamy, “Pakistan’s Peacekeeping Experiences,” *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 9, No. 3 (Autumn 2002): 103-120.

budget and an “assessed varied contribution” for peacekeeping contributions.³⁶ The above calculations suggest that Brunei’s future peacekeeping efforts are likely to cost more than what the government is contributing at present. Troop contributing nations will also have to continue their contributions to the UN peacekeeping budget. However, these costs are unlikely to deter the voluntary commitment Brunei has made to augment UN peacekeeping operations. Sweden, for example, recognizes that in 1994/1995, the total “obligatory and voluntary” contribution towards peacekeeping was more than ten times its contribution to the UN budget. Despite that, Sweden continues to be active in supporting UN peacekeeping missions by way of contributing cash and troops.³⁷ Brunei will likely follow that example, as the cost of financing Brunei’s peacekeepers will not be a prohibitive factor to participation.

The roles of the RBAF have been described earlier. Any peacekeeping operations are likely to be carried out by the Bruneian army. There are currently three infantry battalions in the RBAF. Sending about thirty personnel to perform peacekeeping duties out-of-state at a time may not sound a big commitment or that it will seriously degrade the capability of the force. However, while a platoon is involved in a peacekeeping operation, it is likely that another platoon is being assembled, undergoing training or preparing to be deployed. It is also conceivable that there could actually be another platoon post-deployment and they will have to take some time to adjust to new postings or be in a “recuperation” period. This will mean that when the RBAF fully commits to

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Policy,” http://www.mfa.gov.bn/foreign_policy/reg.htm; Internet; accessed 10 August 2004.

³⁷ Sweden.se, The Official Gateway to Sweden, “Sweden and the United Nations,” http://www.sweden.se/templates/cs/BasicFactsheet_4173.aspx; Internet; accessed 23 August 2004.

participate in peacekeeping operations, it is likely that up to three platoons of personnel are out of the “national duties” loop. With limited resources, this figure may actually affect the force generation capability of the RBAF.

As a consequence, this may increase the tempo of operations of the RBAF and cause undue stress on its personnel. Stress may reduce the morale and overall effectiveness of the RBAF. Consequently, the career in the RBAF may become unpopular and personnel may choose to leave the RBAF early. Additionally, the profession may become unattractive to the young civilian that the RBAF will have a problem recruiting new workforce. This may lead further to an erosion of the combat defensive capability of the armed force.

Therefore, in order to sustain or realise Brunei’s commitment to participation, the RBAF should garner public support, adjust training to suit peacekeeping requirements and establish an effective medical screening system to ensure that personnel are psychologically prepared to conduct peacekeeping missions.

As evident from the US experience in Vietnam, support of the population is important as it can shape political will.³⁸ Although no statistics on public support, or approval for Brunei’s involvement in UNTAC is available, there was no opposition to the deployment either. Generally, the public is supportive of the current Bruneian military observer efforts in the Philippines.³⁹ This public support was also evident in the recent deployment of military and civilian personnel to the island of Sumatra as part of Brunei’s

³⁸ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia, “The Vietnam War,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War; Internet; accessed 16 April 2005.

³⁹ Lt Col Hj Aminuddin, the Brunei Contingent Commander in the International Monitoring Team telephone conversation, 2 April 2005.

humanitarian efforts in the wake of the recent December 26 tsunami that devastated the northern part of the island.⁴⁰

As Brunei deepens its involvement in peacekeeping operations, public support must be harnessed. Therefore, the government and the RBAF need to inform the public of the commitment to participation in peacekeeping operations. This can be done now. The sooner the public understands what peacekeeping is all about, the easier will it be to get public support when troops start deploying. The public must also be informed of the changing security threats and trends that affect Brunei and the population.

However, what happens when there is a loss of life? Risk of fatality in a peacekeeping operation is a reality. There have been a total of 1847 fatalities in peacekeeping missions since 1948.⁴¹ Even though, the Defence White Paper states that Brunei will participate in a low-intensity conflict, no one can predict the future situation on the ground. This was experienced recently in the Philippines when a shooting incident happened in the ceasefire area monitored by Bruneian personnel.⁴² Nevertheless, such incident can erode morale and have a negative impact on the families of those injured or killed. Additionally, this might lower public support especially if the Bruneian Government is unable to justify the RBAF involvement to the people. The people may not understand why their loved ones, sons, brothers or friends are wounded or killed in an operation that is not perceived as defending the country or motherland. Therefore, the

⁴⁰ James Kon, "Mercy Mission Takes Off", *Borneo Bulletin*, 13 Jan 2005, available from <http://www.brunei-online.com/bb/thu/jan13h1.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 Jan 2005.

⁴¹United Nations Peacekeeping, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm>; Internet; accessed 5 April 2005.

⁴² Lt Col Hj Aminuddin, the Brunei Contingent Commander in the International Monitoring Team telephone conversation, 2 April 2005.

government and the RBAF need to work on harnessing the support of the population by educating the public on the purposes of peacekeeping operations, and more importantly why the RBAF is participating in such endeavours.

Before troops start deploying, a phase of training is essential to prepare the peacekeeper for a mission. The RBAF training has traditionally been geared to conventional warfare and against insurgency. The peacekeeping world is a lot different. Peacekeeping has little to do with arms and force but more of negotiations. Many describe a “multi-disciplinary approach” and being able to work harmoniously together with civilian authorities and counterparts is very important.⁴³ Paradoxically, the increased “civilianization” of peacekeeping operations has also contributed to the complexity of missions.⁴⁴

The Malaysian Armed Forces, for example, recognises the value of “specialized training” for peacekeeping missions, which include among others, rules of engagement, roles and structures of the peacekeeping operation and issues concerning negotiations and investigations.⁴⁵ However, some argue that “preparation” is the essential key to peacekeeping and requires an “adjustment of attitude and approach” from a combat orientated pose to a “negotiation and mediation approach.”⁴⁶ On the other hand, the Indonesian military provides “location-specific specialty training” which covers issues

⁴³ ASEAN, “Summary report of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Peacekeeping Operations, 1-3 April 1996, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,” <http://www.aseansec.org/3858.htm>; Internet; accessed 28 November 2004.

⁴⁴ Trevor Findlay, *Challenges for the New Peacekeepers*, SIPRI Research Report No. 12, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996), 21.

⁴⁵ Jakkie Cilliers and Greg Mills, *Peacekeeping in Africa*, Vol 2, (South Africa: Institute for Defence Policy, 1996), 181.

⁴⁶ International Peace Academy, *Peacekeeper’s Handbook* (Pergamon Press: New York, 1984), 259.

such as those mentioned and also includes operational objective, augmented with trainings in mine detention, mobile patrolling, negotiation skills and psychological operations.⁴⁷

As alluded to, peacekeeping needs a different approach altogether from conventional operations. Therefore, before committing into such operations, the RBAF must understand and explore issues associated with such peacekeeping missions such as the mandate, the region, the people, the language, the culture and of course, the conflict as this will help shape the training and preparation of the peacekeeping force. Adequate and proper training is a key essential for the success and efficiency of any peacekeeping operations.⁴⁸ Currently, the RBAF sends selected personnel to attend peacekeeping-related courses in Malaysia. This selective training needs to be addressed to a wider group in future.

Does this mean that the overall training of RBAF personnel needs to be changed to suit future trends of operation? This is unlikely to happen, as the RBAF will still maintain a combat-ready defence force to protect and defend the security of Brunei Darussalam. What is likely to happen is that the RBAF will tailor peacekeeping-specific training relevant to the mission to prepare personnel for deployment.

However, before any training begins or any preparation is initiated, selection of personnel needs to be defined. A fit and healthy peacekeeping team will more likely be

⁴⁷ John B Haseman, "Garuda XII: Indonesian Peacekeeping in Cambodia," *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, No 12 (Summer 1996): 89-94; http://www.ndu.edu/inss/jfq/title_index.htm#g; Internet; accessed 28 November 2004.

⁴⁸ ASEAN, "Summary report of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Peacekeeping Operations, 1-3 April 1996, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia," <http://www.aseansec.org/3858.htm>; Internet; accessed 28 November 2004.

able to adapt to the challenges, stresses and physical demands of a deployment.⁴⁹ Therefore, selection of the team is essential in advance of any deployment. It should be mentioned that personnel not only face stresses during the mission but also before and after deployment.⁵⁰ The separation from loved ones, the uncertainty and challenges of the mission and many other factors contribute to increased levels of stress or anxiety during deployments. Cases of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) have been widely described in peacekeepers.⁵¹ In her study, Hodson suggested that the chances of developing PTSD is increased if soldiers are deployed as single individuals than in groups. Her study also suggested that the social help and support post-deployment is equally important in reducing the incidence and length of such disorder.⁵² Litz, on the other hand, predicted that the severity of PTSD is related to the type of stressful exposure peacekeepers were faced with.⁵³ It has also been stated that there are higher rates of

⁴⁹ Department of Defence, *Management of Australian Defence Force Deployments to East Timor*, (Canberra: Australian Defence Force, 2002); available from <http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/4A256AE90015F69BCA256B810076F2F5>; Internet; accessed 12 October 2004.

⁵⁰ Chua Hon Kiat Stanley, "Psychological Dimensions of Peacekeeping: The Role of the Organization," *Journal of The Singapore Armed Forces*, Vol 29, No 2 (Apr – Jun 2003); available from http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer/back/journals/2003/Vol29_2/1.htm; Internet; accessed 8 October 2004.

⁵¹ Brett T Litz, "The Psychological Demands of Peacekeeping For Military Personnel," *NCP Quarterly*, No 6(1) (Winter 1996); available from <http://www.ncptsd.org/publications/cq/v6/n1/litz.html>; Internet; accessed 8 October 2004.

⁵² International Military Testing Association. *Proceedings of 1997 IMTA Conference*. (Sydney, Australia, 1997), 209-213; available from <http://www.internationalmta.org/1997/97IMTAproceedings.pdf>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005.

⁵³ Brett T Litz, "The Psychological Demands of Peacekeeping For Military Personnel," *NCP Quarterly*, No 6(1) (Winter 1996); available from <http://www.ncptsd.org/publications/cq/v6/n1/litz.html>; Internet; accessed 8 October 2004.

mental problems, suicide and substance abuse among former peacekeepers than the general population.⁵⁴

Hence psychological aspects of deployment should be given considerable thought and emphasis. This process should start at the selection process. Personnel chosen should not have any history of mental illness or instability.⁵⁵ Schmidtchen describes a number of traits that a peacekeeper should have in order to contribute to a successful peacekeeping mission. These traits include among others stability, maturity, high motivation, possessing initiative, having good interpersonal skills, culturally sensitive and professional.⁵⁶ Haseman also believed that selection of personnel is important and should include psychological testing.⁵⁷

During the pre-deployment phase, the time spent planning and preparing for the mission could take the soldier away from quality time spent with loved ones may add stress to the soldier.⁵⁸ During deployment, soldiers are expected to be working around the clock, under circumstances of uncertainty, living in conditions he may not be accustomed

⁵⁴ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia, "Peacekeeping," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peacekeeping>; Internet; accessed 8 October 2004.

⁵⁵ Chua Hon Kiat Stanley, "Psychological Dimensions of Peacekeeping: The Role of the Organization," *Journal of The Singapore Armed Forces*, Vol 29, No 2 (Apr – Jun 2003); available from http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer/back/journals/2003/Vol29_2/1.htm; Internet; accessed 8 October 2004.

⁵⁶ International Military Testing Association. *Proceedings of 1997 IMTA Conference*. (Sydney, Australia, 1997), 414-421; available from <http://www.internationalmta.org/1997/97IMTAproceedings.pdf>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005.

⁵⁷ John B Haseman, "Garuda XII: Indonesian Peacekeeping in Cambodia", *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, No 12 (Summer 1996): 89-94; http://www.ndu.edu/inss/jfq/title_index.htm#g; Internet; accessed 28 November 2004.

⁵⁸ Chua Hon Kiat Stanley, "Psychological Dimensions of Peacekeeping: The Role of the Organization," *Journal of The Singapore Armed Forces*, Vol 29, No 2 (Apr – Jun 2003); available from http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer/back/journals/2003/Vol29_2/1.htm; Internet; accessed 8 October 2004.

to and enduring those conditions for the rest of the deployment period. These are all sources of stress.⁵⁹ The importance of identifying and treating stress post-deployment cannot be overstated and the organization has the obligation to monitor the psychological health of these personnel.⁶⁰

Thus, the years ahead will be challenging for Brunei and the RBAF. Not only does the country need to adapt to the changing security environment, the RBAF will soon be used as an instrument to project Bruneian values and interest in a way that was last used in UNTAC in 1993. More nations are now contributing troops for the peacekeeping efforts and missions have become more complex. However, the Bruneian Government has made a voluntary commitment to participate more actively in UN peacekeeping missions in the near future. Much can be learned from the experiences of neighbours and also new players.

However, Brunei should not rush into dispatching troops prematurely. Future participation in any peacekeeping missions has implications for Brunei and the RBAF. Therefore, before commitments and irreversible steps are taken, the RBAF must study the implications, benefits, risks and impacts of such participation. The RBAF should make a calculated and considered approach on such decisions bearing in mind that peacekeeping missions have become more intricate, involved numerous parties and nationalities with differing or competing interests.

⁵⁹ Chua Hon Kiat Stanley, "Psychological Dimensions of Peacekeeping: The Role of the Organization," *Journal of The Singapore Armed Forces*, Vol 29, No 2 (Apr – Jun 2003); available from http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer/back/journals/2003/Vol29_2/1.htm; Internet; accessed 8 October 2004.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Brunei might choose to send a few personnel or up to platoon strength of peacekeepers as long as this does not erode the defence capability of the armed force. Brunei should also understand that participation in peacekeeping could actually mean sending a few personnel on several missions at a time.

At the end of the day, Brunei understands the importance of the United Nations and is a committed member of the world body. Brunei aspires to be a more responsible member of the international community and feels that it needs to play a part of that “international collective responsibility.”⁶¹ For the Bruneian soldiers who will soon participate, they should always remember that they represent the pride of the country and maintaining discipline and professionalism during such missions is critical to the success of future Brunei’s peacekeeping involvement. Additionally, they serve as “ambassadors and diplomats” for Brunei.⁶²

Brunei is also presently contributing ten military personnel as observers to observe the ceasefire in Southern Philippines. This was significantly more than the number of military personnel Brunei sent during UNTAC in 1992/1993. Additionally, Brunei sent about 45 military personnel and two helicopters in the first and recent humanitarian relief mission in Sumatra post December 2004 tsunami disaster that devastated the region. In fact, Brunei and the RBAF have already taken positive and gentle but certainly not infantile steps into the peacekeeping and humanitarian domain. It was only about five months after the release of the Defence White Paper that a force was

⁶¹ United Nations, United Nations Peacekeeping, *Meeting New Challenges*, (New York: United Nations, Department of Public Information, July 2004): 13; available from http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/faq/qa_english.pdf; Internet; accessed 3 April 2005.

⁶² Jakkie Cilliers and Greg Mills, *Peacekeeping in Africa*, Vol 2, (South Africa: Institute for Defence Policy, 1996), 181.

assembled to participate in an observer mission. That is by no means any small feat. So, the cogwheels have actually been turned in motion and Brunei is stepping into the peacekeeping arena. Therefore, with careful evaluation and learning from the experiences of current and recent missions, and also from the experiences of others, Brunei and the RBAF could consider playing a more active role in peacekeeping missions in the future.

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