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## Role of National Defense Policy against Cyber Threats

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### Abstract

Since Independence in 1957, Malaysia has been pursuing various strategies against traditional and non-traditional threats as a means of maintaining national security. The advancement in technology resulted in a positive impact on the country and the society, but this also led to damages due to misuse. This article explained the strategies incorporated in National Defence Policy in addressing cyber threats. One of the strategies incorporated with the policy is Total Defence involving all the society along with the governments to defend national security and sovereignty. However, Total Defence was reported to be vague in its implementation and has given a new approach through the introduction of Defence White Paper as the preparation in addressing the cyber threats. This ensures the capability and national defence strategy are in line and relevant to the changing global security environment.

**Keywords:** National Defence Policy; Total Defence; Defence White Paper; Cyber threats.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has faced various security threats and experienced wars since the era of foreign invasion, world wars and communist invasion. Security threats come in various forms and ways, both domestic and from abroad. With the emergence of technology, these days appear makes these threats more difficult to handle as the development in the technology allows easy sharing of various information, thus leading to political, economic, cultural and national security concerns. Although the technology in communication has unified the world easier compared before, it also contributed to a new approach for the cybercriminals and terrorists to communicate and planning an attack. According to Hishamuddin Hussien (2015), the situation is getting worse as new mediums of communication especially through media social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and WhatsApp's have allowed these criminals have channels to launch their activities.

Considering the Independence in 1957, Malaysia is considered able to maintain its peace and secure despite the presence of threats from offshore security. Till now, Malaysia had experienced aggression hits twice, during the year 1965, confrontation Malaysia-Indonesia occurred and the occurrence of terrorist invasion by the Philippines at Lahad Datu during 2013 (Ahmad Ridzuan Wan Chik, 2011). However, Malaysia managed to address these threats successfully as a result of the focus on the development of security aspects. To fulfil this purpose, the Malaysia Government has intensified efforts to improve the capacity of Armed Forces through defence equipment and enlargement of security personnel (Nambiar, 2009). The landscape now requires the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) along with other security agencies and the civilians working together to address these challenges. This alliance of all parties is required because the borderless world may lead to universal threats. Thus, Malaysia has organized strategy as preparation against any threats through the implementation of the National Defence Policy (NDP).

## 2. CYBER THREATS

The development of communication technology has allowed unifying the world easier compared to before. However, this also created a new approach and strategy for the criminals and terrorists to communicate and launch the attacks. The situation is getting worse as these cybercriminals used various social media networks such as WhatsApp, Twitter and, Facebook as well as YouTube in planning their cyber threats (Hishammuddin Hussein, 2015). The cyber threat is known as one of the most concern and unpredictable asymmetric threat (BeritaHarian, 2019). Besides, cybercrimes also contributed more challenges towards national security and need to be prevented in order to avoid any harm.

Through research done by Anita Abdul Rahim and Nazura Abdul Manap (2004) explained that cyber threat is a malicious act done by an individual or in a group by using electronic devices with the connection of internet services. This act can outreach limitless border among other countries within a shorter time frame. Rusli Abdullah, Noraini Che Pa' and Noorsalwati Nordin (2003) emphasized that cyber threat also contributed to damages or destroying the information, equipment, and data which involving any software or computer processor through the act of information theft on targeted electronic devices or computers, asides from trespass and virus attacks. Meanwhile, Nazura Abdul Manap and Jasri Jamal (2003) reported that cybercrime is a modern type of crime executed using computer technology through cyberspace, and this makes this cyber-crime is different from any crime in the past which only occurred in physical environment.

According to Mursilaili Mustapa Sa'di (2006), the scope of cybercrime is extremely broad and the prosecution process is quite difficult compared to conventional crimes. The process of detecting the crime location can be difficult especially for the criminals from overseas and caused it more challenging and difficult to overcome (Christina Ulau, 2013). Therefore, it makes cybercrime is different from other physical crimes. According to Anita Abdul Rahim and Nazura Abdul Manap (2004), they had detailed that cybercrime is categorized into four different types; fraud, forgery, theft and treason. Thus, such scope can threaten Malaysia's security if the prevention steps were taken lightly. Among the initiatives taken by the government facing these threats is through the implementation of the National Defence Policy.

### **3. NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICY**

A sovereign and independent nation are established through the border defences protected from enemy military threats, which also known as national security (Sity Daud & Zarina Othman, 2005). Also, Trager and Simonie (1973) detailed that security is the government's policy in ensuring governance systems nationally and internationally safeguard the nation's main interest against enemy threats. This is because as Buzan (1987) had traditionally described the object of reference to a security threat is the nation, even though a race itself is considered as the object of reference. Understandably, the concept of national security is a state of nation protection from the enemy through an established policy made by the government. Looking into the Kementerian Pertahanan Malaysia (2010) had detailed the concept of national security for Malaysia has been formulated and discussed in detail in the NDP.

Malaysia had been facing various threats for a longer period since Independence along with the development of policies to protect its sovereignty (Simpson, 2013). Thus, NDP had been detailed the principles of defences involving the security of the nation's interest in any kind of situation. The main objective of this policy to develop thrust towards economic prosperity besides building the integrity and sovereignty of the region including the protection and preserving of the nation's interests (Kementerian Pertahanan Malaysia, 1997). To fulfill the objective, the comprehensive strategy has been established as the primary defence principle. There are six main principles which are; self-reliance, Total Defence (HANRUH), support of Union Nation in the efforts towards universal peace, commitment to five-state defence regulation (FDPA), defence diplomacy (bilateral or multilateral cooperation) and measures on terrorisms (Kementerian Pertahanan Malaysia, 2010).

### **4. TOTAL DEFENCE (HANRUH)**

HANRUH concept was established to protect the nation's sovereignty through integrated and comprehensive efforts by many parties such as the private sector, government personnel, non-government personnel and also public society. It is important to ensure the security forces can address these threats and challenges as a national responsibility, although the task for protecting the country is their primary responsibility (Kementerian Pertahanan Malaysia, 2010). Thus, this situation caused national security to become a shared responsibility without distinguishing religion, race, occupational class or political differences. Since the Cold War, the concept of HANRUH had been implemented by other countries including Finland, Switzerland, Singapore and Denmark (Koleksi Arkib Ucapan Ketua Eksekutif, 2007). Therefore, it is shown that the concept of HANRUH was not new in the governance of a country.

According to Balakrishnan (2013), based on the countries that implemented the concept of HANRUH, this concept has similar characteristics especially the main objective of HANRUH is to protect the society, war prevention and defending the country. The HANRUH need to have the capability to prevent any threats and always be prepared for any possibilities, as well as providing the defence in implementation of actions and efforts concerning the use of assets and resources in defence the country involving the government and

private sectors (Koleksi Arkib Ucapan Ketua Eksekutif, 2007). Meanwhile, Azman Abdul Razak (2009) emphasized that there are five components of defence in HANRUH namely military defence, civil defence, economic defence, social defence and psychological defence.

Looking into National Defence Policy, the HANRUH concept lies as the second strategy after the concept of self-reliance. Initially, this concept was not driven for any form of threats but based on capability driven. As there is no anticipation from any conventional threats in the future, the concept of HANRUH has been incorporated with NDP to safeguard the nation's interest and sovereignty through total collaborative resources involving defence-deterrence strategy and forward defence based on capability driven (Mohamad Faisal Keling, Mohd Dino Khairi Sharriffuddin & Laila Suriya Ahmad Apandi, 2006). To achieve each component of HANRUH's concept, collaborative efforts from many parties including the public, the government and private as well as ministries, departments, statutory agencies and non-government are required (Mohamad Faisal Keling, Ahmad Shah Pakeer Mohamed & Md Shukri Shuib, 2016). Therefore, the government had taken initiative by establishing voluntary forces in every community including the Angkatan Pertahanan Awam (APM), Ikatan Sukarelawan Malaysia (RELA), Jawatan Kuasa Kerja Kampung (JKKK), Askar Wataniah (AW), Police Volunteer Reserve (PVR), Polis Bantuan, Pasukan Latihan Pegawai Simpanan (PALAPES) and Kor Sukarelawan Polis Siswa Siswi (Kor SUKSIS).

## **5. ROLE OF NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICY AGAINST CYBER THREATS**

Nowadays, the limitless world has contributed to the emergence of various universal threats. As looking into the period of January till July 2019, the reported losses due to cybercrimes amounted to RM309.67 million (Chandrasekaran, 2019). These reported losses were due to the increases in cybercrimes, which later affected national security. To overcome this challenging situation, the commitment and collaborative efforts from Malaysia Armed Forces and other security agencies are required. Since the beginning of NDP, it seems that the elements required for addressing the cybercrimes through this policy was reported to be vague. Thus, the Ministry of Defence Malaysia had introduced the Defence White Paper (DWP) to improve the current policy by addressing a few matters that included cyber-crimes.

Defence White Paper is implemented into Rancangan Malaysia Ke-12 (RMK12) and Rancangan Malaysia Ke-13 (RMK13) starting on the year 2020 until 2030 as becoming the strategic direction of the nation's defence (Muhammad Yusri Muzamir, 2019). Through the implementation of DWP, all society has to take responsibility to protect the country. This will be the continuation of HANRUH's concept brought by NDP in the past (Nurul Huda Husain, 2019). The concept of HANRUH reported to be vague as well as feared to be a failure because of the low publicity among society (Balakrishnan, 2009). Besides that, Mohamad Faisal Keling, Ahmad Shah Pakeer Mohamed and Md Shukri Shuib (2016) also stated that the concept of HANRUH was only well-understand by armed forces and some other agencies, which made the society not very knew their involvement as a part of this concept. Thus, the DWP was introduced as a new life was given for HANRUH to ensure that its capabilities and strategies are relevant and in line with the changing global security environment (Muhammad Yusri Muzamir, 2019).

Next, DWP has outlined the key vision for the nation's defence interest in terms of prosperity, security and sovereignty. There are five objectives brought by the DWP; enhancing Malaysia's internal resilience through a holistic approach to the government and the public, the development of the defence industry as an economic catalyst, institutionalizing best governance practices, strengthening defence cooperation, and developing various ATM capabilities (Mohd Azlim Zainury, 2019). In addition, Mohd Azlim Zainury (2019) also pointed out that the government would ensure that ATMs are strong, focused and integrated force with five key technology-based features, mission-oriented, cooperative, collaborative and the ability to operate simultaneously in two regions. It is important to cultivate the spirit of patriotism in society as the strength of a nation as dependent on the resilience and unity of the people in the face of various challenges, especially the unpredictable cyber threats.

New approaches have been introduced into the national defence industry as well as science and technology policies as the catalysts for the growth of economic and national defence. Therefore, to advance these approaches, Faris Fuad (2019) had pointed out that the Ministry of Defence Malaysia seeking to apply additional provisions as the preparation against new challenges such as cyber threats as highlighted in DWP. This is due to the growing need for the provision of drones, driverless and radar-related aircraft (FarisFuad, 2019). Smart troops will be created through the DWP, which in preparation for all the soldiers who can

handle modern equipment and have extensive knowledge of information technology to prevent cyber threats (Junita Mat Rasid, 2019).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Due to the experiences from various wars and security threats faced by Malaysia from the era of foreign invasion, world wars and communist's invasion, Malaysia-Indonesia confrontation, and invasion at Lahad Datu gave a huge impact towards Malaysia to become more mature in planning policies as well as appreciate the peace and freedom. Even so, the implementation of NDP to defend national security and sovereignty seems to be vague, this is because the concept of HANRUH was failed to be fully understood by the society. This will cause a high risk to the country if there are non-traditional threats such as cyber-attacks. In reality, the national defence was not only the responsibility of the security personnel such as ATMs alone, but it is also society's responsibility to be shouldered together to strengthen the national defence's border from any threats. Soon, the open implementation of DWP will result in the hope to be more understandable for all society as the preparation for defending the nation in any given situation.

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