

## Philippine National Security

The concept of national security has changed, evolved, and expanded in immense ways over time. No longer does it exclusively refer to the traditional notions of internal and external defense, but now also encompasses virtually every aspect of national life and nation-building. It is anchored on three major pillars:

1. The first pillar is safeguarding the Philippines' national unity, its democracy, and its social institutions. The most important foundation of national unity is that all citizens share one national identity that is, being Filipinos regardless of their ethnic, religious, cultural, and ideological orientations.
2. The second pillar of national security is ensuring the security of the State and preserving and protecting its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and institutions.
3. The third pillar is the protection of properties, infrastructures and keeping the people safe from all forms of threats, both here and abroad, and to the extent possible, creating jobs in order to bring back home overseas Filipino workers where their physical safety can be fully guaranteed by our Government.

The Government envisions a Philippines that by 2022 shall become *"a secure and prosperous nation wherein the people's welfare, well-being, ways of life and core values; government and its institutions; territorial integrity and sovereignty are protected and enhanced and confident of its place in the community of nations."*

### The National Security Interests

#### 1. Public Safety, Law and Order and Justice

The most fundamental duties of the State are to ensure public safety, maintain law and order, and dispense social justice within the purview of the constitutionally enshrined principles of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights.

#### 2. Socio-Political Stability

This is a condition where peace prevails even in diversity and where cooperation and support exists between the Government and the people under an atmosphere of mutual respect and empathy, bound by a strong notion of nationhood and a sense of duty to respect the rule of law and serve the common good.

#### 3. Economic Solidarity and Sustainable Development

Reducing poverty and income gaps, creating equal economic opportunities for all, and distributing the fruits of development to the broadest segments of society are key objectives of the desired economic growth and national security outcomes.

#### 4. Territorial Integrity

This condition ensures that the territory of the country is intact and inviolable, and under the effective control and jurisdiction of the Philippine Government. This includes the right of the Philippine government to protect and defend all land, marine and sub-marine features and resources within its territory from invasion and illegal incursions and resource exploitation.

#### 5. Ecological Balance

The Philippines must be able to maximize the rewards of its rich natural resources while at the same time conserving and protecting these finite resources for the sake of the future generation.

#### 6. Cultural Cohesiveness

National unity is an essential cornerstone of nationhood and national survival. The Government must continue to fully harness these attributes and values system in order to strengthen the Filipino family

#### 7. Moral and Spiritual Consensus

It speaks of moral and spiritual consensus among Filipinos on the wisdom and righteousness of the national vision, as enunciated by the country's leadership. It presupposes the people's trust and confidence in the Government's commitment and capability to lead the nation toward this desired national vision.

#### 8. International Peace and Cooperation

The security of the state is best enhanced through the pursuit of amity cooperation with all nations and partnership with *like-minded* countries and strategic partners.

### The National Security Challenges

The national security sector needs to give focused attention to several major internal and external issues and challenges confronting the Philippine society.

#### • Internal Environment

##### 1. **Law and Order and Administration of Justice**

- The Philippines has grappled for years with a serious peace and order problem. The national crime rate, considered as one of the highest in Southeast and East Asia, has posed a significant deterrent to investments as well as constrained the country's overall development potential.
- While the number of reported crimes has been rising, the ability of the police to solve crime has decreased. The twin scourge of corruption and patronage politics plaguing law enforcement institutions and Government sector as a whole has made it extremely hard, to bring the crime rate down.
- This has amplified the need to undertake crucial reforms aimed at cleansing and strengthening the five pillars of the criminal justice, namely: law enforcement, the courts, prosecution, correctional institutions, and the community.
- The Philippines' growing illegal drugs problem in particular needs a determined and proactive solution. Successive researches and pertinent crime statistics in the Philippines show a strong and direct correlation between crimes, especially serious or violent ones, and drug abuse.

##### 2. **Internal Armed Conflicts**

- The communist rebellion being waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), continues to pose serious peace and order problems in the country.
- The Muslim separatist struggle being waged by non-state armed groups and extremist movements remains a major source of instability in resource-rich but impoverished parts of southern Philippines (or Mindanao).
- The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is the largest and most organized of the myriad radical groups operating in Mindanao.

##### 3. **Terrorism and Transnational Crimes**

- The Philippines faces continuing threats from terrorism, both of foreign and domestic origin.
- The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) which is an extremist organization known for its bandit-like tactics and notorious for beheadings and kidnap-for-ransom activities in Mindanao, remains as the foremost terror group actively inflicting severe socio-political and economic disruptions.
- ASG along with its affiliates, such as the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), has a long-term intention of waging jihadist against non-Muslims.
- Other local terrorist groups such as the Ansar al-Khilafah Philippines (AKP), Maute Group, Bangsamoro Freedom Fighters (BIFF), and Daesh-inspired entities have the potential to inflict various forms of violent attacks not only in Mindanao but also in any part of the Philippines.
- Meanwhile, the problem of transnational crimes has become more pressing. Given its archipelagic attributes, the Philippines' borders are porous and vulnerable to the activities of international crime syndicates. These illegal transborder activities include: drug trafficking; human trafficking of children, women, illegal migrants and labor; illegal fishing/poaching; arms smuggling; and monetary laundering.

##### 4. **Economic and Social Threats**

- Poverty remains pervasive and is not expected to change significantly in the near future. As the population continues to grow, more Filipinos are expected to join the ranks of the poor so long as the poverty rate remains largely unchanged.
- Income inequality between the rich and the poor and between urban and rural areas has remained high and will likely persist in the near future.
- Different levels of economic and social development, along with the demographic pressures, cause hunger and malnutrition, homelessness, and larger migrations of people from rural to urban areas.
- Demographic migrations, in addition to social problems and with the growth of crime, can lead to increased instability and insecurity.
- Infectious diseases are also on the rise particularly human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

#### • External Environment

##### 1. **Overlapping Territorial Claims and Maritime Domain Issues**

- The country needs to address the disputes concerning maritime boundaries as they affect a complex range of national security concerns as well as threaten regional peace and stability.

- The Philippines must ensure good order within its sea boundaries and develop appropriate maritime domain awareness and response force capability to address the presence of hostile forces at sea, pirates, terrorists, traffickers, illegal fishers, and other environmental transgressors.
- The Philippines must also protect the nation's maritime interests in the Benham Rise and Batanes islands in the North, and the Zambal and Bongao islands in the Southern Philippines.
- The dispute over the West Philippine Sea (WPS) remains to be the foremost security challenge to the Philippines' sovereignty and territorial integrity

## **2. Global and Regional Geopolitical Issues**

In addition to the WPS issue, there are other inter- and intra-states flashpoints of immediate concern to the Philippines. These include the intensifying conflicts in the Middle East and Africa (MENA region), persisting tension in the Korean Peninsula, unresolved territorial disputes in Northeast and Southeast-Asia, unsettled Sabah issue, China-Taiwan conflict, and other power rivalries where the hegemony of the United States is contested and threatened.

### **I. United States**

The United States remains as the only superpower in the world today and maintains its strategic presence around the globe. In the Asia Pacific region, the US strengthens the sphere of influence through the "pivot/rebalance policy" and has sought to improve its military standing through the introduction of more sophisticated weapons systems, in the improvement of basing facilities and in the alliance and multilateral network it has set up among its regional partners. The US remains as our sole defense treaty ally.

### **II. China**

With China's rise as the world's second largest economy, surpassing Japan, attention has focused towards its direction due to its large population, large territory and vast natural resources, rapid industrial and technological breakthroughs, and unparalleled economic growth. The rise of China generates policy concerns not only among developed countries such as the US, Japan and Korea, but also among the ASEAN nations due to socio-cultural interactions, significant trade and investments, as well as territorial claims in the WPS. China's more active presence in the WPS is motivated by the growing need for food sources, increasing demand for energy resources, and renewed stirrings of nationalism.

### **III. ASEAN**

There are existing border disputes among the member-states of ASEAN, but the organization has consistently upheld the principles of consultation and consensus as its norm in resolving inter-states misunderstanding and conflicts.

### **IV. Japan**

Japan remains as an economic power house in Asia and the new security challenges confronting it induce Tokyo to seek closer security relations with other regional states. Their pacifist constitution is a product of its experience in World War II as well as the continuing security umbrella the US has been providing it. Japan has entered into a strengthened strategic partnership with the Philippines aimed at boosting political, security and defense ties and cooperation between the two countries.

### **V. Other Regional Players**

Other extra-regional powers such as South Korea, Australia, Russia, and India as members of the East Asia Summit (EAS) are also crucial in contributing to the peace, stability and prosperity of the East Asian Region.

## **3. Global Uncertainties and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

### **I. Increased Global Economic Uncertainties**

While the world has so far averted a full-blown economic crisis, the present trends show that the potential for global economic recessions has increased significantly. The slowdown in major economies of the world such as the US, China and the European Union will have an impact on virtually every country in the world including the Philippines.

### **II. Global Security Issues and Welfare of OFWs**

- Conflicts abroad and other emerging global security threats pose a direct danger to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), who contribute significantly to the national economy, accounting for most of the country's net factor income from abroad (NFIA) through their remittances
- The Government must exert continuing effort to promote and protect the rights and welfare of our OFWs, particularly victims of illegal recruitment, human trafficking, ill-treatment and unfair labor practices, among others.

### III. Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

- Rapid technological advancements and greater access to scientific knowledge are changing the face of the world in unimagined ways. Scientific and technological breakthroughs are creating wealth and progress everywhere, but are also spawning new and increasingly dangerous triggers for global insecurity.
- Among the most serious of these threats is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), which has come to occupy center stage in international politics.
- WMDs are classified into three major types: nuclear weapons, chemical warfare agents, and biological warfare agents.
- Nine nations are currently in possession of such WMDs – Britain, China, France, India, Israel (assumed), North Korea (claimed), Pakistan, Russia, and the United States – and a number of states are believed to possess chemical and/or biological warfare agents.

### 4. Other Strategic Issues and Challenges

#### I. Rising Threat of Cybercrime

The latest report by PricewaterhouseCoopers's (PWC) Global Economic Crime Survey revealed that cybercrime is today's fastest rising economic crime. Expounding on the nature of cyber crime, Interpol said that more and more criminals are exploiting the speed, convenience and anonymity of the Internet to commit a wide range of criminal activities that know no borders, either physical or virtual, cause serious harm and pose very real threats to victims worldwide.

#### II. Climate Change

Scientific studies show that the Philippines is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. In its most recent assessment, the Inter-Governmental Panel for Climate Change stressed that the rising global temperature has already impacted on the climate threshold of the earth. For the Philippines, the findings predicted that we will experience extreme maximum and minimum temperatures, more frequent intense rains, and more disastrous tropical cyclones (e.g. Typhoon *Haiyan*) with average of 22 typhoons per year.

The possibility of El Niño weather episodes will also increase. According to a 2015 study funded by the US Agency for International Development, every single major city in the Philippines is expected to face some form of water shortage by 2025.

#### III. Institutional Concerns

Other urgent concerns include much-needed reforms in the security and judicial sectors with emphasis on the following: modernizing and professionalizing the armed services; strengthening the judicial system; strengthening legislative oversight on security agencies; and improving the national security and intelligence community.

### The 12-Point National Security Agenda

The Government shall endeavor to unify all efforts that will open the door for greater progress and enhance the well-being of Filipinos. Collective actions shall be promoted to pursue and advance the 12-point National Security Agenda summarized as follows:

#### 1. Human and Political Security

Effectively respond to the complexity of both old and new security threats to the safety, welfare and well-being of Filipinos. It is an important element to protect the core of human lives and institutions in ways that enhance peace, unity, freedom, democracy and people's dignity.

#### 2. Health Security

Enhance the quality of life of Filipinos by preventing and mitigating the effects of infectious diseases as well as interdicting illegal and hazardous agents (e.g. chemical, biological and radiological contrabands) including illegal drugs that destroy the future generations of Filipinos.

#### 3. Economic and Financial Security

Harness science and technology for global competitiveness, level the economic playing field, promote multi-resource economy that guarantees the interests of the next generation, develop infrastructure and tourism attractiveness, and enable our people to innovate and upgrade their capabilities to protect their livelihood and resources. Pursue the development of financial institutions which are essential mechanisms for productive enterprises.

#### 4. Food and Water Security

Promote food security in the country by addressing the causes of food shortage and inaccessibility to food supply (e.g. low production due to natural calamities and conversion of agricultural lands to subdivisions and

other commercial land uses); improving agricultural productivity to include livestock, poultry and fishery; and pursuing modern agricultural technology through corporate and cooperative arrangement. Develop additional water impounding and irrigation systems and safeguard access to quality water to preserve ecosystem, sustain livelihood, health and food nutrition, and achieve socio-economic development.

**5. Military and Border Security**

Achieve upgraded defense capability, to assume responsibility for security, protect the country from internal and external threats, and strengthen national sovereignty by modernizing the capabilities of our core security sectors

**6. Socio-Cultural Security**

Heighten consciousness and pride in the Filipino heritage and values.

**7. Environment and Disaster Security**

Guarantee the right to live in green and environment-friendly conditions, preserve and develop these conditions, and protect the eco-systems from damages brought about by the people's destructive practices on land, air and marine life. In addition, enhance our disaster preparedness through preventive and mitigating mechanisms from natural and/or human-induced emergencies that may impact on our environment and the safety of our citizenry.

**8. Energy Security**

Secure and protect energy supply throughout the country and pursue the sustainment of existing sources and the development of alternative sources of energy to support the demands of economic enterprises and households and contribute to the global efforts to address climate change.

**9. Maritime and Airspace Security**

Ensure safety of life and protection of trade and marine resources against piracy, poaching, illegal intrusion, terrorism, and human and drug trafficking at sea. In addition, ensure safe and secure airspace by improving airspace security measures and capabilities in space-based radar systems and satellites.

**10. International Security**

Maintain an independent foreign policy in the community of nations, and ensure a stable and secure international environment for the country and people to thrive as a nation, politically, economically, socially and ecologically.

**11. Information and Cyber Security**

Safeguard our classified action plans and programs, sensitive government intentions, and state secrets from espionage, cyber-attacks and other hostile actions to protect and preserve national security interests.

**12. Transportation and Port Security**

Strengthen the integration and modernization of multi-modal transport systems (i.e. land, sea and air), and thereby securing the mobility of people, goods, services and commerce.

**REFERENCE:**

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