

THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

Definition: Our national security is a state or condition where our most cherished values and beliefs, our democratic way of life, our institutions of governance and our unity, welfare and well-being as a nation and people are permanently protected and continuously enhanced.

Fundamental Elements

There are seven fundamental elements that lie at the core of, and therefore further amplify our definition of national security. At the same time, they constitute the most important challenges we face as a nation and people.

1. Socio-Political Stability
2. Territorial Integrity
3. Economic Solidarity and Strength
4. Ecological Balance
5. Cultural Cohesiveness
6. Moral-Spiritual Consensus
7. External Peace

Description of Fundamental Elements

1. The first and foremost element is **socio-political stability**. We must achieve peace and harmony among all Filipinos, regardless of creed, ethnic origin or social station. The government and the people must engage in nation-building under the rule of law, Constitutional democracy and the full respect for human rights.

2. The second is **territorial integrity**. We must ensure the permanent inviolability of our national territory and its effective control by the Government and the State. This includes the preservation of our country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and its protection from illegal incursions and resource exploitation.

3. The third is **economic solidarity and strength**. We must vigorously pursue a free-market economy through responsible entrepreneurship based on social conscience, respect for the dignity of labor and concern for the public interest. We must perpetuate an economic regime where the people take command of their own lives, their livelihood and their economic destiny.

4. The fourth is **ecological balance**. National survival rests upon the effective conservation of our natural environment in the face of industrial and agricultural expansion and population growth. We must promote sustainable development side by side with social justice.

5. The fifth is **cultural cohesiveness**. Our lives as a people must be ruled by a common set of values and beliefs grounded on high moral and ethical standards, drawn from our heritage and embodying a Filipino standard, drawn from our heritage and embodying a Filipino identity transcending religious, ethnic and linguistic differences.

6. The sixth is **moral-spiritual consensus**. We must be propelled by a national vision inspired, and manifested in our words and deeds, by patriotism, national pride and the advancement of national goals and objectives.

7. The seventh is **external peace**. We must pursue constructive and cordial relations with all nations and peoples, even as our nation itself must chart an independent course, free from external control, interference or threat of aggression.

INTERNAL THREAT

Our national security environment is infused with four important dimensions. **Internal threats to our national security** make up the *first dimension*.

1. The main internal threat arises from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) which, in open rebellion against the government, has the avowed objective of establishing an independent Islamic state in southern Philippines. While the government has engaged the MILF in constructive peace negotiations, the armed activities of the group continue to be a source of serious concern, particularly the build-up of its defensive and offensive capabilities. Hopefully, the peace negotiations would succeed in persuading the MILF and allied groups to join the autonomy within the framework of the Republic. Hand in hand with this security problem is the threat from the **Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)**, a small band of highly mobile terrorists with suspected links to international networks.

2. The **Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/Naitonal Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF)** continue to pose a serious threat to national security, although presently weakened in comparison with their peak strength in the 1985-87 period. During the past two years, there has been an incipient increase of underground activities in the urban areas and a slight upward trend in isolated terrorist acts in the countryside.

3. **Organized crime** is a national security concern. The challenge of illegal drugs, in particular, has grown into amajor threat to the national community. Of the 42,979 barangays nationwide, about 12 per cent are affected in varying degrees. The anti-drug campaign is a major cornerstone of the government's law and order drive, involving the police, the Local Government Units and the private sector, and focusing on a tripartite strategy of reducing drug supply and demand as well domestic and international cooperation. Drug use among the youth has risen alarmingly over the past three years. The national crime rate is also exacerbated by the drug trade, which involves a number of crime syndicates.

4. **Grave incidence of poverty** is also a serious threat to national security, especially to the extent that it breeds and abets rebellion, crime and dissidence. Poverty incidence affects about one-third of Filipino families nationwide. Consequently, the distribution of wealth has been skewed in favor of a wealthy minority.

5. **Economic sobatage** undermines the market economy, the financial system and the nation's resources. Under this category are underground activities such as counterfeiting, money laundering, large-scale smuggling, inter-oceanic poaching and commercial dumping. This is being met through vigilant economic intelligence and the strict enforcement of maritime and trade laws.

6. **Graft and corruption** has become another threat to our national security by virtue of the huge scale by which it saps public resources, undermines the morale of the civil service and affects the delivery of quality basic services. It has also become a disincentive to investment. The Estrada administration has waged a vigorous campaign against graft at all levels in line with the dictum that every peso stolen from the public coffers is a peso withheld from the upliftment of the poor.

7. **Severe calamities** cause serious food shortages, abet hoarding and profiteering and cause hunger, disease and deprivation. Over the past ten years, the disaster toll stands at more than 13,000 lives lost and P179 Billion worth of property destroyed. The National Disaster Coordinating Center (NDCC) ensures the focused, coordinated and systematic application of government and private manpower and resources to the tasks of disaster mitigation, and community rehabilitation and reconstruction.

8. **Persistent environment degradation** poses a long-term security threat. The attrition of forests and watersheds, air-land-water pollution and the proliferation of toxic substances are a cause of sickness, death and the diminution of national productivity and well-being. Environmental protection has assumed a high priority in defense and law enforcement concerns and is an institutional area of emphasis in the educational system.

EXTERNAL THREAT

The **growing uncertainties that lie in the regional and global milieu** make up the *second dimension* of our national security environment, even as threat of **external aggression** against our country remains in the remote horizon.

1. The **multilateral dispute over the Spratlys Islands** is a source of intermittent tensions, owing to the build up of structures, believed to be military-oriented, by some claimant countries in the area. This is a clear encroachment into the Philippine EEZ which is being met through a comprehensive package of diplomatic measures.

2. The **smuggling of firearms and contraband, illegal migration and the occasional movement of foreign terrorists through the porous borders of our southwestern frontier** have elicited transnational concern. Philippine law enforcement agencies work closely with international police organizations, bilaterally and multilaterally, to check these activities.

3. The **lingering effects of the currency crisis affecting the countries within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** are a cause of regional anxieties, which tend to aggravate political instabilities and socio-economic dislocations involving the poorest peoples.

4. The **serious economic disparity between rich and poor nations** keeps the world in a state of instability and virtually on the brink of war in many places. Local or regional shortages of fresh water, arable land, food, fisheries, and energy are already causing tensions.

5. **Ethnic, religious and cultural conflict** pervades many regions and nations, including our own. It is constantly exacerbated by mass poverty, limited access to resources, denial of human rights, lack of national integration and international issues.

6. The **proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)** is a threat to global security. Nuclear materials and technologies are more accessible now than at any other time in history. The relative ease of production of both chemical and biological weapons has made these attractive to terrorists.

7. **Transnational organized crime** has proliferated in the era of globalization. The International Monetary Fund estimates that global drug trafficking now accounts for two percent of the world economy, excluding illicit capital flight and money-laundering activity. There are links among drug trafficking, terrorism, smuggling of illegal aliens, massive financial and bank fraud, arms smuggling and political corruption.

8. **Natural disasters and environmental issues** will continue to pervade the global security agenda. Mankind's global activities – particularly population growth, resource consumption, pollution, urbanization, industrialization, desertification and deforestation – will increasingly impact on climate and weather patterns, strain fragile ecosystems, and put more pressure on health and social support systems.

9. **Cybernetic crime** is a growing global threat, as experienced with computer viruses such as *Melissa* and *Chernobyl*, which have attacked isolated or networked information systems through the internet or through software carriers and devices. Many vital decision-making processes of our Government are now electronically-based and therefore vulnerable to this threat.