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National Security Policy (2017-2022): For the Betterment of the Filipinos

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Abstract

The National Security Policy of a nation has become an integral part of the policies and frameworks that are generally made for a state or a country to understand, enlist, and integrate their agendas and points of focus in terms of domestic as well as foreign factors/matters. It is essential to understand the need, the organization, and the execution of a National Security Policy first before its analysis. By dissecting the National Security Policy formed to cover the years 2017-2022 and meant to protect the state and well-being of the Filipino people, we shall attempt to not only understand the policy of the Philippines but also understand the fundamental need and basis of a National Security Policy. Additionally, we shall also cover the National Security Policy's (2017-2022) ambit the challenges mentioned in the policy, the goals set to be accomplished in terms of the challenges mentioned. Finally, this paper analyses the special 12 point agenda that the government of Philippines has set and elaborates the efforts needed to complete the process of attaining these agendas and turning it into action, followed by a simple conclusion. Every step or stage would reflect the points that are mentioned in the policy, and it is to assert that the challenges, goals, etc. are both, internal as well as external in nature to the state of Philippines.

Introduction

As briefly mentioned earlier, the basic nature of the National Security is to act as a set of guidelines or to provide a framework in order to establish grounds and enunciate the issues or problems for the people of the concerned nation and the state. The policy bears in mind both, internal as well as external challenges (Stocker 2005). , The framework of the NSP is crucial as it holds challenges not always defined from the perspective of being an obstacle but also from the point of view overcoming these challenges as an opportunity for growth. The NSP covers a wide array of topics, concerning not only the state but the people as well, about which we shall learn and investigate more in the sections ahead. However, it is claimed to be ranked well above any other security document, mainly for the reason that an NSP is specific and inclusive in nature. It is not a compulsion for states to have such a policy and many simply choose not to make it publicly available (Stocker 2005).

Talking a little about what the head of the state had to say about the National Security Policy of 2017-2022 in a few words will sum up our introduction. It is integral to understand, mention and hear the words of the head of the state so that the collective ideology of the leader and the governing head is established and clear before we dissect the intrinsic details. We all know that the policy covers more points, but the message from the president mentioned some aspects on which his words were narrowed down and showed how multiple national and international factors are correlated. Factors such as economic prosperity and its dependence on national security, the mention of the ASEAN economic community being a risk as well as presenting opportunities oh how national security needs to be viewed in the context of a large global community and the array of a solo foreign policy which has lesser grounds for compromise (Philippines 2017). With this, the president of the Philippines Rodrigo Roa Duterte opened the National Security Policy to be received by the people and the state and demanded eager and positive contributions in achieving the goals and understanding the challenges (Philippines 2017).

National Security Challenges

National Security comprises various issues and challenges which are both, internal and external in nature that actually pose a threat or a concern to the Philippine society, we shall know about the nature of these in brief. First are the Internal issues, followed by the external issues:

- **The issue of Law and Order and Administration of justice –** As mentioned in the policy, the , rising crime rate and the declining crime-solving rate down have discouraged business as well as harmony. Illegal drugs and their procurement show a heavy correlation when it comes to crime, and violent crimes as well (Philippines 2017).
- **Internal Arms Conflict –** The communist rebellion, armed militia NPA have increased violence across the states along with the Muslim separatist struggle by armed groups as well. The increase in hostility due to the failure of promises to uplift the marginalised has given rise to poverty, etc. which have become fundamental root causes for the regional rise of conflicts (Philippines 2017).
- **Terrorism and Transnational Crimes –** The threat from national and international terrorism, the Abu Sayyaf Group is a threat disrupting both social and economic order.

They initially took inspiration from Al Qaeda in their primitive years then pledged towards the Islamic State. Along with crimes like poaching, trafficking, human trafficking, etc. they pose a more transnational threat to the Philippines (Philippines 2017).

- **Economic and Social Threats** – Poverty at a consistently high rate, 21.6% in 2015 (Philippines 2017), low-income generation, the vast difference between the rich and the poor, dwindling employment, and growing underemployment or unemployment 2.8 M (Philippines 2017). An increase in diseases like AIDS, and HIV and an increase as well, unbalanced internal migrations result in further issues (Philippines 2017).

- **Overlapping Territorial Claims and Maritime Domain Issues** – Development and maintaining boundaries at sea, from pirates, traffickers, illegal fishing exercises, etc. Protection of islands of southern Philippines, the South China Sea dispute involving the 9-dash line, dispute of the West Philippine Sea, and other issues in the same space (Philippines 2017).

- **Global and Regional Geopolitical Issues** – The relations with the United States regarding the mutual defence treaty, China and the rise of China as a serious regional and global power and its ASEAN influence, the dispute regarding the WSP. Japan poses challenges in the shape of Senkaku Island and the security concerns regarding that, along with that, other countries who are the members of the EAS also pose a recognizable threat to peace, instability, and prosperity when it comes to the region (Philippines 2017).

Other issues that I would briefly touch upon would be Weapons of Mass Destruction which concern their maintenance by other states of the world and has the potential threat to cause mass-scale destruction (Philippines 2017). Then discussed is the rising threat that is faced in the sphere of cybercrime, which houses the challenges of high speed, convenience, and coveted ways of causing crime and harm (Philippines 2017). Finally, climate change which in its primitive is thought of in the context of extreme temperatures and the effects of climate change that are there when it comes to socio-economic conditions that are hampered by the extreme climate crisis, pushing people into poverty, not meeting the basic needs, etc. causing internal violence as well (Philippines 2017).

Goals Set

So, this another aspect of the policy which covers how to tackle the challenges that were set in the previous section, rather the target that is set pertaining to each sector of issues present, we shall cover some in brief:

- **Giving more teeth to public safety, law and order, and execution of justice –** Safeguarding the interests of people, property, and life and the practice of how people live. To initiate programs that tackle the menace of drugs, crime, corruption, terrorism, etc. along with this to strengthen the system of criminal justice, increase the involvement of citizen representation in governance, policies, etc. (Philippines 2017).

- **To Sustain and improve socio-political stability –** Focus within this section is on promoting the peace process to dismantle the internal armed conflicts, promote internal development of basic needs, give more power to national institutions, increase transparency and policies to win the trust of the people (Philippines 2017).

- **Solidarity-based and sustainable economic progress –** Freedom from hunger, poverty, etc. sustainable growth through inclusivity, education, infrastructure, etc. (Philippines 2017).

- **Securing the Territorial boundaries –** Securing boundaries and being free of external influence, for that, the requirement to develop defence tools, cooperation between the three armed arrangements of land, air, and water, then safeguarding the interest of SCS and WPS to wave off claims of other states, develop more regional confidence, protective passes and blocks in the sea for smoother access and control (Philippines 2017).

Other points that are covered under the goals are protecting and preserving ecological balance and securing their correlation with regards to poverty, administration, and how to cater to rapid growth, population, etc. (Philippines 2017). Cultural togetherness, which mentions promotion, respect, inclusivity, safety measures, and for the point of culture, enhance the local or indigenous cultural practice and way of living this correlates to the next goal of promotion of moral consensus, which involves the interfaith promotion of talks and exchange, awareness towards a collective sense of nationalism and duty towards the nation of Philippines (Philippines 2017). And, lastly about international peace, emphasizes the goals in this one too of contributing largely to the ideas of

international cooperation, partnerships, alliances, dialogues, etc. including defence, cultural, social, and economic agendas too (Philippines 2017).

The 12-point National Security Agenda and How to go about achieving the set goals

To ensure that the set goals are met and the challenges that were enlisted don't get squandered off in the agendas, an affirmative 12 point agenda for national security was made and followed in order to simplify the broader goals as well as specify the headers that would be catered, the 12 points are as follows (Philippines 2017) :

1. Human and Political Security
2. Health Security
3. Economic and Financial Security
4. Food and Water Security
5. Military and Border Security
6. Socio-Cultural Security
7. Environment and Disaster Security
8. Energy Security
9. Maritime and Airspace Security
10. International Security
11. Informal and Cyber Security
12. Transportation and Port Security

The 12 pointers illustrated the need and path for what exactly needs to be enhanced, safeguarded, channelized, and bolstered under them for the interest of national security and how equally the 12 needed to be attended for national interest (Philippines 2017). Lastly from the policy, the range for the development of Human Capital in terms of teachers, doctors, vocational jobs, etc. even in defence and the mention of institutions like NDCP and PPSC who provide human capital for the service in the sector (Philippines 2017). The legal framework

is another point, in the shape of the national security act which would give more legal hands to the National Security Policy and its execution along with the National Security Strategy as well (Philippines 2017). Budget and spending, in the Philippines, is one of the lowest spenders when it comes to defence and law which needs to be further injected with increased spending (Philippines 2017). And lastly the integration of public-private partnerships for projects that require heavy investment from the state as well as the private sector into a wide array of industries (Philippines 2017).

Towards Conclusion and author's take on the policy

As mentioned at the end of the policy, the council recommends a decent solution to oversee the challenges of national security and how the goals are set, the framework set to solve these challenges, and the aim to enact the framework over a lot of sectors. A separate organization was formed called the Organization for National Security, which would review as well as keep checks on the work and development that goes on around the National Security Policy (Philippines 2017). I see the National Security policy as a pretty integral section or a step towards attaining proper control and development of the state, Philippines in the years prior to 2017 saw major events of national and international security in the shape of communist armed conflicts, and the Davao market blast which rocked the country to its core. The rising poverty and the rise in the number of people in the unorganized sector, as well as minimal job protection, is a major concern for Philippines in recent years. The lack of movement from the rural to the urban not only in migration but in terms of education and contributing population that would be educated and secure job is a wide issue. Another issue is the lack of job generation and lack of jobs for the youth that sit idle and vulnerable (Rutkowski 2015). A concerning factor is the internal terrorism which finds its root causes in the socio-economic conditions of the country again. Additionally, the involvement of local communities to win their trust, make them more inclusive and to understand the friction lines that have emerged and are causing rising cases of internal terrorism and violence (De Leon 2018). Solving international issues at the earliest must be a priority. The rise of China is a warning to the Philippines that the matters of domestic terrorism and instability stand bound to increase which would affect their disputes abroad as well in the fields of SCS & WPS. Hence active and prompt

action through international cooperation and dialogue is observed and needs to be catered on a priority along with the others.

Attention drawn to specific points in the conclusion is a mere attempt to highlight what are the narrowed down root causes, which when dissected in detail have been dealt with in the policy. But underlying poor socio-economic conditions, friction lines, weak administration, and governance rides high and seeing the global economic conditions in the current times as well as the shift in global power order also might gravely affect the NSP's last year in action.

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