

## Policy of the Minister of Defence

### Introduction

The Ministry of Defence attaches the greatest importance to uphold the key institutions of the country by following the Royal Command of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great for its administration in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, as well as to preserve the democratic regime of government with the King as the Head of State. Additionally, the rule of law, the Government Policy and the participation of people are also required to strengthen unity and harmony in Thai society, leading to cooperation on economic, social and political development and governance with progress, security, prosperity and sustainability for the benefit of all the Thai people.

### 1. General Policy

Assign all departments under the Ministry of Defence, organisations and state enterprises under the supervision of the Ministry of Defence to operate in accordance with the general policy, which is extracted from the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, the State Administration Act, B.E. 2534 (1991), the Reorganisation of Ministry, Sub-Ministry and Department Act, B.E. 2545 (2002), the Administration of the Ministry of Defence Act, B.E. 2551 (2008) and other relevant laws, as well as the National Strategy, the Government Policy, the National Security Policy and Plan as well as the National Economic and Social Development Plan, in order to achieve tangible outcome, comprised of 1) Strengthening the country's security and safety 2) Developing the administrative system of the Ministry of Defence and reforming the Armed Forces and 3) Supporting the state administration of the government as follows:

#### 1.1 Strengthening the Country's Security and Safety

1.1.1 Protect and uphold the institution of kingship as the Head of State and the Supreme Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces with the greatest honour in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. This includes cooperating with public sectors and other relevant divisions with utmost effort to unify the institution at the centre of the people's hearts and minds, continuing to be the most important key institution of the country.

1.1.2 Support the mobilisation of the National Strategy to achieve the targets and indicators as stated in the Master Plan under the National Strategy, the National Policy and Plan on Security and the National Economic and Social Development Plan, as well as rules

prescribed by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council and the National Security Council. In this regard, all projects conducted by the department need to be cost-effective in accordance with the capability development of the Ministry of Defence and in connection with the value chain target of Thailand.

1.1.3 Monitor and analyse the on-going security situation in the world, ASEAN, Mekong Sub-Region, border areas and domestic conflicts in neighboring countries that may affect the security of the country and ASEAN. In addition, it is necessary to coordinate closely with concerned security agencies to obtain guidance and position at the government level in order to prescribe appropriate approaches for the Armed Forces in adherence to balance of international relations, defence cooperation, ASEAN Centrality and benefits of the country and people.

1.1.4 Maintain relations and enhance security and military cooperation with ASEAN Member States, allied countries and international organisations. These are done on the basis of mutual trust, mutual benefit and mutual respect while enhancing Thailand's leading role in the region. This includes participation in the United Nation Peacekeeping Operations, provision of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as development of defence industry and technology to strengthen Thailand's leading role at the international level.

1.1.5 Enhance the defence capabilities and readiness on protecting independence, sovereignty, integrity and national interests during peace time. These must be implemented in accordance with security environment and threats, as well as future military technology. In this regard, the development of national defence plan is required to adhere to the principle that the use of force is for self-defence at different levels of situation, the doctrine of interoperability, the participation of personnel, the mobilisation of force and resources for national defence, as well as the integrated cooperation with relevant government agencies and the support of public sector under the principle of law and humanity.

1.1.6 Develop the reserves personnel affairs and people's force to support security, national defence and development, disaster relief and assisting people during peace time. The training system for students at the Reserves Training Centre needs to be improved with objectives to develop discipline, to foster morality, to cultivate patriotism and to nurture voluntary spirit, which will result in promotion of good citizens with discipline.

1.1.7 Maintain and promote continued support for veterans, both on and off duty, their families and retired personnel with access to welfare and benefits; consequently, they will be able to live their lives with honour and dignity. This needs to be managed in accordance with the current and future budget status (in estimation). Furthermore, activities to

commemorate veterans and their bravery should be prioritised for wide acknowledgement of general public and society. This is aimed to honour veterans and promote morale support for the personnel who are currently on missions to protect the country or in dangerous filed operations.

## **1.2 Developing the administrative system of the Ministry of Defence and reforming the Armed Forces**

1.2.1 Revise the appropriateness of organisational structure and the number of personnel in the Ministry of Defence at present, including progress assessment in reducing the number of personnel in accordance with the Personnel Management Reform Plan of the Ministry of Defence, which has targeted on reducing the total number of personnel by 5 percent, starting from B.E 2563 (2020) - B.E. 2570 (2027), as well as reducing the number of senior experts, experts, operating officers and officers by 50 percent, starting from B.E. 2551 (2008) - B.E. 2571 (2028).

1.2.2 Expedite the arrangement of the overall civilian defence employee positions, focusing on the units that have the organisational structure adhering to the Table of Distributions (TD), where the units require specific specialties or expertise and be inclusive in all kind of tasks, starting from the fiscal year B.E. 2567 (2024). This includes the arrangement of Civilian Defence Employee Enrollment Plan, which clearly specifies the timeframe for implementation, as well as create the correct knowledge and understanding of personnel and the public concerning the management of civil defence employees.

1.2.3 Increase communication channels for receiving complaint from the personnel and the general public in order to promptly resolve problems. In addition, these will be used for listening to opinions from civil sector so that the acquired information could be beneficial for improving operational efficiency of the Ministry of Defence, as well as enhancing the performance in serving the public.

1.2.4 Develop administrative mechanism of the Ministry of Defence by modernising, increasing efficiency, and reducing redundancy of agencies to be in line with social and security context in the future. This is done by applying new management mechanism and advanced technologies in order to increase the operational efficiency and enhance the performance in serving the public.

1.2.5 Develop education and training systems of the Armed Forces at all levels in order to enhance leadership and effectively encounter challenging circumstances and threats, which effect the security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with particular focus on enhancing the capability

of personnel, as well as military experts as the Think Tank in order to support the operation of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. This includes civilian training and education for personnel in order to promote lifelong learning, which will improve the quality of life of the personnel and their families in the long term.

1.2.6 Assign agencies or working groups by integrating cooperation in order to conduct critical analysis report, regarding problems and challenges of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence and the government, which they are facing and will possibly encounter in the future such as restructuring of the Armed Forces to become modern and at the appropriate size, reduction of the number of personnel, decrease of defence budget. The report includes recommendation for solving the problems, which will be applied as the information for the consideration of the Commanders of the Ministry of Defence and for nurturing understanding among the people.

1.2.7 Collect and establish database system integrating collection of research, documents and academic articles, which are related to the Armed Forces, and also defence and security from domestic and international resources. These are beneficial for not only self-development of the personnel but also conducting studies of staff officers, as well as managing projects or operations of the Ministry of Defence, which require appropriate supporting academic principles.

1.2.8 Expedite the transformation to digital administration and personnel system of the Ministry of Defence to digitalisation to facilitate the internal operations, coordination with other government agencies, and accommodate public service while maintaining cyber security protection measure, personal data protection as well as e-governance.

1.2.9 Raise awareness and educate the personnel on the importance of space technology and threats that can impact the national security and interest in order to lay the foundation for the Ministry of Defence future developments of space operations and capabilities.

1.2.10 Focus on budget expenditure to achieve maximum benefit, projecting good governance, transparency, and cost worthiness, that are efficient and effective in strict conjunction to the related laws, regulations, procedures, and all other measures.

1.2.11 Develop the overall public relations system of the Ministry of Defence so that it is modern and appropriate to serve as mechanism to promote cooperation among the personnel, their families, and the general public in the field of national defence. Simultaneously, the system must also help strengthen cooperation with allied nations, to provide assistance to the people and to support the government in resolving important

national problems. Furthermore, the system must support the close coordination and cooperation between the concerned government agencies in countering fake news that may affect the government, the Armed Forces, and the livelihood of the people.

1.2.12 Develop the Defence Industries for the defence of the country so that it truly fulfills the requirements of the Armed Forces and, at the same time, support the driving of the country's economy. This can be achieved by improving the collaborative relations between organizations, agencies, and the existing committees of the Ministry of Defence with the main objective of producing and equipping the Armed Forces with its own equipment to support the compensation policy on importation of defence equipment (Defence Offset).

### **1.3 Supporting the state administration of the government**

1.3.1 Support the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC) and other security agencies established under the relevant laws in resolving important national problems and the alleviating of the people's hardship, such as the unrest in southern border provinces, maritime security, drugs, natural disasters and environment.

1.3.2 Integrate with other government authorities or relevant national agencies to promote the Area-Based Security and to provide a prompt assistance to the people. It is imperative that all departments of the Ministry of Defence to develop the potentials and capabilities of their personnel, tools and equipment to international standards in order to provide effective support for disaster mitigation operations to assist the people. The Ministry of Defence strengthens cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief with allied countries and international organisations both within the ASEAN and United Nations frameworks

1.3.3 Promote and support the economy drive of the country by using the potentials and resources of the Ministry of Defence to help develop new economic areas in the region, such as the development of the U-Tapao Airport area to become the Eastern Aviation Hub and parking areas for small private aircraft. To assist in the development of special border economic development zones and other special economic development zones to support the national strategy on strengthening the country's competitiveness.

## **2. Specific Policy**

All departments under the Ministry of Defence are required to expedite the implementation of the Government Policy delivered to the National Assembly and initiatives of the Prime Minister which aimed to develop the modern and smart Armed Forces to serve

as the state's main security mechanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to address threats in all forms and to be reliable for the people at every opportunity. The specific policy has been identified to cover 8 aspects as follows:

2.1 Amend conscription to a voluntary military service system alongside a compulsory one in order to develop a complete voluntary system in the future. Also, a reduction in military conscription quotas should be made. However, the transition should not affect the capabilities of the Armed Forces in protecting the nation at different levels of situation, supporting national security development and assisting the people. Measures to create incentive to voluntary enlistment need to be considered and introduced. In addition, training system should be modernized in accordance with current context. Public relations and announcement also need to be developed by providing accurate information related to duties, importance and benefits of conscripts.

2.2 Restructure the Armed Forces, the number of personnel and armaments to be compact, active, flexible, modern and complete in addressing threats which affect the security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and becoming a critical tool for protecting and upholding the institution of Kingship, independence, sovereignty and national interests, as well as strengthening security and safety of the people countrywide. This includes providing support for national security development and assisting the people efficiently in time of disaster.

2.3 Reorganise the departments under the Ministry of Defence of which missions are to support operations of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC) and other national security agencies established under relevant laws and regulations to reach their compact and appropriate size and number of personnel. This includes performing roles in support of developing national security, resolving the country's major problems, assisting the people and conducting operations in accordance with the Government Policy with fullest potential.

2.4 Improve the training curriculum and teaching method for students at the Reserves Training Centre to be more creative and modernized according to current context, focusing on promotion of good citizens for the nation with discipline, voluntary spirit and basic military skills beneficial for everyday use. This includes placing great importance to recruiting personnel with knowledge, ability and positive attitude to be training instructors for students at the Reserves Training Centre. Training facilities at the Reserves Training Camps should also be refurbished to ensure good hygiene and suitability for students' lifestyle in existing circumstance.

2.5 Promote readiness of armaments by considering maintenance and modernisation as priorities. In terms of acquisition of new defence equipment, advancement should be taken into account in order to be able to address future threat patterns. The procurement process needs to be conducted on the basis of transparency, verifiability and maximum benefit in accordance with the Public Procurement and Supplies Administration Act, B.E. 2560 (2017), the Regulation of the Ministry of Finance on Public Procurement and Supplies Administration B.E. 2560 (2017), as well as the Order and Rule of the Ministry of Defence on Procurement and Supplies Administration. Also, domestic sources, manufacturers using in-country components or defence acquisition in exchange of agricultural products should be taken into consideration. In this regard, allocation of large procurement budget requires clear rationale and necessity.

2.6 Utilise military areas such as Ratchaphatsadu land and facilities which are no longer in use for military purpose and cooperate with related agencies to enhance the well-being of the people, to create job opportunities, to increase economic growth and to fortify the country, for instance, promoting agricultural development, improving infrastructure and utilities, enhancing the ecosystem, and facilitating educational uses to generate income.

2.7 Manage military welfare assets, both internal and commercial, on the transparent and verifiable basis in accordance with the Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on Welfare Provision within Government Agencies B.E. 2547 (2004) and the Announcement of the Welfare Commission for Government Officers on Rules, Procedures and Conditions of Welfare Provision for Commercial Purpose, dated 8 July 2005. Generated income needs to be prioritised for the well-being of low-ranking personnel and their families in order to promote morale support. In addition, the capacity of schools under the patronage of the Armed Forces needs to be standardised and modernised to effectively support children of the personnel and general public.

2.8 Improve accommodation within the units for low-ranking personnel by promoting conditions that enhance safety, cleanliness, hygiene and suitability. Facilities should be developed in accordance with budget allocation, for instance, parking areas, sports facilities, playgrounds, waste management systems and places to sell low-priced food and consumer products in order to promote the quality of life, honour and dignity of the personnel and the Armed Forces as a whole.