



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

NATIONAL RESILIENCE AND THE ROLE OF DEFENCE

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Strategic Partner

KEARNEY

FOREWORD FROM H.E. MOHAMMED AL BOWARDI, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AFFAIRS



As we conduct the fifth round of the Ministry of Defence's annual Leadership Conference, the entire world is confronting a real threat to humanity: a threat that goes beyond the consequences of conventional wars and battles. It is the spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), which has become a common enemy for mankind.

The spread of pandemics was not among the scenarios or topics we discussed in previous conferences. In practice, we have learned that their consequences are very serious, posing real threats to human life, as well as disrupting various vital functions in nations. Therefore, joint international efforts are required to confront and contain this common danger.

The challenge faced by the nations of the world in the past eight months as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is complex in its effects and repercussions. The crisis has called upon us to reflect deeply on ways to fight the pandemic and adapt to the challenging conditions it has imposed, to search for ways to restore a suitable national life with the least detriment; and, most importantly, to prepare for future challenges that could be more complex in nature than the current one.

Our real goal should be preparing nations to face such challenges in the future and remain highly resilient. We must protect our countries' existence and find ways to recover from such crises rapidly. Here, I wish to thank the working team that prepared this paper. It highlights the nature of the current crisis and the complexities it has produced. It also invites us to learn the lessons from this crisis and think ahead to face future, similar but more complex crises. I look forward to hearing your contributions to this important discussion in the Ministry's conference in November.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National well-being is no longer a matter of protection from physical attack. With the repercussions of COVID-19 still reverberating, what we have been shown—once again—is that threats come in all shapes and sizes, are difficult to predict and cause disruption that goes far beyond their immediate scope. And the landscape is changing fast. Contemporary threats now occupy a vast space, ranging from pandemics to economic risk, terrorism, extreme weather events, cyberattack and beyond. Added to which, their impact is often compounded by the rampant spread of misinformation.

To face this new environment, in which there is 'no normal', nations must focus on becoming capable of adapting to sands that are constantly shifting. This is crucial but difficult to deliver, and calls for a whole-of-nation effort involving government, the private sector, civil society, academia and international allies. It also means ensuring that the institutions and individuals that make up society are themselves able to develop a new level of resilience.

In this paper, we examine these trends and present the case for a new approach to crisis management that, rather than focusing on recovery and returning to the status quo, is about building the resilience nations so desperately need. We also offer a perspective on the valuable role that defence entities play during times of crisis and question whether there is a case for them to occupy a different position in modern emergency response.

1. A GREAT RECKONING

It's almost impossible to discuss any aspect of life today without referring to COVID-19. The pandemic has disrupted and reshaped society in countless ways, including healthcare systems, supply chains, the way business is done, what work means, and even how we build and maintain relationships. COVID-19 was a full-voltage shock to the system that challenged many ingrained assumptions and patterns of behaviour and served as a stark admonition that **'normal' is a thing of the past.**

Although it served to drive the point home, in truth COVID-19 has merely shone a spotlight on the intricacies of the current operating environment and its repercussions when crisis comes calling. It has also highlighted a lack of forewarning and preparedness, and a lack of acceptance and recognition of this new crisis in some parts of the world.

Modern threats don't discriminate or stay within neatly defined boundaries or national borders. They affect anyone and anything in their path, and many of them are 'black swans', which makes early identification mechanisms all the more important.

“
Black swans are low-probability, high-impact events that are extremely difficult to predict
”

2. A NEW THREAT LANDSCAPE

As recent history has shown, safeguarding national welfare is only becoming more complex. **Today's crises come in many forms, and they have transformative and lasting consequences far beyond their immediate scope.**

For example, the 9/11 attacks permanently altered the way we travel, brought terrorism to the world stage and impacted global geopolitics in ways that are still being felt two decades on; mass displacements and irregular migration will have lasting economic, medical and social repercussions for host nations for years to come; and the fallout from climate change will extend to a higher likelihood of violent conflict in the future, as limited resources come under increasing pressure.

COVID-19 is just the most recent example. The pandemic quickly went from threatening people's physical safety and well-being to jeopardizing jobs, production, the availability of food and other essential items, consumer confidence, trade flows, economic stability, education, and mental health. In short, it threw every cornerstone of present-day life into disarray. **In today's interconnected world, this sort of ripple effect may well become an unwelcome impact when disruption comes calling.**

Adding to an already tangled web, today's 'information age' not only enables individuals, organizations and states to access and share vast amounts of data, it allows information to be manipulated and misused to influence human behaviour, aggravate grievances and create discord. This makes it more difficult to know what to believe and whom to trust, and has driven sophisticated weapons and lethal capabilities into the hands of non-state groups and individuals, further complicating nations' efforts to protect their citizens.

In this environment, where very little is predictable for any length of time and issues routinely spill across many interdependent categories, the idea of being able to rely on periods of stability to recover and rebuild is now firmly off the table. **This requires different thinking. In effect there is no clear 'winning' against disruptive events, rather 'adapting' to constant change.**

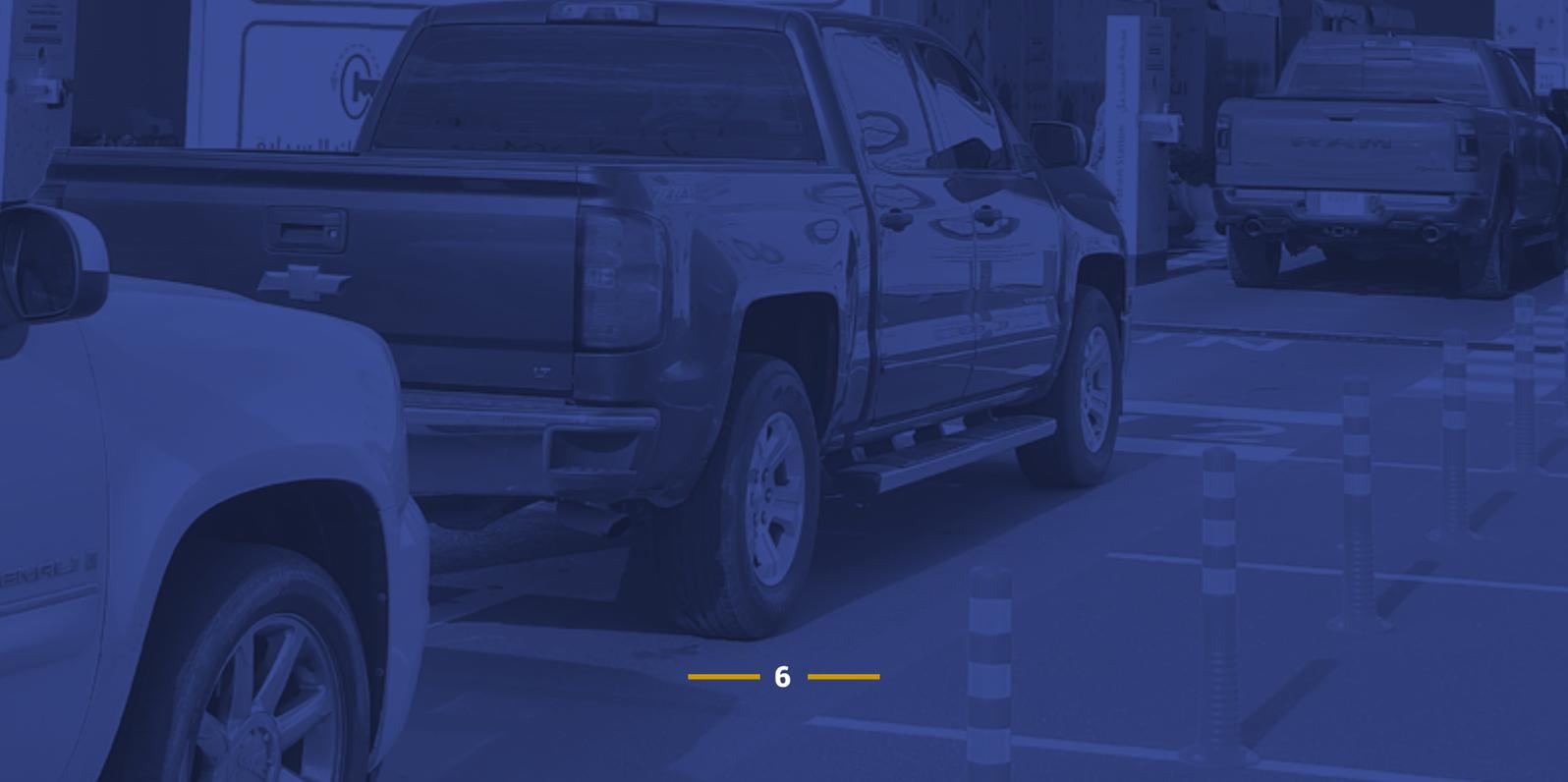


THE QUESTION THAT REMAINS IS: **AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, HOW CAN NATIONS (AND THE WORLD AT LARGE) DEVELOP THE CAPABILITY TO PROTECT THEIR CITIZENS AGAINST FUTURE THREATS?**

to Armed Forces
Screening Center
Al Bataeh

مرحباً بكم في مركز
المسح الطبي بالقوات المسلحة
البطائح

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|  <p>ابق داخل السيارة وانتظر التعليمات Remain seated in your car and await instruction</p> |  <p>ممنوع التدخين No smoking</p> |
|  <p>انزل نافذة السيارة Roll down the car window</p> |  <p>ابق في مسارك Stay in lane</p> |



3. A NEW APPROACH TO NATIONAL RESILIENCE

With countries' protective safety nets and infrastructures now under heavier assault than ever before, government, civil society, the private and education sectors, and international allies must come together in a **new approach that prepares for and deals with threats in a comprehensive way**. We propose **four pillars of national resilience** that appropriately reflect the complexity and interconnectedness of contemporary threats .

PILLARS OF NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1 TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY</p> <p>Which domains are involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military defence preparedness • National command and control • International cooperation <p>What is it?</p> <p>Focuses on national defence planning that consolidates military and civil efforts; the decision-making structure and relevant authorities to be used in times of emergency and crisis; and proactive planning to ensure effective international relations.</p> | <p>2 PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTECTION</p> <p>Which domains are involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement • Civil defence • Food and water security • Medical services <p>What is it?</p> <p>Encompasses the maintenance of law and order through border protection, internal security and the continued operation of the criminal justice system; the provision of essential civil emergency services and a robust national warning and civil defence system; assuring the continued supply of food and water, production, distribution and storage systems; and providing essential medical services and supplies.</p> | <p>3 SOCIAL WELL-BEING, INCLUSION AND COHESION</p> <p>Which domains are involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic communications • Social services • Culture and heritage protection <p>What is it?</p> <p>Ensures ongoing and effective communication between the state, the media and the general population; continued access to fundamental social services such as benefits and other assistance from local or central authorities; and the protection of places and items that form a significant part of the country's national heritage.</p> | <p>4 ECONOMIC STABILITY AND SECURITY</p> <p>Which domains are involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical information infrastructure protection • National strategic logistics • Economic security • Security of strategic industries • Energy security <p>What is it?</p> <p>Covers the creation, maintenance and protection of the national information structure; the prioritization and preservation of essential transportation and logistics systems; safeguarding the economy and financial system; ensuring the continuity of essential industries and the provision of critical items; and plans to secure the generation, storage and distribution of energy supplies.</p> |
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While **GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AGENCIES** should lead nations' efforts, it's crucial that they integrate other segments of society, rather than attempting to 'go it alone' given the difficulty of the task.

The **PRIVATE SECTOR** plays a crucial role in providing goods and services. It also brings skills and assets to the table that can help identify, prepare for and respond in times of emergency.

One example is the ability to gather, process and analyse vast amounts of complex data. This could be vital in identifying crises early on and potentially limiting their impact. With cyberspace becoming one of the key battlegrounds, the effort to control it requires the active participation of the private companies that own large chunks. For instance, as the coronavirus crisis developed, social media companies stepped up their use of machine learning algorithms to detect and counter the spread of false information.

Many companies can also turn their time and resources to different activities when needed. As we saw during the pandemic, production lines and workforces were temporarily reassigned to the manufacture and distribution of essential items such as medical supplies and personal protective equipment.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND EDUCATION provide the means to develop an informed population, and thereby make nations less vulnerable to attack.

Civil society organizations represent and advocate for individuals and groups and act as a watchdog and 'conscience' for society. They reveal unpalatable truths—such as the fact that instances of domestic violence rocketed during lockdown—and can be an extremely effective link between government and citizens, especially where trust in national administrations has been undermined for any reason.

Meanwhile, the importance of effective education before, during and after times of crisis cannot be overestimated. **Becoming resilient as a nation means developing and educating citizens who are able to cope in times of disruption** by standing up to new, potentially prolonged difficulties and adapting to their effects. Prior to COVID-19, millions were ignorant of the dangers of pandemics, including 'hidden' effects such as the impact on mental health. This has been replaced by a hyper-awareness about the spread of infectious disease, the measures we can take to contain it and the potential psychological impact of the pandemic. Strong, consistent education is also one of the most effective ways of combating the spread of false information and enabling people to respond to new challenges and find solutions more quickly.

As we have established, modern threats are no longer confined to discrete geographic areas, which means **the importance of INTERNATIONAL ALLIES is greater than ever**. Throughout the pandemic, international collaboration has become necessary to restrict people movement effectively, and the global effort to find solutions continues today. Similarly, other current dangers including terrorism, global irregular migration and climate change will only be tackled successfully if countries and institutions work together across borders.



4. A NEW MODEL FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Clearly, nations can no longer afford to rely on traditional crisis management methods, which assume that a single crisis situation will be followed by a period of recovery and, ultimately, a return to some baseline 'normal'.

To be resilient in today's turbulent times, **nations must adapt to the 'No Normal', in which life-changing disruptions occur frequently and simultaneously.** This means basing their crisis planning and response mechanisms on the ability to adapt and readjust on a continuous basis, and being ready for what comes next.

“ **The model and mindset must change from plan-prepare-manage-recover to plan-prepare-manage-adapt** ”



1. PLAN AND PREPARE:

Access to well-timed information is a must here. Governments and strategic decision-makers constantly rely on early warnings of threats to national security. We argue that **intelligence agencies must now broaden their reach across a wider threat landscape.**

The slow recognition of COVID-19's global impact makes a self-evident case for extending national intelligence collection beyond a habitual focus on terrorism, military and non-state adversaries. Furthermore, global corporations collect large amounts of information across the planet and NGOs operate where state entities often do not. Their information collection can surely look out for 'black swans'.

Let's harness all of these endeavours to constantly scan for new and emerging threats in the 'no normal' era. This would provide a truly all-source opportunity to shorten warning time and provide the four pillars of national resilience with timely analysis of threats as well as their potential impact.

2. MANAGE

Managing crises well relies on a unified approach at the national level, covering all aspects of the response.

Leadership has a crucial role in keeping populations informed and reassured. This can be achieved by heads of state personally leading all crisis announcements or appointing a dedicated individual to be the face of the national effort.

Secondly, a central unit should **mobilize and coordinate all response efforts and actors across the four pillars of national resilience.** Operational command can be delegated but national leadership must be tightly aligned on all developments to ensure timely strategic decisions, such as the release of economic stimulus packages, can be made.

The **systematic sharing of data and information** between all relevant parties must be an uppermost concern, both domestically and between nations. COVID-19 exposed deep failings in sharing threat information which do not breach national security regulations. Careful consideration and implementation are necessary to break down barriers and make sure no important data falls between the cracks.

Telling one story with one voice builds trust in testing times, but it is not enough. By giving the public a single source of truth, nations can spur individuals and institutions to follow official instructions and advice. At the same time, nations should actively fight back against rampant misinformation to mitigate the impacts of rumour and conspiracy and protect their citizens.



In the time of 'No Normal', success is characterized by the ability to adapt and readjust on a continuous basis and being ready for what comes next.



3. ADAPT

A key characteristic of national resilience is that it has no fixed end state, even once the eye of the storm has passed. **Responses to new and evolving threats must be continuously developed, practiced and stress tested** to ensure they are robust enough to withstand increasingly severe and frequent incidents.

Another crucial factor is ensuring the involvement and effective orchestration of all participants in this process and assessing how well they are able to cooperate and share crucial information. High-performing institutions are not enough: most crisis management problems lie in the seams between institutions, due to ambiguous accountabilities, communication failures, missed hand-offs and myriad other problems that stem from anything less than meticulous coordination.

As nations adapt to new realities, leadership has a continuing responsibility to keep all parties and sectors of society on course, enabling collaboration and rapid decision-making throughout, and ensuring that the model plays to the strengths of all stakeholders.

5. AN EXPANDED ROLE FOR DEFENCE

Given the changing threat landscape, the rapid pace at which crises are set to evolve due to technological advancement and the ever-present push to stretch resources even further, this raises the question of what 'defence' really means in today's environment. **Could it be time to revisit the role of the military in supporting non-combat emergencies?**

For many armed forces, peacetime protection activities are already an integral part of their overall purpose and, even in the most stable democratic societies, the deployment of troops in times of need is not unusual. One obvious example is relief operations, as we saw in the wake of 2007's widespread floods across the UK, the Sichuan earthquake in 2008 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

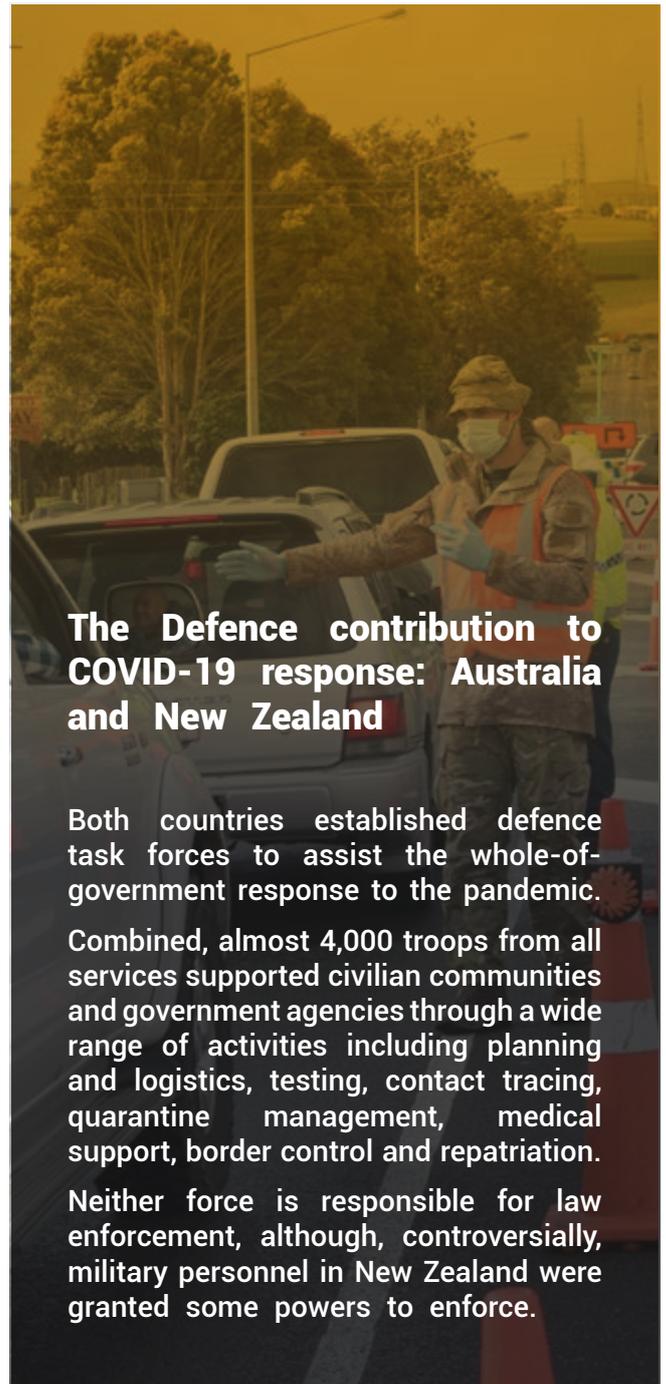
Armed forces have a range of capabilities that can be put to use to support response to non-military threats. Their specialist skills are abundantly suited to emergency response and military personnel are highly disciplined and specifically trained to respond to precarious situations at short notice.

In the face of COVID-19, armed forces around the world supported national responses through logistics; medical support; intelligence, surveillance and communications; collaboration and coordination; and—in certain cases—security and public order, for example the protection of vulnerable assets or locations.

As our case studies show, many of these assets were called into play during the pandemic, as armed forces around the world deployed troops and resources to aid the response in a huge variety of ways, in effect **acting as a force multiplier for nations in their fight against the virus.**



Armed forces have a range of capabilities that can be put to use to support response to non-military threats



The Defence contribution to COVID-19 response: Australia and New Zealand

Both countries established defence task forces to assist the whole-of-government response to the pandemic.

Combined, almost 4,000 troops from all services supported civilian communities and government agencies through a wide range of activities including planning and logistics, testing, contact tracing, quarantine management, medical support, border control and repatriation.

Neither force is responsible for law enforcement, although, controversially, military personnel in New Zealand were granted some powers to enforce.

SPOTLIGHT: HOW THE UAE ARMED FORCES CONTRIBUTED TO THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

The UAE Armed Forces contribution to national COVID-19 response

The UAE Armed Forces have been playing a key role in the national COVID-19 pandemic response. They have worked closely with civilian authorities in a mutually supporting relationship to plan, prepare and execute a wide range of response measures.

Working with civilian authorities to safeguard the nation

The UAE Armed Forces Medical Services Corps contributed to whole-of-government committees and teams including, but not limited to, the following: National Response Team, National Technical Committee for ICU patients, National Technical Committee for Infectious Diseases, Medical Logistics Committee, National Labs Committee and Joint Surveillance Teams.

- Shared critical information and experience including track-and-trace efforts to limit the spread of the pandemic.
- Exchanged, loaned and provided medical supplies (e.g. PCR machines, PPE, testing enzymes and reagents, nasal swabs, and test kits).
- Contributed to decisions delaying the disease spread and assessments of societal and economic consequences of the pandemic.
- Preserved the preparedness of the Armed Forces by prioritizing the screening, testing and isolation of critical military personnel.
- Analysed efficacy of test kits and identified accredited PPE suppliers to scale up national response capability.
- Collaborated with major private labs in the UAE, through providing manpower and technical support to assist their establishment and operations.

Leveraging the logistic capabilities and global reach of the Armed Forces

- Supported global disease surveillance and detection efforts using forward deployed personnel.
- Exchanged information with international partners, enhancing global security.
- Obtained essential supplies for national requirements from overseas sources through the Defence Health Attaché Network.
- Supported establishment and operation of screening centres across the UAE.
- Assisted in conducting international evacuations of UAE and other Arab nationals from hard-hit centres of the pandemic.

Providing medical support to military and civilian communities

- Augmented the intensive care capacity of Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City and Mafraq Hospital and initiated an 'open ICU' system in collaboration with medical experts from partner countries.
- Provided essential equipment, such as respirators and PPE, to medical institutions in the UAE.
- Allocated military physicians to support isolation hospitals and COVID-19 vaccine trials in the UAE.
- Supported the transfer of critically ill patients between hospitals within the UAE.
- Launched isolation wards on all military camps to limit spread of COVID-19.

6. NO COPY AND PASTE ANSWERS

The ability to detect, deter and defend against threats in today's world is one that makes a 'whole-of-society' approach imperative. While it's impossible to precisely predict what the nature of the next large-scale crisis will be, early identification of unexpected crises gives nations the ability to respond faster and more effectively. Equally, as unconventional threats become more frequent and more serious, nations need to cope with and acclimatize to an ever-changing operating environment. In these circumstances, nations must develop an innate resilience to threat and disruption, using all the resources at their disposal.

This raises the question of the role of national defence organizations in responding to the full spectrum of threats. They clearly are capable of and indeed already play an important role in addressing modern, non-military threats. But it's impossible to mandate a one-size-fits-all approach. Just like the threat environment itself, the purpose and nature of domestic military intervention is shaped by the unique requirements of each nation state, and is inextricably bound up with the sovereign, legal and political setup.

There are no copy and paste answers, and although we have discussed how military forces can provide much-needed expertise and practical assistance in non-combat situations, they are only one element of the plan-prepare-manage-adapt ecosystem, along with many other stakeholders including other areas of government, civil society, academia and international allies. Whatever the role of defence organizations is decreed to be, it must dovetail with those of other actors in a whole-of-nation collaboration and ensure countries are capable of facing the next big crisis—regardless of what shape it comes in.

CONTRIBUTORS



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