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National Defence Studies Institute.

Case Study

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Female Soldiers
and Military Missions**



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Preface

Nowadays, threats to security are sophisticated and has vulnerability toward human rights. Most of them root from domestic conflicts that directly cause impacts on civilians, especially women and children. The impact then result in social movements calling women rights protections and gender equality. Therefore, numerous countries, including Thailand, have been advancing and supporting women's roles in various aspects.

In the past, Thailand and many other countries, grounded on physical reasons, consistently set up the roles of female soldiers to be excluded from combat missions or any missions directly involving with warfare. At the present time, the idea has been changed. International communities obviously see that female soldiers have unique capacities that allow them to serve better than men in some particular missions. Thus, regulations, practices, and rules about women in forces have been developed and amended to be appropriate with female soldiers' roles, duties, and characteristics.

In this regard, the Strategic Studies Center (affiliated under the National Defence Studies Institute) sees this as important, and conducted the article entitled as "Roles of Female Soldiers in Military Missions" on the purposes of studying the circumstances currently affecting security, missions and military capacities of Royal Thai Armed Forces, Roles of female soldiers in military affairs, problems and obstacles obstructing capability development of female soldiers, and proposing solutions or guidelines to enhance female soldiers' roles in military missions in suitable manners.

Strategic Studies Center

March 2020

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Roles of Female Soldiers
and Military Missions



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Importance of Problems

At the present, threats to security are becoming more complicated and are changing in form. The effects in both domestic level and foreign countries are so dynamic in many areas, e.g., politic, economic, socio-psychology, military, science, technology, energy, and environment. The advance in information technology makes the world become borderless and more connected. Thus, threats in one state may globally affect the world's security. Characteristic of threats can be categorized into 2 types, namely (1) traditional threats and (2) non-traditional threats. Traditional threats are traditionally done by foreign troops. Meanwhile non-traditional threats do not directly impact territorial integrity, but affect the nation's security and stability. To illustrate this, non-traditional threats can take place in a form of poverty, human trafficking, terrorism, drug dealing, and natural or man-made disaster.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560, Section 52, provides that *“the State shall protect and uphold the institution of kingship, independence, sovereignty, integrity of the territories and the areas over which Thailand has the sovereignty rights, honour and interest of the Nation, security of the State, and public order. For these purposes, the State shall provide efficient military, diplomatic, and intelligence services. Armed forces shall also be deployed for the*

*purpose of developing the country.” The term “armed forces” used therein means “government officers of the ministry of defence that are of military type, regular soldiers, cadets under the ministry of defence that are registered as regular soldiers, and people who are called to serve as a soldier according to the related laws”, according to Section 6 of the Ministry of Defence Organization Act B.E. 2551.¹ According to the Act, there are 2 types of “government officers of the ministry of defence” which are military officers and civilian officers under the ministry of defence. The Act, Section 8, also stipulates the missions of military officers as “*protecting the country from threats from both inside and outside of the country, protecting and preserving the royal institute, supporting missions of the royal institute, protecting and preserving the nation’s interests, developing the country, preventing against and solving problems risen from disasters, aiding people. Military officers shall have duties of studying, researching, developing, and operating defence industry and energy, defence technologies, and spatial information and communication technologies for security of the nation. Additionally, military officers shall have duties of non-warfare-related military operations.*”*

At the present, women’s roles are being focused. A number of countries have been developing and supporting women’s roles in many aspects, such as politic, governance, society, economic, religion, culture, and especially security. Nowadays, many countries,

¹ Ministry of Defence of Thailand. (2008). *The Government Gazette*. พระราชบัญญัติจัดระเบียบราชการกระทรวงกลาโหม พ.ศ. ๒๕๕๑ [Ministry of Defence Organization Act B.E. 2551]. Vol. 125. Section 26 Kor. Bangkok

including Thailand, give opportunities to women to work in security and defense field. Historically, in Thailand, female soldier unit was firstly established during the administration of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram (1948-1957) which is known as ‘Pibhun’ in the west. The unit was founded up within the Army Training Command on purpose of encouraging Thai women to take a part in defence



Picture 1.1 The first female cadet class graduating in 1943 (Retrieved from <https://www.silpa-mag.com/>)

role. In 1942, women were admitted as a military cadet student for the first time.² All female soldiers were required to graduate from this program which will allow them to get a rank as second lieutenant, and get appointed as an army leader afterward. Additionally, army non-commissioned officer school was also set up at Lopburi province then to train and assign non-commissioned female soldiers in Suranaree battalion under Suriyothai military unit. However, due to the political incident in 1943, Thai women’s role in military was over. Field Marshal Plaek had a great progressive vision in encouraging Thai women’s roles to be more progressive and universal. It’s the starting point that pushed forward women’s role in military into what it is now.

² Silapa-Wattanatham. (2019). ๒๒ สิงหาคม ๒๔๘๕: กองทัพบกไทยประกาศหา “สาวโสด” มาเป็น “นักเรียนนายร้อยหญิง” [The Thai Armed Forces Announced on August 22nd, 1942 to Admit Single Ladies as a Female Cadet] [Online] Retrieved from: https://www.silpa-mag.com/this-day-in-history/article_1644, January 5th, 2020.

According to Thai Ministry of Defence regulation B.E. 2527 on female soldiers, female soldiers are not allowed to take a part in direct combating positions. However, Thai female soldiers have crucial roles that effectively support combating units. The armed Forces headquarters has the policy greatly supporting the roles and equality of female soldiers. This can be seen from the number of female soldiers in the armed forces headquarters, promotion of female soldiers, and training or educational programs for improving abilities and knowledge of female soldiers that contribute to their missions.

The armed forces headquarters improve female soldiers' abilities in accordance with the national strategy on security which is making Thailand capable to play the great role that is accepted among international communities. This is consistent with the national strategy on security expressing that Thailand shall integrate co-operations with ASEAN countries and international communities, including both governmental and non-governmental organizations, to sustainably strengthen peace, security, and advance of the nation, region, and the world.³ The armed forces headquarters shall also work in accordance with the action plan which stipulates that Thailand shall strengthen co-operations among neighboring countries, ASEAN countries, allies, and international organizations, and shall operate for peace under the United Nations' concept in order to maintain the country's pride and honor in global society which is the main mission of Thai armed forces.⁴

³ *The Government Gazette. (2018). ประกาศ เรื่อง ยุทธศาสตร์ชาติ (พ.ศ. ๒๕๖๑-๒๕๘๐) [Announcement on the National Strategy B.E. 2561-2580]. Vol. 135. Section 82 Kor. Page 12*

⁴ *Office of Comptroller General. (2019). แผนปฏิบัติการราชการกองบัญชาการ กองทัพบกไทย ปีงบประมาณ ๒๕๖๓ [Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters' Action Plan of Fiscal Year 2020]. Copied version. Page 1.*

The Strategic Studies Center, National Defence Studies Institute, as an institute in security field and Thai armed forces think tank, sees that the issues aforementioned are becoming more and more important. Hence, the Strategic Studies Center conducted the specific case study document called “Female Soldier’s Roles and Military Missions on purposes of studying into the roles of female soldiers involving with military missions in order to make a proposal on improving female soldiers’ abilities to be capable to perform the duties properly.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 Studying the situations currently affecting security, missions and capabilities of Thai military

1.2.2 Studying the roles of female soldiers involving with military missions, problems, and obstacles obstructing the improvement of capabilities

1.2.3 Proposing suggestions or guidelines to improve the capabilities of female soldiers involving military missions that will allow them to serve properly in multi-dimension of security

1.3 Scope of Study

This document was purposely conducted for studying the situation that currently affects security at the present time, missions and capabilities of Thai military, roles of female soldiers involving with military missions, problems, and obstacles obstructing the improvement of capabilities. The document eventually proposes suggestions or

guidelines to improve the capabilities of female soldiers involving military missions. The author spent 4 months to finish this work. The document is composed of 4 sessions.

Session 1 Introductory part

Session 2 Security Environment, missions, and capabilities of Thai military

Session 3 The roles of female soldiers involving with military missions, including problems and obstacles of female soldier role enhancing.

Session 4 Proposal on improving the capabilities of female soldiers on purposes of strengthening the roles involving with military missions and multi-dimensions security

1.4 Methodologies

This document is a qualitative research which was conducted by the following methodologies.

1.4.1 Data collecting

1.4.1.1 Primary data was collected from the seminar called “Female Soldier Roles and Military Mission” which was held on February 24th, 2020 at the Strategic Studies Center’s meeting room. The participants were a representative of various organizations, including police officers, civil servant, officers affiliated with the Ministry of Defence, private sector, and independent organizations. The guest speakers consisted of (1) Col. Nattapol Saengchan, Deputy Director, Peace

Operation Center, Directorate of Joint Operation, (2) Col. Ronnarong Chantinmatorn, Deputy Director of Personel Division, Directorate of Personnel, Royal Thai Army, (3) Capt. Reongdej Varunaprabha, RTN Director of Policy and Planning Division office of Personnel Management Naval Personnel Department, (4) Gp. Capt. Wirote Phyanoi, Deputy Director of Office of Personnel policy and Administration, Directorate of Personnel RTAF, and (5) Miss Naiyana Supapueng, Director of Teeranat Foundation. More information was also gathered from the Conference called Thai Female Soldiers and Peace Maintenance Missions which was organized by the Peace Operations Center of Royal Thai Armed Forces on January 31st 2020, at 9 a.m. – 12 p.m, at the 60th Anniversary Supreme Commander Peace Operations Center Building.

1.4.1.2 Secondary data was collected from academic documents, articles, research papers, seminar summary, printed documents, and electronic sources.

1.4.2 Data analysis

The primary data and secondary data was analyzed and synthesized by the content analysis technic in order to obtain the good guidelines for improving the capabilities of female soldiers.

1.5 Anticipated Benefits

1.5.1 Learning the security situation, changing of security context, missions and capacities of Thai military, the roles of female soldiers on military missions, and obstacles obstructing the improvement of capabilities

1.5.2 Proposal on improving the capabilities of female soldiers that is consistent with the current dynamic security context

1.5.3 Thai armed forces shall be able to utilize the data from this study to improve the capabilities of female soldiers in order to support the security-related missions in multi-dimensions.

Chapter 2

Security Circumstances, Roles, and Missions of Royal Thai Armed Forces



Chapter 2

Security Circumstances, Roles, and Missions of Royal Thai Armed Forces

At the present, security situation is uncertainly fluctuating. This is caused by national strategy implementations of the superpowers. The increasing changes as such are both “traditional threats” and “non-traditional threats.”

Other factors affecting national security are composed of numerous sophisticated problems in many aspects, e.g. – political, economic, social, science, energy, and military. Escalation of those tensions may certainly cause an impact on the world, regions, and Thailand.



*(Retrieved from :
www.prachachat.net)*

2.1 Security situations in global level

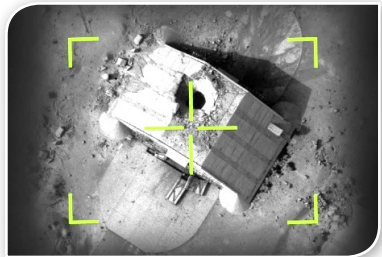
2.1.1 Competitions between the superpowers

After the Cold War termination, what was left-over from the competition was the sole superpower-ship of the United States of America. Recently, the rise of China and the recovery of Russia have caused the new threefold race among the three nations in almost every dimension, including political, economic, social, science, energy, and military. The expansion of influence of these nations into other

regions is the crucial competition in the world forum. The key idea is that each nation is seeking for international friendships and cooperation, in form of a membership of multi-national-groups, on purposes of securing its national interests as much as one could have, and acquiring of bargaining power.

2.1.2 Transformation of the warfare characteristic

Nowadays, warfare nature has been changed from the old days in tactical and strategic aspect. To illustrate this, trench warfare is the characteristic of warfare in the World War I. At that time, bunker, fighter planes, and tanks were used. In the World War II, air forces, poisonous gas, submarines, and aircraft carriers were deployed. Blitzkrieg method was also introduced then to allow rapid attacks. The World War II was a small traditional-warfare with small nature equipped with precision strike. At the present time, warfare nature has turned into the hybrid characteristic (Hybrid Warfare) which covers both traditional and non-traditional characteristics. Exotic technologies are now available, e.g. - unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) and guided ballistic missiles which can be equipped with biological or nuclear warhead. These weapons cannot be detected and prevented against easily. Moreover, cyber warfare is being conducted in this hybrid type.



(Picture retrieved from : Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments)

2.1.3 Threats from terrorism

Terrorism situation is becoming less severe. According to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) published on the November 20th by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) located in Australia, the numbers of casualties became decreased during 2014-2018 due to two factors which are (1) the defeat of the IS and (2) the US



(Picture retrieved from: The Islamic Foundation)

air strikes conducted against the Al-Shabaab group. However, terrorism conducted by right wings increased in numbers, especially in North America, Oceania, and West Europe. The countries that got impacted the most are, orderly arranged from the most to the less, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Syria. In Asian region, the countries that got impacted the most are India, Philippine, Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, and China.

2.1.4 Migration situations, refugees, and global displacement

Global immigration, worldwide refugee, and diaspora occurred from wars, conflicts, and political crisis, have directly affected human rights, especially on females and children. Furthermore, women tend to be a target of persecution, violence, sexual harassment, genocide, and enslaving.



(Picture retrieved from: UNHCR of Thailand)

These are also the factors motivating people to dramatically immigrate. Pursuant to the 2018 Annual Report of the Global Trends Forced Displacement, there were over 70.8 million refugees around the world fleeing from conflict areas. This number does not include those refugees from the conflict in Venezuela. The number exceeded what has been indicated in 2017. What caused this increase were the conflict in Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan War, and immigrating from Myanmar to Bangladesh. The refugees are composed of 3 groups, namely (1) Necessarily-immigrating-refugee, (2) Voluntary refugee, and (3) displaced persons. The first group was forced to move due to problematic conflicts, wars, or mass murdering. It accounted for approximately 25.4 million people. The second group was a group of people that were waiting for the refugee status. They were around 3.1 million people. The third group was the group of domestic displaced persons. The number was calculated to be around 40 million life. Moreover, the UNHCR report indicates that displaced children and orphans accounted for 53% thereof.

2.1.5 Natural disasters

Natural disasters and climate changes crucially caused greenhouse gas to many countries. This is a man-made situation which is pushing the world temperature to go up continually. It is happening worldwide, and high in frequency. During 2019 – 2020, significant disasters have occurred in many places, e.g. - Typhoon Lekima (This caused 72 casualties and 9.26 billion property damage in China), Typhoon Hagibis (This was equal to level 5 hurricane, the strongest

hurricane.), and the heat waves (50.8 degree celsius) phenomenon in India which caused approximately 90 deaths. The heat came while India was facing severe drought, so that population fought against each other for water. This led to death eventually. The other 2 incidents were the huge flood in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the bushfires crisis in Australia. The flood occurred from heavy rain during the Christmas and New Year festivals. It caused 71.91 million USD loss to business sectors in Indonesia. The Australian fires burned down approximately 11 million hectare of lands, killed around 30 human and around 500 animals. This can be regarded as the most severe bushfires incident in Australia.



Picture 2.1: Damage caused by super Hagibis typhoon (Retrieved from Thairath Online, 2019)



Picture 2.2: Forest fire causing a climate circumstance (Retrieved from BBC Thai, 2020)



Picture 2.3: Flood at Ubon-Ratchathani in 2019 (Retrieved from Posttoday, 2019)

Due to Thailand's proper geography, the nation rarely faces with severe and frequent natural disaster like its neighboring countries in the region. However, some phenomena may cause great damage in Thailand, for examples, tropical cyclone, forest fire, earthquake, flood, summer storm, thunderstorm, landslide, rain-shortage, and storm surge.

Natural disaster caused globally by climate change as mentioned above is frequent and severe. This greatly causes casualties, property damage, and causes negative impacts on economic and social development, and national security of states.

2.1.6 Ongoing social movements in global societies

Social movements are increasing nowadays. It is not limited to only political movements, but includes human right



Picture 2.4: Calling for Thai women rights (Retrieved from Matchon Online, 2020)

movements (For examples, rights of disabled persons, women and children rights, and elder people rights) and peace movements purposely to end all kinds of conflicts, wars, and violence (especially violence against women and children). Peace establishment process in conflict areas has also been being conducted.

Women movements mainly aim at protecting women's rights and human-ship, including gender equality. This is for eliminating

sexual discrimination, and calling on higher rates of women participations in education, society, economy, culture, politic, and security.

2.2 Regional security situation

2.2.1 South China Sea Conflicts

South China Sea is the strategically important area in Asian region because it is full of oil and natural gas. Additionally, the sea is composed of important sea routes. Many countries, therefore, claim their ownership over the area which bring this up to a regional political controversy. The main player in this forum is certainly China. The rise of China has brought military constructions and geopolitical influence expansion of China to the area. Such action is claiming of exclusive rights of China over the sea which affects other states' benefits in the area. Those affected nations are currently asking for freedom of navigation above the sea. Of course, the United States is taking a great role herein. She is claiming for her rights to transport through international seas and is referring to the actions of China as the regional stability aggravation. Hence, the conflicts so far have not been solved. The geopolitical competition between the 2 superpowers, namely the United States and China, is still going on.

2.2.2 Rohingya people

The issue regarding to Rohingya refugees has not been addressed. It is regarded as one of Asia's important region issues. International organizations are calling for investigation on the Myanmar

government with respect to genocide. Also, the world is calling for the suspension of Rohingya repatriation from Bangladesh and Myanmar due to the lack of transparency in the repatriation process and the pending unrest situation in Rakhine state. In 2019, the Gambia filed



Picture 2.5: Rohingya people in Myanmar (Retrieved from The Standard Online, 2018)

a lawsuit against Myanmar to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) stating that the Myanmar government has violated the ‘Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide’. During the 35th ASEAN Summit that Thailand was the chair, the United Nations also called the Myanmar government to ensure the safety of Rohingya repatriation, and to ensure

humanitarian actors have full and unfettered access to areas of return.

Besides the aforementioned, Thailand is also affected by the situation. Thailand is a neighboring country of Myanmar and is used as a passage way for Rohingya to immigrate to another country. What need to be beware of are, for examples, human-trafficking, illegal immigration, and transnational crimes.



Picture 2.6: Rohingya people’s immigration routes (Retrieved from Isra News, 2016)

2.3 Domestic security situations

2.3.1 South Thailand insurgency

This ongoing insurgency is still an important problem of the nation grounded on differences in cultural identities, religions, ethnicities, beliefs, and perspective among people therein. Some radical people in the area support the state-separation idea, so that violent actions are being conducted in the region. The insurgency is not only problematic to the national security, but directly affects people's rights and freedoms in daily life, especially women and children. The violence has taken away the heads of family from many families. Many children have become orphans, and women have become dowers. Although the violence is currently becoming less and only public officials are mainly targeted, but narcotic drug issue in youths is getting worse. This issue might lead those youths to get introduced to the insurgency movement which will make the problem gets complicated.



Picture 2.7: South Thailand insurgency (Retrieved from Internet)



Picture 2.8: Campaign Against Violence (Retrieved from Isra News, 2015)

2.3.2 Cyber-treats

There are many forms of cyber-threats affecting security, such as deep fake, fake news, and cyber-attack which includes hacking, sniffing, use of malicious software (Malware), denial of service attack (DOS),



*Picture retrieved from
Anti-Fake News Center of
Thailand*

and cyber espionage. One cyber-attack may cause damage to national security in economic, social, political, and stability aspects. Furthermore, cyber technology can be launched as a tool to largely dominate or incite people in the determined by one. To illustrate this, social media can be used to defame the royal institution which can call people to

be hostile to the royal institution. In order to serve one’s political goals, it can be used to influence people which bring about conflicts and violence in one society.

2.3.3 Narcotic drugs and transnational crimes

Thailand is always confronting with narcotic drug



(ภาพจากมิดิซนออนไลน์, ๒๕๖๒)

problems due to the country is close to the Golden Triangle, the drug rest point area. Drugs are imported from the Golden Triangle to the north and north east of Thailand before being delivered to another country. Drugs can be carried by drug users and minor dealers that are

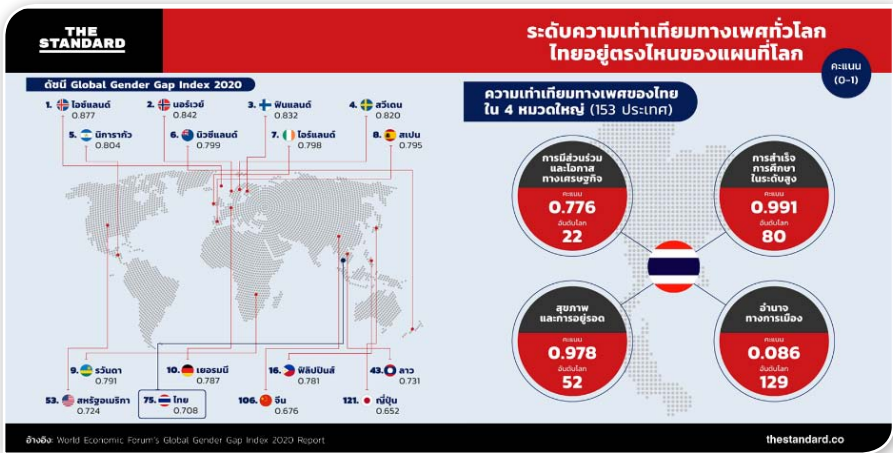
connected to each other as a huge network throughout the nation. Drug does not merely cause problems to users, but causes impacts on national security in many aspects, namely economic aspect, social aspect, state management, and international relations. Additionally, drug problem is related to terrorism and transnational crimes, such as human-trafficking, money laundering, and arm dealing. Due to Thailand's free-tourism policy, and its transportation center-ship, tourists can travel easily and freely, and criminals sometimes get into Thailand as a tourist.



Picture 2.9: Arresting of Prostitution (Retrieved from Matichon, Online 2016)

2.3.4 Women freedom and gender equality

According to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the international law protecting women's human rights and female-ship. Thailand has ratified to be a party to this convention since 1985. This allows women to take parts in all levels of managements. This allows female civil servants can take a position as high rank officials or administrators. In civilian part, in 2001, the Thai cabinet passed the resolution declaring the support of gender equality between males and females. Thus, in every ministry, department, and bureau, must have at least one female vice leader in charge of a Chief Gender Equality Officer (CGEO). Also, there must be a division unit of Gender Focal Point (GFP) in charge of



Picture 2.10: Global Gender Equality (Retrieved from The Standard, 2019)

making the ‘Supportive Master Plan on Gender Equality’ for that ministry, department, or bureau. The Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development, affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, shall play the role as the Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN) in charge of directing the gender equality works in other government organizations.

Thailand has established the National Female Status Development Policy and Strategy Commission to make the women development plan. Currently, Thailand is following the “Women Development Strategy B.E. 2560-2564” which indicates that “Thailand shall build an equal society without discrimination. Women shall have good and stable quality of life, be safe, and shall be a part of national modernizing.” The document declares totally 5 strategies, namely (1) building social attitude of gender equation, (2) enhancing all-sectors participation to develop the society and life quality for all groups of

women in all level, (3) making all conditions and factors available to support female development effectively and efficiently, (4) making all preventive and monitoring measures to provide aids and assistance, including remedy measures, (5) strengthening the mechanisms for female development which is in line with the 20 Years National Strategy and the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan. All government organizations are obligated to report their annual overall result to the Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development at the end of every year. The office shall gather the result and report to the cabinet.

2.4 Missions arrangement and sub-divisions in Royal Thai Armed Forces

Thailand is facing with threats to security which is becoming severe in accordance with global changes and Thailand’s domestic factors. This problem has been directly and indirectly affecting the state. Thus, in order to maintain security and peace for the nation in all dimensions, The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560, Section 52, provides that *“the State shall protect and uphold the institution of kingship, independence, sovereignty, integrity of the territories and the areas over which Thailand has the sovereignty rights, honour and interest of the Nation, security of the State, and public order. For these purposes, the State shall provide efficient military, diplomatic, and intelligence services. Armed forces shall also be deployed for the purpose of developing the country.”*⁵

⁵ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. (April 6th, 2017). The Government Gazette. Vol. 134, Section 40 Kor, Page 14)

To serve that purpose, the Ministry of Defence Organization Act B.E. 2551 established the Ministry of Defence (MoD) of Thailand which is in charge of (1) protecting the state's independence and integrity to be safe from internal and external threats, (2) protecting and upholding the institution of kingship, (3) protecting and maintaining the national interests, upholding the democratic regime of government with the King as Head of State, developing the country for security, preventing and eliminating threats and disasters, and providing aids to population, (4) conducting research and development and operating the affairs related to defense industry and military energy, defense science and technology, space affairs and communication, and (5) carrying out other military missions, besides warfare, to preserve the security. This includes also peace operations.⁶

The term “armed forces” used therein means “government officers of the ministry of defence that are of military type, regular soldiers, cadets under the ministry of defence that are registered as regular soldiers, and people who are called to serve as a soldier according to the related laws”, according to Section 6 of.⁷ According to the Act, there are 2 types of “government officers of the ministry of defence” which are military officers and civilian officers under the ministry of defence. The Act, Section 8, also stipulates the missions of

⁶ Ministry of Defence Organization Act B.E. 2551. (February 1st, 2008). The Government Gazette. Vol. 125, Section 26 Kor, Pages 37-45)

⁷ Ministry of Defence of Thailand. (2008). The Government Gazette. พระราชบัญญัติจัดระเบียบราชการกระทรวงกลาโหม พ.ศ. ๒๕๕๑ [Ministry of Defence Organization Act B.E. 2551], Vol. 125, Section 26 Kor, Bangkok

military officers as “*protecting the country from threats from both inside and outside of the country, protecting and preserving the royal institute, supporting missions of the royal institute, protecting and preserving the nation’s interests, developing the country, preventing against and solving problems risen from disasters, aiding people. Military officers shall have duties of studying, researching, developing, and operating defence industry and energy, defence technologies, and spatial information and communication technologies for security of the nation. Additionally, military officers shall have duties of non-warfare-related military operations.*”

In order to operate smoothly, the armed forces is divided into sub-divisions and is assigned to be in charge of duties as declared in the Ministry of Defence Organization Act B.E. 2551 as being described below.

2.4.1 Royal Thai Armed Forces

This unit is in charge of controlling, directing, and commanding all sub-units affiliated with the Royal Thai Armed Forces on force preparation and national defense. The unit shall plan, develop, and carry out the tasks related to commanding system in the forces to ensure that the forces shall be able to work jointly, and shall be able to do information exchange in governmental level, ministerial level, and sub-ministerial level. It also assigns the responsibilities to the Services and relevant units. There are 5 main divisions under the Royal Thai Armed Forces, namely, (1) Command Group, (2) Joint Staff Group, (3) Operation Group, (4) Special Services Group, and (5) Education Group.

2.4.2 Royal Thai Army

This unit is in charge of land forces preparation, national defense, maintaining internal security, peace, and domestic order. It is also in charge of preserving, protecting, and upholding the Royal Institution. Assisting people, national development, and enhancing military cooperation with allied countries is also included as its missions. The 7 sub-divisions under the army are (1) Command Component, (2) Regional Component, (3) Combat Component, (4) Education, Training, and Doctrine Component, (5) Combat Support Component, (6) National Development Support Component, and (7) Logistics Component.

2.4.3 Royal Thai Navy

This unit is in charge of naval forces preparation, national defense, missions related to uses of naval forces according to the Ministry's duties, other missions assigned by the government. The Navy, at the present time, is performing its (1) military role, (2) constabulary role, and (3) diplomatic role.

The military role includes all naval operations for defense purposes in various forms depending on the situation that affects the country's integrity and sovereignty. Strong naval forces and forceful capability is so required.

The constabulary role is protecting the maritime national interests, internal peace, and domestic order. The Navy is also in charge to enforce the laws as assigned. National development and assisting people is also a part of its function.

The diplomatic role includes supporting of international relation policy and policy implementation of the government. This also includes conducting of powerful military maneuver on purpose of supporting any negotiation in case that there is a conflict involving with national interests.

The Navy is divided into 4 sub-units which are (1) Command Unit, (2) Combat Unit, (3) Support Services Unit, and (4) Education and Research Unit.

2.4.4 Royal Thai Air Force

This unit is in charge of naval forces preparation, national defense, national development, and conflict solving. The unit focuses on maintaining its capabilities by enhancing its forces and services to be competent. Moreover, the Air Force aims at acquiring modern technologies, and maintaining its relations with allied nations. The Air Force is divided into 6 sub-units, namely (1) the Headquarters, (2) Command Group, (3) Combat Group, (4) Support Group, (5) Education and Training Group, and (6) Special Service Group.

2.5 Proportions and recruitment numbers of female soldiers in Royal Thai Armed Force

According to the Ministry of Defence's Regulation on Female Soldier B.E. 2527, each service shall recruit women to be a soldier not in any positions involving with direct combat. The Ministry of Defence Council has adopted the Resolution 6/39 on June 20th, 1996 (B.E. 2539) declaring that positions and numbers of female soldiers shall be

separately determined by each service, but it, nevertheless, shall not recruit women as a soldier in the proportion higher than 25% of all active personnel or approved vacancy number. Every service and all units affiliated with the Ministry must comply with these principles. Which unit deems it is necessary to recruit female soldier higher than so, that unit must consider the highest interest that the Ministry shall be benefited.⁸ In conclusion, the below is the table 2.1 depicting female soldier numbers in Thai military.

Table 2.1: Female soldier numbers in Thai military

Military units/services	Numbers of female soldier appointed				Proportion (Percentage)
	All personnel	Female commissioned officers	Female non-commissioned officers	All female soldiers	
Royal Thai Armed Forces	18,498	2,084	4,487	6,571	35.5
Royal Thai Army	130,000	4,400	3,700	8,100	6
Royal Thai Navy	80,000	2,260	740	3,100	3.8
Royal Thai Air Force	24,247	2,732	1,700	4,432	18
Total	252,845	11,476	10,627	22,103	8.7

⁸ ระเบียบปฏิบัติราชการ บก.ทท. [Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters’ Regulations on Duty Performing] Vol. 1, ข้อบังคับกระทรวงกลาโหมว่า ด้วยทหารหญิง พ.ศ.๒๕๒๗ [Ministry of Defence of Thailand’s Regulations on Female Soldiers B.E. 2527], Copied version, Pages 108-112

Source: Summary of the Strategic Problems Conversation Conference 2/2563 on “Female Soldier’s Roles and Military Missions” held on February 24th, 2020 at the Meeting Room, Strategic Studies Center, National Defence Studied Institute (Thailand).

The table above can be described as the follows.

(1) Royal Thai Armed Forces has 18,498 personnel which has 6,571 female soldiers thereof. The 6,571 female soldiers are 2,084 commissioned and 4,487 non-commissioned. Due to this unit has the duties of force preparation and defense which does not include ‘use of force’, its female soldier proportion accounts for 35.5%.

(2) Royal Thai Army adheres to the not-exceeded 25% principle. Hence, it won’t recruit female soldiers higher than 25% of the whole active personnel. The army is composed of 130,000 personnel which has only 8,100 female soldiers among those. The 8,100 number of persons accounts for only 6% of 130,000, and is composed of 3,700 commissioned soldiers and 4,400 non-commissioned soldiers.

Some sub-divisions under the Army, such as the Finance Department and the Office of Army Comptroller, are considering to recruit more female soldiers up to 30% of their approved vacancies, while hospitals affiliated with the Royal Thai Army Medical Department can bring it up to 50% thereof. All Army Support Commands are not allowed to recruit female soldiers more than 25% of the approved vacancies in its unit. As for female rangers, the in charge units shall be able to appoint the full-number of female soldiers as approved. Currently, there are approximately 800 female rangers.

(3) Royal Thai Navy has totally 80,000 personnel which includes 3,100 women (3.8%) therein. The 3,100 consists of 2,260 commissioned soldiers, 740 non-commissioned soldiers, and 100 rangers.

(4) Royal Thai Air Force has 4,432 female soldiers as a part of its 24,247 personnel. The number of female soldier accounts for 18% of the total personnel. There are 2732 commissioned female soldiers and 1,700 non-commissioned female soldiers therein.

Henceforth, totally, there are approximately active 252,845 female soldiers in Thai Armed Forces.



*Picture 2.10 Female Pilots from Royal Thai Air Force
(Retrieved from Royal Thai Air Force)*

Chapter 3

Female Soldier and Military Missions: Problems and Obstacles toward the Roles Enhancement



Female Soldier and Military Missions: Problems and Obstacles toward the Roles Enhancement

3.1 Roles of female soldiers in other countries

The world is now paying more attention on women's role. Many countries has been supporting women's role in many dimensions, namely religious, social, cultural, economic, politic, and security. Many countries, including Thailand, have opened the threshold for women to participate in security works.

3.1.1 Armed Forces of the Philippines

It was established in 1899 while the country was being colonized by the United States (1898-1946). In 1936, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) was founded. At that time, there was no female soldier in the forces (PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY, 2020). After then, the armed forces admitted women as a soldier to perform supportive roles, and female soldiers were allowed to participate in combat missions in 1993 in accordance with Section 7192 of the law. There was also an enrolment of 17 female cadets then which could graduate only 7 from those. Since 2013, the Philippine Armed Forces has been sending female soldiers to participate in the UN Peace Operation. Currently, there is a 4.38% woman in the Armed Forces which includes both permanent officers and conscripts (Mylene C. Orillo., 2019).

3.1.2 Indonesian National Armed Forces

The cadet school firstly admitted women as a cadet since 2013. There were 38 graduates then which accounted for 9% of the whole graduated in that academic year. The female graduates can be appointed as a military commander. Formerly, women were not allowed to take a part in combat missions. Then, the Armed Forces reviewed its regulations to get ready for possible upcoming challenges. Eventually, the commando academy has allowed women to take training courses since 2014. The training rules are almost the same with male soldiers, but some physical test standards were fixed to be more proper with women. Most of Indonesian female soldiers are in services at the Women Army Corps called Kowal, and the (Women Air Force Corps called Wara. Each of the Kowal and Wara has its own education unit.

3.1.3 Singapore Armed Forces (SAF)

In 2017, there were approximately 81,000 soldiers in the forces. Among these troops, there were 5,700 female soldiers active in all 3 branches of services. This number accounted for 7% of all personnel. Singaporean female soldiers are allowed to perform both combat and combat-supportive missions (Ministry of Defence, 2019).

3.1.4 Australian Defence Force (ADF)

Women firstly participated in the forces in 1899 as a nurse. According to the Ministry of Defence's report, there were 6,507 female soldiers which was 12.8% of the whole personnel during the years of

1999-2000. In 2011, the Minister of MoD declared to increase women's roles to be the front-line combatants. From not allowing to perform in combat zone due to female sexuality, women now are able to train and take the physical tests like male soldiers do. This will change Australian culture in future (Jeremy Thompson, 2011). Australian Armed Forces allowed female soldiers to be on duties on the Collins class submarines in 1998. That was first time that female soldiers took parts in war-zone in Persian Gulf (The Gulf War). In 2017, there were 16.5% female defence forces. Currently, they are separated from direct-combat units, e.g. - clearance diving teams, patrol units, combat engineering units, air-port security units, ground-based security forces, artillery units, and any units in charge of working with chemical agents, based on bio-health reason (Parliament of Australia, 2020).

3.1.5 People's Liberation Army (PLA)

According to the United States' research, this Chinese armed forces has 1.6 million ground-based regular services which account for 2 out of 3 of its personnel. Thus, it is regarded as the largest forces of the world. According from the information obtained from The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the Chinese armed forces has produced female soldiers which accounted for 4.5% of the forces. The China Military Online reported that the PLA has assigned duties to 53,000 female soldiers in 2015 which accounted for approximately 5% or lower (Army Technology, 2018).

3.1.6 United States Armed Forces

Women took part in military for the first time in the World War II. There were assigned as a spy and other duties not directly involving with combat. Then, American female soldiers participated in other wars, e.g. – the Vietnam War (1962) and the Gulf War (1991). The US show to the world its capability that its 40,000 female soldiers could carry out various missions, especially missions involving with arms-carrying (Karl Rubis.,2020). In 2018, the United States has 1,292,354 soldiers, including conscripts and regular services. Among those, there were 210,695 women which were 40,210 regular services and 170,485 conscripts. The 210,695 women accounted for 16.3 of all personnel (Servicewomen, 2019).

3.1.7 Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

In 2018, the Ministry of Defense of Russia considered to increase women's military roles. Hence, the ministry permitted women to enroll into the cadet school and military college, and to perform their duties on war submarines. Later then, the forces re-considered the role as such grounded on the 1914 Agreement of Gender Justice which means that the Russian Navy must give priority to the safe of female personnel. The Navy considered that women in the forces can perform better in the communication units, medical units, and coastal units. Additionally, it is risky for them to get sexually harassed if they work offshore. However, women are still allowed to be trained and educated to work offshore (Russia Beyond, 2015). Russia has 830,000 soldiers in total which includes 45,000

women therein. The number of women accounts for 5.4% of the whole personnel (Question More, 2018).

We can see that many nations set up the qualifications of female soldiers in the same direction. Based on physical reasons, they decided that women are not supposed to work as a combatant and should not directly participate in warfare. At the present time, female soldiers are able to show their unique abilities in some missions that men are not as good as them. Therefore, regulations and practices have been improved and amended to enhance female soldier's roles and abilities.

3.2 Roles and capabilities of Thai female soldiers

In the old days, women were capable to fight and protect their town or country, e.g. – Queen Suriyothai. Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon, and Thao Suranari.

Queen Suriyothai fought against Myanmar viceroy in the Elephant warfare in 1548.

Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon fought against Myanmar naval troops in 1785 when the troops were invading the coastal town in Andaman area.



Picture 3.1: The battle between Queen Suriyothai and the Myanmar viceroy which led to her death (Royal historical picture drawn by Prince Narisara Nuwattiwong)

Thao Suranari fought against Lao troops in 1826 while the troops commanded by the King Chao Anouvong of Vientiane were herding civilians in Nakhon Ratchasima to Vientiane.

At the present time, Thai female soldiers perform non-combat roles as mentioned in the ministry's Regulation on Female Soldiers B.E. 2527 which is consistent with the roles of female soldiers in global contexts. Many nations go in the same direction considering that women are not supposed to directly participate in warfare due to physical reasons.

Thailand's security situation is confronting with both traditional threats and non-traditional threats. Some conflicts are related to borderlines which cannot be assured which states have sovereignty on. These conflicts can anytime lead the situation to traditional warfare. Additionally, new forms of threats have complicated characteristics. These threats are sensitive toward human rights. Mostly, the threats as such arises from intrastate conflicts, and directly affects civilians, especially children and women. It is vulnerable to intervention from other countries. Hence, the capabilities of Thai female soldiers have been strengthened to handle the current situation, so that they shall be able to perform their duties efficiently and to support the armed forces' mission in all dimensions. The follows are the roles of Thai female soldiers.



Picture 3.2: Royal Thai Air Force's Female Pilots

3.2.1 Combat support roles

3.2.1.1 Female pilots

Royal Thai Air Force has 7 female pilots. 5 pilots are working at the Squadron 601, in charge of flying with C-130 Aircrafts. The rest 2 are on training at the Squadron 604. This appointment was made purposely to pave the way to future amendment of the ministry's Regulation on Female Soldiers.

3.2.1.2 Voluntary female rangers

These personnel are only in the Army and the Navy. Their roles are crucial especially in the Southern Border Provinces due to their modesty and gentleness which allow them to easily access and communicate with local people. Most of the female rangers are from the area, so they are able to fluently speak the local language, to understand and reconcile with people there. Female rangers in the south shall be trained in some special skills, e.g. – childbirth delivery, first aid, and remote located people assisting. These



Picture 3.3: The Navy's voluntary female rangers (Photo from Wassana Nanuam)



Picture 3.4: A female voluntary ranger working in the south borderline area (Photo retrieved from the Manager Online, 2020)

skills allow them to help people affected by the conflicts, and also help them to receive cooperation from people in any matters needed.

3.2.1.3 Psychological operation

Although female soldiers have difficulties on carrying out missions in some rough areas, they are good at conducting psychological operations. This is supportive to other main missions such as insurgency suppression, civilians and resources protection, armed groups suppression, counter-terrorism, environment improvement, and people aiding. To conduct psychological operations, female soldiers use performance and music as a tool.



Picture 3.5: Female soldiers from psychological operation units (Photo retrieved from Thairath Online, 2014)



Picture 3.7: Female military doctors from Royal Thai Air Force were training in disaster relief program (Photo retrieved from Khaosod Online, 2020)

3.2.1.4 Female military polices

Their ability is well-known among people in public. Their duties are discipline maintaining, law enforcing, order keeping, military transportation controlling, important female figures protecting. Furthermore, they are in charge of inspecting and ensuring that all officials are complying with rules, orders, and good morality. In protecting duty, they have to arrange female bodyguards that are not too harsh, but are able to work effectively and are able to get closer to the protected figure compared to male soldiers. In the Navy, female military polices are affiliated with Naval Military Police Regiment which is categorized as a special group, Adjutant General. The Navy assigns women to work in this unit as a combatant only if they are not older than 40 years old. The above 40 shall be moved to work in their former field.



Picture 3.7: Female military doctors from Royal Thai Air Force were training in disaster relief program (Photo retrieved from Khaosod Online, 2020)

3.2.2 Country development and people aids

3.2.2.1 Thai female soldiers actively support the works of ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM) in human assistance and disaster relief (HADR) tasks of member states and parties to the negotiation. Female soldiers working performing this duties are from the Armed Forces Headquarter, and 3 medical units from the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force.

3.2.2.2 Thai female soldiers have been supporting national crucial problem solving such as disaster relief, anti- narcotic drug operation, anti-crime operation, natural resources protection and exploration, environmental protection, and rehabilitation after disasters.



*Picture 3.8: Female military nurses and doctors were helping people
(Photo retrieved from Internet)*

3.2.3 Peace operations

Royal Thai Armed Forces has been sending female soldiers to join the operation in accordance with the United Nations Framework since 2002. Till now, there are 113 female soldiers sent. They are in charge of observing and directing in, for examples, the following missions: 1) United Union–United Nations peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID), 2) United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), and 3) United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Their roles and capabilities are accepted in both regional and international levels. They are able to join in various types of



Picture 3.9: Thai female soldier and peace operation (Photo retrieved from Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters, 2019)

missions, including information gathering from those damaged from torturing, violence, and sexual harassment. They can easily access to children and women in the operation areas due to their soft, friendly, and gentle characteristics. People are open to give them precise information. This decrease escalation of tension in many situations.



Picture 3.10: Female military soldiers from the Forces Headquarters in Peace Operation (Photo retrieved from Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters, 2019)



Picture 3.11: : Female military soldiers from the Forces Headquarters in Peace Operation (Photo retrieved from Royal Thai Armed Forces Journal, October – December 2019)

3.3 Problems and obstacles toward role enhancement of female soldiers

Thai female soldiers have shown their capabilities in many missions, including both mission requiring physical strength and missions requiring gentleness and sympathy. The latter are what women can perform better than men. Nevertheless, equalization between female soldiers and male soldiers in every dimension is still difficult because women still have some physical limitations in working in rough areas which can affect their health and safety. Additionally, in Thai culture's eyes, some military missions don't suit with women. The follows are the summary of problems and obstacles.

3.3.1 Structure and regulations on female soldier recruitment

Currently, the percentages of female soldiers in each service are 6% in the Army, 3.8% in the Navy, and 18% in the Air Force. It is clear that the numbers are still lower than the maximum number allowed by the Ministry of Defense declaring the percentage of 25%. Even though there are 13 types of non-combat military units that women can participate in, but the qualifications, vacancies, and positions are dependent to each service's policy. Thus, the low numbers of active female soldiers absolutely affect the enhancing of roles of female soldiers.

3.3.2 Lack of opportunity for women to be appointed as a high rank commander which decisiveness is needed.

Compared to male soldiers, female soldiers have less opportunities to train in a variety of military programs. This makes them have less leadership and skills allowing them to think and make a decision in urgent situation. One example of this is that female soldier graduated from Royal Thai Army Nursing College are not qualified to take any courses of the Army's Command and General Staff College because those courses require students or trainees to be experiences in borderline areas or combat zones, and the Ministry's Regulation does not allow female soldiers to work in the area as such. Hence, only men are qualified, and women cannot be trained to be decisive which leaves them to be hesitating. Furthermore, in generic, women are sensitive and slow, while men are more experienced and well trained in decision making, so that men are likely appointed to be a military commander more than women.

3.3.3 Thai cultural perspective

The culture views that women are physically weak and should be protected by men. This results in not being chosen to work in any positions requiring physical strength or in rough areas shortening of public utilities. Moreover, it is risky for them to get sexually harassed.

3.3.4 Women's responsibility and duty toward their family

Thai culture expects women to take care of domestic affairs, family, kids, and parents. After marriage, women tend to be expected to take care of kids in both during pregnancy and after giving birth. Women cannot work continually because they cannot move to remote

areas. Another problem is they need to follow their family to settle up in wherever better for their family. This makes them lose opportunities to get promoted although they are capable to earn it.

3.3.5 Physical limitation and safe

After giving birth, women's body and health gets changed, for examples their physical appearance, congenital disease, bone and muscle mass, and menopause period. These affect women's body, mind, the ability to adjust themselves with the society, and capabilities to carry out their missions. Thus, there are always few women can reach to high rank military promotions.

3.3.6 The number of Thai female soldiers is lower than what required by the United Nations

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC)'s resolution no. 1325 set the mutual goal that all member states must send female soldier to participate in the peace operations in both individual type (25%) and military contingent type (15%). Thailand already achieved the goal of the individual type, but not the contingent type due to many factors affecting this.

Chapter 4

Proposals on Development of Female Soldier Capabilities for Military Roles Enhancements



Proposals on Development of Female Soldier Capabilities for Military Roles Enhancements

Currently, both traditional and non-traditional threats have been affecting national security. The threats are sophisticated and multi-dimension connected. The examples are the expansion of superpowers, warfare transformation from the traditional form to hybrid form, terrorism, use of violence affecting human security, genocide, and migration. Among these problems, women and kids are significantly affected by human rights violation, torturing, sexual harassment, and persecution. Those impacts have led to social movements for women worldwide which, are demanding for peace, human rights, women rights, humanity, and gender equality. Such demands are being mad purposely to eliminate gender inequality and sexual persecution, and to call on women to participate more in cultural, political, economic, security, and educational affairs. Therefore, global communities revised and support women's roles. Variety of countries, including Thailand, have opened the floor for women to work in security field. Female soldiers have greatly perform their abilities which are unique and cannot be done by male soldiers.

Royal Thai Armed Forces have 8.7% women from all personnel. This number is obviously lower than what prescribed in the Ministry's Regulation B.E. 2527 and the guideline from the Defence Council Summit 6/39 which set the number of 25%. Currently, based on their capabilities, female soldiers can greatly support missions of Thai Armed

Forces in many types, namely combat support, country development and people aids, and peace operation. Thus, enhancing of capabilities of women in the forces must be supportive to and consistent with the Armed Forces' missions and their roles as a woman. Thai Armed Forces have the following ways to improve the female capabilities.

4.1 The Structure Revise

The Armed Forces firstly considers its missions prior to seeking, selecting, and recruiting people into the forces. Thus, the forces shall have personnel that have proper knowledge, capacities, physical abilities, and perspective supportive to its missions. By open the door for everyone, both male and female, to get selected and recruited. This allows the forces to have proper and qualified personnel. The recruiting methods also support the idea of gender equality (Gender Focal Point: GFP), universality, and gender equality. The practice also complies with The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In order to allow women to participate more in the missions, the Forces must know the necessity to use female soldiers, which missions need women, and what qualifications of women can support the missions.

4.2 Increase of number of female soldiers

The percentage of female soldiers in Royal Thai Armed Forces is much lower than 25%. At the present, there are 8 educational institutes affiliated with the Ministry of Defense. 4 commissioned officer institutes are the Phramongkutklao College of Medicine and the 3 Nursing

Colleges under the 3 services. The rest 4 non-commissioned schools are the Military Technical Training School which admits women in its joint program, and the 3 military music brand schools in the 3 services. It's clear that female soldiers graduated from these schools all are uniquely expert. The Forces is supposed to revise its missions to be compliant with the security situation for the current and future circumstances, so that the forces shall be able to plan on producing female soldiers for the organization, and to develop mandatory courses for women that the forces needs them to be expert in. Thus, women shall have opportunities to study in the programs under the ministry which shall make them qualified for serving as equal as men.

4.3 Eliminating of prejudice

The forces should aim at upholding gender equality, and adjust people's sexist perception viewing women as weak and sensitive which shall lead to discriminative policies and practices against women and women in forces' capabilities development. New trend must be brought into play. Female soldiers must be judged grounded on their abilities and knowledge required by the forces. The forces must support female soldiers to freely determine which capacity developments they desire without any discriminative practices toward them. They should have opportunities to train in numerous courses to strengthen their capabilities in both physical and mental aspects.

4.4 Systematic post-serving education and training

In their career paths, female soldiers should be able to systematically participate in many military courses to enhance their roles to be able to take a high rank commanding position. This shall allow them to be mature as a leader or director that possess good leadership in both physical and mental aspects, and be able to make a decision in urgent circumstances. This is so mandatory to develop personnel to carry out the forces' missions. Additionally, this shall be a good motivation for female soldiers to develop and improve themselves as they desire and capacity, to have fairness, and bright career future.

4.5 Female soldiers and specific combat units

According to the job descriptions, female soldiers are able to work in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), e.g. - system analyst, program developing, network administration, and webmaster. Nowadays, traditional warfare that has actual confrontations is becoming less. Non-traditional warfare, especially cyber warfare, is becoming more practical.

Female soldiers can also be trained and educated to participate in combat missions even though they don't have to work in rough areas. Thus, they can be appointed and assigned to work in some combat units, e.g. - cyber-warrior and drone pilot.

4.6 Forces preparation for peace operations in both contingent type and individual type

Royal Thai Armed Forces should prepare female soldiers to be capable and knowledgeable, and to meet the quantity required by the United Nations, especially the military contingent type. The Thai Armed Forces can also enhance the skills and capacities of current female soldiers by giving them more opportunities to train or study in numerous program in order to strengthen their administrative skills. In addition, in order to achieve the goal of peace keeping missions, Royal Thai Armed Forces may consider recruiting female soldiers from civil servants or governmental staffs.

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Appendix

Summary of 2/2020 Strategic Problems Conference

Fiscal Year 2020

Title: “Roles of Female Soldiers in Military Missions”

Monday February 24, 2020, 01:00 PM – 4:00 PM

The Strategic Studies Center’s meeting room



President

Col. Buntoon Bamrerraj

Deputy Director, Strategic Studies
Center, National Defence Studies
Institute

Speaker

1. Colonel Nattapol Saengchan

Deputy Director, Peace Operation
Center, Directorate of Joint Operation

2. Colonel Ronnarong Chantinmatom

Deputy Director of Personel
Division, Directorate of Personnel,
Royal Thai Army,

3. Capt.Reongdej Varunaprabha, RTN

Director of Policy and Planning
Division Office of Personnel
Management Naval Personnel
Department

4. Gp.Capt. Wirote Phyanoi

Deputy Director of Office of
Personnel policy and Administration,
Directorate of Personnel RTAF

5. Miss Naiyana Supapueng

Director of Teeranat Foundation

Moderator (Master of ceremonies)

Gp.Capt. Chularat Pethcharawises

Vice Director of the Strategic

and Security Research Studies Division,

Strategic Studies Center,

National Defence Studies Institute

Summary

1. Missions, available vacancies, and proportion of recruitment

1.1 Royal Thai Armed Forces has 18,498 personnel which has 6,571 female soldiers thereof. The 6,571 female soldiers are 2,084 commissioned and 4,487 non-commissioned. Due to this unit has the duties of force preparation and defense which does not include ‘use of force’, its female soldier proportion accounts for 35.5%.

1.2 Royal Thai Army is composed of 130,000 personnel which has only 8,100 female soldiers among those. The 8,100 number of persons accounts for only 6% of 130,000, and is composed of 3,700 commissioned soldiers and 4,400 non-commissioned soldiers. As for female rangers, the in charge units shall be able to recruit the full-number of female soldiers as approved. Currently, there are approximately 800 female rangers.

1.3 Royal Thai Navy has totally 80,000 personnel which includes 3,100 women (3.8%) therein. The 3,100 consists of 2,260 commissioned

soldiers, 740 non-commissioned soldiers, and 100 rangers.

1.4 Royal Thai Air Force has 4,432 female soldiers as a part of its 24,247 personnel. The number of female soldier accounts for 18% of the total personnel. There are 2732 commissioned female soldiers and 1,700 non-commissioned female soldiers therein.

2. Roles and capabilities of female soldiers involving military missions

2.1 The representative of the Peace Operations Center expressed that:

(1) The United Nations has stressed 3 focal points in the agenda of Women, Peace and Security (WPS). Firstly, female soldiers should be supported to take more roles in conflict prevention and solving by applying peace method. Secondly, women rights must be protected in both during and after conflicts. Lastly, more staffs and officers should be contributed into the UN peace operation. This agenda is closely connected to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),

(2) The current roles of Royal Thai Armed Forces fort the supports of UN peace operation.

(3) The UN called on each member state to send 15% of female soldiers to join the contingent type of operation, send 25% of female

soldiers to join the individual type.

2.2 The representative from the Army Directorate of Personnel expressed that female soldiers in the Army have 4 types of roles, namely:

(1) Combat support roles, for examples, voluntary female rangers, female military polices, psychological operation officers, and quartermaster staffs;

(2) Country development and people aids, e.g. – supporting of the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM)’s missions in human assistance and disaster relief (HADR);

(3) Peace operations; and

(4) Other roles that include, but not limited to, protecting and upholding of the institution of kingship, and establishing and developing of civil networks participated by every sector.

2.3 The representative from the Navy Directorate of Personnel expressed that female soldiers in the Army have 3 types of roles, namely:

(1) Combat support roles, for examples, voluntary female rangers, and female military polices;

(2) Country development and people aids, e.g. – being a moderator in anti-narcotic drug campaigns and any activities contributing to bedridden patients; and

(3) Peace operations

2.4 The representative from the Air Force Directorate of Personnel expressed that the Air Force would like to support the recruitment of female pilots. The view was expressed that the Air Force wanted to apply the exceptional clause of the Ministry of Defence's Regulation on Female Soldiers B.E. 2537 to allow the Air Force to recruit 5 female pilots annually for 3 years. The Force was then considering the pilot roles of women as the ground to amend the regulation forward.

2.5 Miss Naiyana Supapueng mentioned that Thailand has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 1958. This international convention is opening the floor for women to participate in management and administration in all levels.

3. Problems and obstacles toward enhancing of women roles in the forces

3.1 The percentages of female soldiers in the 3 branches of services are still lower than the percentage prescribed by the Ministry of Defence which is 25%.

3.2 Female soldiers have less opportunities to get promoted to stay in a higher commanding position which requires leadership and skills to think and make a decision decisively in urgent situation. This

is because women generally are sensitive and hesitating.

3.3. Thai culture views that women are physically weak and should be protected by men. This results in not being chosen to work in any positions requiring physical strength or in rough areas shortening of public utilities.

3.4 Thai culture expects women to take care of domestic affairs, family, kids, and parents. After marriage, women tend to be expected to take care of kids in both during pregnancy and after giving birth. Women cannot work continually because they cannot move to remote areas. Another problem is they need to follow their family to settle up in wherever better for their family. This makes them lose opportunities to get promoted although they are capable to earn it.

3.5 Physical limitation and safe

After giving birth, women's body and health gets changed. Menopause period is also another issue that can affect women's health. These affect women's quality of life and their abilities to perform their duties.

3.6 The number of Thai female soldiers is lower than what required by the United Nations Peace Operation. Thailand already achieved the goal of the individual type services, but not the contingent

type services required by the UN due to many factors affecting this.

4. Proposals

4.1 The forces' missions must be given the great priority to decide whether there is necessity to recruit female soldiers.

4.2 Increase of female soldiers should be done through the armed forces' educational instruments. Specific training or educational programs under the Ministry's supervision should be developed to produce qualified and skillful female soldiers as the forces needed. This shall increase the number of capable women in the forces, and ultimately enhance gender equality in military education.

4.3 Prejudice toward women must be eliminated. New trend must be brought into play. Female soldiers must be judged grounded on their abilities and knowledge required by the forces. The forces must support female soldiers to freely determine which capacity developments they desire without any discriminative practices toward them.

4.4 Systematic post-serving education and training should be established. Female soldiers should be able to systematically participate in many military courses to enhance their roles to be able to take a high rank commanding or administrative position. This shall allow them to be mature as a leader or director that possess good leadership in both physical and mental aspects.

4.5 Female soldiers can be assigned to work in some particular combat units. Nowadays, traditional warfare that has actual confrontations is becoming less. Non-traditional warfare, especially cyber warfare, is increasing. Thus, female soldiers can work in combat missions requiring some technical knowledge even though they don't have to work in rough areas.

4.6 Forces preparation for peace operations, in both contingent type and individual type, must be done to meet the UN's requirements. Royal Thai Armed Forces may consider recruiting female soldiers from civil servants or governmental staffs. In addition, the Thai Armed Forces can also enhance the skills and capacities of current female soldiers by giving them more opportunities to train or study in numerous program in order to strengthen their administrative skills.

Photos from the 2/2020 Strategic Problems Conference
Fiscal Year 2020

Title: “Roles of Female Soldiers in Military Missions”

Monday February 24, 2020, 01:00 PM – 4:00 PM

The Strategic Studies Center's meeting room







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