



## Bhutan Position Paper

### Doğa Deniz Tüfekçi



#### I. Background Information on Bhutan

Bhutan is a country in south-central Asia. Historically being a monarchy, Bhutan became a parliamentary democracy in 2008 thanks to the efforts initiated by King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (1952-1972). Bhutan shares borders with Tibet and India and has parts within the Great Himalayas that are in the northern part of the country. Bhutan population is mostly dominant with Bhutia people, with Nepalese coming next. However there has been a refugee problem arising between Nepal and Bhutan before were more than 100,000 Nepalis in Bhutan fled to Nepal and were held and UNHCR has established refugee camps and helped resettlement of the refugees. The Kingdom of Bhutan was historically very isolated, but it has become less isolated starting from the 1960s. Bhutan is well known for its rich variety of animals and forests. Bhutan's primary concern is environmental problems in the region.

Bhutan has close ties with Bangladesh in the region and has been friendly towards other countries by signing treaties that enrich their relations. Bhutan also has been active in regional and international organizations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Bhutan has not previously worked on ensuring security in the Bay of Bengal due to its economic inactivity. Due to its peaceful nature, Bhutan has not faced terrorism but has been supporting India in its efforts to fight state-sponsored terrorism. Bhutan would also affirm India's big role in deciding the future of the Durand Line.

#### II. Past Achievements and Attempts of Bhutan on the Issues

##### A. The question of the Durand Line:

- Being a part of the SAARC along with Afghanistan, Pakistan and India have let Bhutan improve its political relations with all of them. However, Bhutan hasn't been active in the debate on the topic of the Durand Line nor it has taken military action.

##### B. Tackling maritime security threats in the Bay of Bengal:

- Bhutan is a member of The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and this organization has also focused on cooperation in the area of terrorism. Not having a navy leaves Bhutan in a hard position to take action in order to protect maritime security.



### C. Curbing state-sponsored terrorism in Southern Asia:

- Bhutan has been a member state of the BIMSTEC and has been attending discussions on the topic of terrorism as well. Bhutan has previously also attended SAARC summits, such as the 12th and 13th, in which there was an emphasis on establishing more cooperation between the South Asian member states to fight terrorism.

## III. Objectives, Aims and Possible Solutions Proposed by Bhutan on the Issues

### A. The question of the Durand Line:

- Bhutan has concerns as this is a very complicated situation that won't be easily solved as both countries approach the issue with too much seriousness. The most important solution to the issue would be using the UN as an international mediator where more politically involved countries in the issue like the United States could pressure the two countries to start a dialogue. In these discussions, the two countries would decide upon the security measures that should be taken to reduce the tension in the Durand Line, the governance in the territory, and such. Bhutan also wants India who also claims to be actively involved in these discussions so that their interests are also taken into consideration.

### B. Tackling maritime security threats in the Bay of Bengal:

- Bhutan believes increasing the authority and funding of the BIMSTEC is crucial in addressing the topic of maritime security, where they could keep actively participating in the issue. This would allow more efficient and frequent meetings by BIMSTEC, information sharing and agenda would be regularly updated and this would allow early action taken by the members. BIMSTEC members should also designate the relevant government bodies to communicate with BIMSTEC and speed up the process of taking initiatives. The Bay of Bengal should have more specialized security mechanisms overall.

### C. Curbing state-sponsored terrorism in Southern Asia:

- Bhutan hopes all countries in Southern Asia participate in being more transparent, especially about their findings that could help accelerate the process of coming up with solutions and punishing the perpetrators of state-sponsored terrorism in Southern Asia.



#### IV. Bibliography

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