

PREFACE

The end of cold war in late 1980s had totally changed the strategic outlook in the management of military crisis. The revolution in military affairs (RMA) that took place thereafter, had witnessed the importance of technology in determining the national resilience and military power. In modern warfare, technology is considered the main determinant in victory or defeat in the battlefield.

The Malaysian Army, realising the need to prepare a lean and mean force to fight a conventional warfare, requires state-of-the-art equipment in order to provide the mobility, firepower and intelligence, which are vital in waging war. All these elements can be obtained through the possession of land vehicles of various functions, be they soft- skinned or armoured platforms. The military capability is further enhanced with the support of local automotive industry, which enables the force to be self reliant on military hardware.

This paper intends to look at the development of local automotive industry's technological capabilities that help enhance the nation's defence posture. The automotive sector provides the basis for the

development of defence land transportation requirement for logistics support and combat tasks. The research is conducted on three companies that are actively involved in supplying and manufacturing various types of vehicles required by the army. The companies are Malaysian Mining Corporation-Defence (MMC-Defence) which specialises in armoured vehicle modernisation and upgrading, Diversified Resource Berhad-Defence Technology (DEFTECH), which supplies and assembles trucks and armoured vehicles, and Pesaka Astana (M) Sdn Bhd (PA), which manufactures customised and special purpose vehicles.

The study shows that the companies have obtained a considerable level of technological capabilities, mainly due to government's incentive and favourable policies. However, they need to further increase their R&D efforts and the diffusion of technology provided by their strategic alliances, the foreign military hardware manufacturers. It is also felt that the local defence industry does not fully benefit from the transfer of technology arrangement from the purchases of equipment. This is where more comprehensive policies and monitoring systems should be formulated so that the taxpayer's money is worth spent.