

DIIS REPORT

ASEAN AND ARF IN EAST ASIA'S SECURITY ARCHITECTURE:

THE ROLE OF NORMS AND POWERS

Erik Beukel

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Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS

Strandgade 56, DK-1401 Copenhagen, Denmark

Ph: +45 32 69 87 87

Fax: +45 32 69 87 00

E-mail: diis@diis.dk

Web: www.diis.dk

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I. Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is the oldest regional organization in East Asia. It was established in 1967 by five anti-communist and Western-leaning states: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei joined in 1984. After the end of the Cold War, ASEAN's former communist adversaries also joined the Association: Vietnam in 1995, Burma (from 1998 Myanmar) and Laos in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999, meaning that today all Southeast Asian countries (except Timor-Leste, which was separated from Indonesia in 2002) are members of ASEAN. Throughout its first forty years ASEAN worked on the basis of various declarations and documents, but a formal charter was not adopted until the fortieth anniversary summit in November 2007. However, the ASEAN countries have developed a set of more or less formalized principles and norms, called the "ASEAN way", as a basis for their cooperation, and since the end of the Cold War they have sought to extend the ASEAN normative framework to relations between states in the rest of East Asia.

Assessments of ASEAN and its role and significance in East Asia have been highly varied. Until the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, many observers and scholars considered ASEAN the most successful international organization among developing countries. That was a view shared not only by observers in the region, but also by several others. ASEAN was a social, economic and political success and represented a far-sighted and sensitive diplomacy that was peaceful and efficient, despite operating under consensus and with full respect for national sovereignty (Martin, 1987; Öjendal, 2004). Michael Leifer, the late British scholar who was a leading expert on Southeast Asian relations, wrote in the late 1980s that ASEAN had become well established as a regional actor and enjoyed widespread international standing (Leifer, 1989: 147). An Australian scholar, Paul Dibb, noted in the mid-1990s that the ASEAN group, "which acts together as a united bloc on key issues, has already accrued to itself political influence out of all proportion to any objective measure of its economic, military or political power" (Dibb, 1995: 41). Against this, a few Western scholars have long been more skeptical and pointed to the marginal diplomatic role of ASEAN, for instance, in settling the Cambodian conflict in the late 1990s. The notion of an exceptional and benign "ASEAN way" (or "ASEAN spirit") has also been questioned, as has the assertion that there is a distinctly peaceful Asian and ASEAN approach to security (Buzan, 1995; Segal, 1995-6).

Since the Asian economic crisis and the extensive forest fires in Indonesia in 1997 and 1998, with the resulting haze and health problems in neighboring countries, the lack of any attempt by ASEAN to decide or implement countermeasures have led to less enthusiastic views on ASEAN. Nonetheless a few scholars still see only success in the organization. Thus one Philippine political scientist, Estrella Solidum, has written: "With the highest commitment to its goals of peace, freedom, stability, prosperity, rule of law, and security ... ASEAN has remained vibrant and relevant as the 21st century has begun" (Solidum, 2003: 222). An opposite assessment, however, has become much more widespread among both Western and Southeast Asian scholars and observers. One European scholar has noted that "the 'ASEAN way' with its tendency of hiding problems behind euphemisms and symbolic action...leaves little time for concerted reaction when the organization is subjected to external shocks.... The 'ASEAN way' represents fair weather cooperation which flourishes under the conditions of economic boom" (Rüland, 2000: 444). In early 1998 *The Economist* noted, under the heading "The Limits of Politeness", that ASEAN "favours carrots over sticks, consensus over breakthrough, camaraderie over formality and process over substance. ... The 'ASEAN way' no longer works" (*The Economist*, February 26th, 1998). A similar observation is that "ASEAN did little other than host light-weight summits centered around innumerable games of golf" (Kurlantzick, 2002: 21). It has become a widespread view that ASEAN is little better than a lame duck which is unable to deal with serious transnational and international challenges in Southeast Asia. Some scholars strongly criticize ASEAN scholarship for being ASEAN-centric and sharing an exaggerated enthusiasm for ASEAN's practices, a tendency that has been called 'ASEANology' or 'ASEANthink' (Jones and Smith, 2001, and 2007a). But the specific feature of ASEAN is that it is "making process, not progress" (Jones and Smith, 2007b). Think-tanks and academics in Southeast Asia are also increasingly questioning ASEAN's role, suggesting that it needs reinvent and revitalize itself or risk becoming irrelevant.¹

ASEAN's significance beyond Southeast Asia is suggested by the fact that different institutions in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region have been set up by ASEAN countries since the early 1990s. Most important is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), established in 1994 with eighteen participants, which now has 27 from the Asia-Pacific region (cf. the appendix) as an attempt to extend the "ASEAN way" to the rest of East Asia. Attached to ARF is the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), which was founded in 1992 and forms the core of the

¹ See especially: Tay, Estanislao and Soesastro (ed.), 2001, pp. 9-12.

so-called track II nonofficial diplomacy. ASEAN Plus Three (APT) (ASEAN plus China, Japan and South Korea) was established in 1996 and then seen by a few member states, especially China and Malaysia, as the beginning of a distinctive pan-East Asian regionalism, especially after the 1997 economic crisis pointed to the need for an institution to coordinate East Asian economies (Stubbs, 2002; Zhang, 2005). Yet, most APT states, especially Japan, prefer a broader Asia-Pacific framework (Hund, 2003). Potentially more important, the first East-Asia Summit (EAS) was held in 2005 and attended by the thirteen APT states plus Australia, India, and New Zealand. EAS was promoted by especially Malaysia and has until now dealt primarily with economic issues. Lastly, there is Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), established in 1989, has 21 members – referred to as “member economies” – from all around the Pacific Ocean. The institution is unique in that both China and Taiwan are “member economies”.

The aim of this report is to evaluate the potential and limitations of ASEAN and the ASEAN-sponsored ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a part of East Asia’s composite security architecture. ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum are treated here as security regimes. A *security regime* is a normative framework (principles and norms) and associated implementing instruments (rules and decision-making procedures) which make it feasible for member states to be restrained in their behavior towards each other in the belief that others will reciprocate even if their relationships are shaped by fear of war and expectations of the use of military power (Blanchard, 2003: 446f.; Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 491-2; Jervis, 1982). A security regime may turn into a *security community*, meaning that countries do not expect or prepare for the use of military force in their relations with each other. Although there has been no major war between two ASEAN countries since the Association was founded forty years ago except for a few cases of border fighting and a number of tense situations with preparations for military conflicts, the possibility of war among ASEAN members cannot be ruled out (Acharya, 2006; Collins, 2000: 117-18). While ASEAN is not yet a security community, it can be termed a thin, or nascent, security community (Acharya, 1998; Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 491; Emmerson, 2005). *The questions* to consider in this report are the following: What is the distinctive character of ASEAN as a regional institution? What are the central features of ASEAN and ARF as security regimes? How should ASEAN’s normative influence in framing East Asia’s security architecture be compared to the role of great powers with influence in the region, especially China and the United States? Do ASEAN and ASEAN-sponsored institutions have the institutional capacity to remove, and possibly reduce, great power rivalry in East Asia’s loose security architecture and

change relations between states in the region in order to turn them into something closer to a security community?

The following section, section 2, provides a brief introduction to economic, political and cultural features of East Asia, as well as characteristics of regional institutions in the region and East Asia's security architecture. As a continuation of this, the character of ASEAN as a regional institution is assessed from two angles. First, section 3 presents an overview of ASEAN's origins in the late 1960s and its aims as stipulated in early ASEAN declarations, new initiatives since 2000 and the new ASEAN Charter. Next, in section 4, the normative framework of a distinctive "ASEAN way" and the interplay with ASEAN practices is considered with a view to how it has evolved since the Association was formed forty years ago. Section 5 looks at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which was established in 1994 on the initiative of the ASEAN countries as a response to uncertainties in the East Asian security context after the end of the Cold War and as an attempt to extend the ASEAN model to other parts of East Asia, thus displaying the Association's aspirations to normative leadership in the region. In the concluding section 6, the institutional capacity of ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum as a part of the overall East Asian security architecture is assessed: what role do ASEAN's aspirations for normative leadership play compared to the structural leaderships of major powers in the East Asian security architecture?

2. East Asia: A Brief Introduction

East Asia is a rising region. Its economic and political importance in world affairs is growing, and the region's new self-confidence is evident. Since the 1970s East Asia has had by far the strongest economic growth of all regions in the world, and it includes some of the world's most dynamic economies. East Asia accounts for nearly a third of the world's population, and since 1970 the region's emerging economies have increased their share of global output from less than 10% to 13% in 1995 to more than 20% today. Three of the ten largest economies in the world are in East Asia: Japan (no. 2), China (no. 4) and South Korea (no. 10). In recent decades, especially since the early 1990s, some of the most populous East Asian countries, like Indonesia, China, South Korea and Taiwan, have reduced absolute poverty markedly and, considered as a whole, East Asia is fast becoming a middle income region (World Development Indicators 2007; World Development Report 2007. Regional Highlights: East Asia and the Pacific). Before the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 there was much talk about Asia's miracle economies, but, as Paul Krugman argued three years before the 1997 crisis (Krugman, 1994), Asia's miracle is a myth. The remarkable record of East Asian growth has been matched by rapid growth in inputs, in particular high saving ratios and investments in primary education. Whatever the reason, East Asian countries have managed to get the key input factors right. At the same time, it is evident that some countries in East Asia have vulnerable economic and political systems.

East Asia is also a very heterogeneous region. Focusing upon three major variables in comparative analyses of political systems – political freedom, economic development and culture – the chief characteristic of East Asian countries is their diversity. As for political freedom, Freedom House's latest annual survey of the distribution of the sixteen East Asian countries on a "freedom rating" clearly indicates the most obvious differences between the countries in the region: four are rated as "free" (Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan), five as "partly free" (Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor)), and seven countries as "not free" (Brunei, Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, North Korea and Vietnam).² Also, there are clear economic disparities both between and within East Asian countries. The region encompasses some of the world's richest countries

² See *Freedom in the World 2007*, at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=372> (accessed October 19, 2007). The most important recent change in country distribution is that since the military coup in autumn 2006 Thailand has been moved from the "free" to the "not free" and then to the "partly free" group.

(Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) and some of the poorest (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, North Korea and Vietnam). Moreover, while absolute poverty has declined rapidly in major East Asian countries, economic inequalities have increased, particularly in China.³

Culture plays a prominent and often peculiar role in analyses and debates on developments in Asia. Common features like the centrality of the family, community, respect for education, for the teacher and authority, hard work, thrift, strict discipline and a preference for governance according to moral dictates rather than law have been cited as characteristic of 'Asian values' (Bessho, 1999: 53f.). This may encourage the view that applying a Weberian perspective, with its weight on culture and ideas rather than economic input factors, offers a valuable starting point in the study of the rapid industrialization in East Asia (Hamilton and Kao, 1987). However that may be, especially in the first half of the 1990s, a group of influential East Asian leaders and opinion-makers named the common Asian values mentioned above which distinguish Asia from other civilizations – including Western liberal democracies with their demands for human rights – as fundamental for East Asia's economic success and what was seen as the region's cooperative approach to security.⁴ Sometimes East Asian observers and scholars have expressed the view that, as the rise of East Asia shed its earlier passivity, there would be three centers of world power in the twenty-first century: East Asia, Europe, and North America. The difference between the ascent of East Asia and the decline of Europe was often presented as particularly striking. Asia had at long last started to define itself, and Asian consciousness was coming vigorously to life, animated by workaday pragmatism and the social awakening of a flourishing middle class which exemplified Asian values (Funabashi, 1993; Mahbubani, 1995). Modernization without Westernization was seen as a distinct trait of Asian values (Katzensein, 2000: 355). Moreover, some argued that, by building on dialogue, East Asians had found a distinctively new, culture-based and supposedly superior way of coping with security problems.

However, Asian cultures are also very diverse, as many ethnic groups and most of the world's major religions are found among and within Asian states. Focusing on East Asia there is no single set of East Asian values, but a pronounced socio-cultural, linguistic and religious diversity (Kim, 2004: 54f.). To the extent that Confucian-

³ See *World Economic Outlook*, April 2007, at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2007/01/index.htm>; and *Inequality in Asia: Key Indicators 2007*, Asian Development Bank, 2007, at <http://www.adb.org/>.

⁴ See especially the interview with Singapore's Prime Minister (1959-90) Lee Kuan Yew (Zakaria, 1994). See also Funabashi, 1993; Kausikan, 1993; Mahbubani, 1995.

ism is considered basic to East Asian values, the fact that Confucianism is not an immutable mono-tradition and that one should distinguish between Confucianism as a philosophy and as state orthodoxy is ignored (Dupont, 1996; Öjendal, 1998: 113-15). In the same way, the region's history, its colonial experience, and the diversity of political systems in the post-colonial period do contribute to its heterogeneity, since this has left a plurality of historical traditions, internal conflicts, border disputes and maritime conflicts between the countries in East Asia. In particular, a multitude of overlapping claims made by countries bordering the South China Sea have led to conflict situations in the 1990s and may contain the seeds of new conflict situations needing careful management to avoid escalations (Amer, 2002 (a) and (b); Kivimäki, Odgaard, and Tønnesen, 2002).

While East Asia is a heterogeneous region, East Asian states have also entered various regional, sub-regional and extra-regional multilateral institutions. The growth in Asian regional institutions has been especially strong in recent decades and has led one scholar to declare that "Asian regionalism is an idea whose time has come" (Katzenstein, 2000: 361). However, in focusing upon regional multilateral institutions in East Asia, its sub-regions or the broader Asia-Pacific region, it is important to note that they are relatively weak, with no equivalent to the panoply of European-wide institutions like the European Union (EU), with its many-sided functions. Nor is there any equivalent to NATO as a multilateral security organization (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002). Moreover, contrary to not only Europe but also North America, regional economic and political institutions in the Asia-Pacific region are not highly legalized in any of the dimensions of obligation, precision and delegation: there are few formal rules and obligations, precisely defined agreements are few compared to general principles, and disputes are managed rather than resolved without delegation to third-party adjudication. This can be related to an Asian predisposition against formal rules and a rejection of all kinds of political union, pooling of sovereignty or supranationality in favor of state-centric international relations. However, developments in the 1990s seem to indicate some movement toward a so-called demand-driven legalization, i.e., functional integration, though compared to economic and political integration in other regions, it is still a minor development (Kahler, 2000; Katzenstein, 1996). Potentially more important, a major change in ASEAN as a regional institution may be in the pipeline with the adoption of an ASEAN Charter in late 2007 (see below).

The relatively weak character of multilateral institutions in East Asia must be viewed in connection with the heterogeneous security architecture of the region. One reason

for this is that there are clear differences between the threat perceptions and security priorities of the states in the region. The region contains two of the world's most dangerous flashpoints – the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Strait – and some ASEAN members perceive their partners rather as potential adversaries. Hence, in important respects the security situation of East Asia is more complex, volatile, and potentially unstable than any other region of the world (Kim, 2004: 59). As for the actual prospects of regional peace and stability, scholars have disagreed over this, as in the early 1990s, some predicted dire scenarios about Asia as “ripe for rivalry” due to the fragmented character of its security architecture, while others have reached a more optimistic conclusion (Friedberg, 1993/94; Ross, 1999). Whatever the consequences for peace and stability, the situation is that scattered across the region are a patchwork of multilateral fora, *ad hoc* security arrangements and engagement mechanisms, as well as bilateral alliances with the most important extra-regional power, the United States (Ikenberry and Tsuchiyama, 2002).

In brief there are at least three types of security order in East Asia: hegemonic, balance of power, and community-based, which overlap in the evolving security architecture in East Asia (Ikenberry and Mastanduno, 2003). The American system of bilateral alliances with Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand, as well as security ties with Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan, forms a US-centered “hub and spokes” hegemonic order. As to the balance of power factor, the rising economic and military power of China and China's strained relations with Japan and Taiwan in particular represent the balance of power characteristics of the East Asian security architecture. Unlike these two power-based security orders, ASEAN and ASEAN-related institutions like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the track II diplomacy represent a community-based order that may form the basis of an emerging security community in the region to replace the power-based elements.

3. ASEAN: Origin and Aims

To understand ASEAN's character as an international organization, it is useful first to emphasize what it is not. ASEAN was never intended to be an organization promoting regional functional integration in the same manner as the European Community (EC) or its successor, the European Union (EU). Nor was ASEAN intended to fulfill a classical state-centric security role, whether as a collective defensive organization, i.e. an alliance in which all member states pledge to assist each other in case of attack from outside, or a collective security organization in which all member states pledge to punish a member who commits an act of aggression (Wolfers, 1959/1962). For the forty years of its existence, ASEAN's aims have been broader and more ambiguous, yet still strongly state-centric. A review of ASEAN's origins and aims as stipulated in early ASEAN documents will demonstrate that. Finally, new initiatives after 2000 to revive the Association and the ASEAN Charter, adopted by the 13th ASEAN Summit in November 2007, are reviewed.

Origin

ASEAN's five founding states – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand – are all small to medium-sized powers and all, except Thailand, former colonies. The origin of ASEAN lay in Indonesia's *konfrontasi* with Malaysia, initiated by President Sukarno in 1963 as an undeclared war against the new Federation of Malaysia which had been established with strong support from one of the traditional colonial powers in the region, Great Britain. The confrontation was intended to destabilize Malaysia through limited military action, economic sanctions and propaganda, pursued by Sukarno and backed by the powerful Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), as an attempt to overcome the last vestiges of colonialism. After Sukarno was removed from power and the PKI annihilated in 1965-66, when about half a million people were killed following a military coup, Indonesia endeavored to mend fences with its neighbors in the wake of the policy of confrontation. As by far the largest country in Southeast Asia, accounting for over half of the total population of the five founder states, Indonesia was a key state in the formation of ASEAN. For the other four members, ASEAN was a device to lock Indonesia into a multilateral structure that would restrain any hegemonic pretensions it might otherwise have had. That is, ASEAN was both a means of reconciliation and an attempt to prevent the recurrence of confrontation by establishing a form of political defense to constrain a potentially menacing neighbor (Emmers, 2003: 10-13 and 54-60). For ASEAN's

founders it was an important objective to promote a regional security community (Acharya, 1998: 202-3).

For the founding states, ASEAN also made it possible to fight secessionist movements without interference from one's neighbors. Related to this was the fact that ASEAN attempted to create a united front against communist insurgencies by supporting nation-building in the member states. Some insurgencies, however, were externally sponsored by China. Besides, ASEAN's founding members shared a concern for the outcome of the Vietnam War and its effect on the United States' commitment to security in Southeast Asia (Leifer, 1996: 10-11). But unlike regional institutions in Western Europe during the Cold War, which also had obvious anti-communist traits, ASEAN was not founded upon a shared commitment to liberal democracy. On the contrary, ASEAN's founding states experienced a retreat from postcolonial liberal democracy, and ASEAN's formation and consolidation can be characterized as an elite-centered and 'patrimonial' regionalism (Acharya, 2003a).

Early ASEAN documents

ASEAN had no formal charter until one was adopted by the ASEAN Summit in November 2007 (see below). When the institution was founded in August 1967, the five Foreign Ministers signed the Bangkok Declaration, a brief two-page document containing just five articles. The preamble to the Declaration spoke of "the existence of mutual interests and common problems" among countries of Southeast Asia and how, "in the spirit of equality and partnership," they sought to "contribute towards peace, progress and prosperity in the region". These words strike the tone of the Declaration. It further reads:

in an increasingly interdependent world, the cherished ideals of peace, freedom, social justice and economic well-being are best attained by fostering good understanding, good neighbourliness and meaningful cooperation among the countries of the region already bound together by ties of history and culture;

... the countries of Southeast Asia share a primary responsibility for strengthening the economic and social stability of the region and ensuring their peaceful and progressive national development, and that they are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of their peoples;

... all foreign bases are temporary and remain only with the expressed concurrence of the countries concerned and are not intended to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence and freedom of States in the area or prejudice the orderly processes of their national development;

The most important aims and purposes of the Association were stated as follows:

1. To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of South-East Asian Nations;
2. To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields;

At the end of the declaration, it was stated that the Association was open to participation by all states in the Southeast Asian region that subscribed to the aforementioned aims, principles, and purposes. The Bangkok declaration ended by stating that:

the Association represents the collective will of the nations of South-East Asia to bind themselves together in friendship and cooperation and, through joint efforts and sacrifices, secure for their peoples and for posterity the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity. (<http://www.aseansec.org/3628.htm>)

A minimum of administrative machinery was established to carry out these aims in the form of an annual meeting of foreign ministers, while special meetings might be convened as required. A Standing Committee was also created to carry at the work of the Association in between the foreign ministers' meetings, as well as ad-hoc committees and committees of specialists and officials on specific subjects. Although a national secretariat was set up in each member state, a joint ASEAN secretariat was not established until 1976, when one was set up in Jakarta.

The Bangkok declaration reflected the thinking that free and independent states intent on economic, social and cultural nation-building were essential when it came to fighting ethnic or communist insurgencies and realize the peaceful development of all nations in Southeast Asia. In a world marked by interdependence, the developmentally strong states had to be supported by cooperative state-to-state relations rather than attempts to pool sovereignty in international institutions. Any sort of foreign interference or subversion was rejected. Thus in the founding declaration, ASEAN as a security regime was characterized by a normative framework marked by general principles and goals rather than norms for specific standards of behavior. When it came to instruments of implementation, a few institutions were established without any stipulations regarding decision-making procedures. Convergence of political outlook did not mean a ready-made consensus on how to proceed (Leifer, 1989: 21).

During ASEAN's first ten years, a number of declarations and agreements reiterated or elaborated on these ideas or gave them a slightly different turn. Three documents in particular have a quasi-constitutional character. First, the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace and Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), which emphasized respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, endorsed the principles of peaceful coexistence as laid down by the Bandung conference of 1955⁵ and stated that the neutralization of Southeast Asia was a desirable objective which should be explored. Besides, the trend towards establishing nuclear-free zones for the purpose of promoting world peace and security was noted but not endorsed outright. Altogether, ZOPFAN expressed a desire for regional autonomy, though since it was constrained by a fear of being abandoned, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration did not represent a true meeting of minds on the part of ASEAN countries (Leifer, 1989: 58ff.; <http://www.aseansec.org/1215.htm>). Secondly, in 1976 two documents were signed at the first ever summit meeting of ASEAN leaders held in Bali, Indonesia, when the five anti-communist Southeast Asian countries responded to the victory of communist North Vietnam the year before by registering and attempting to build a specific political identity and purpose. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) reiterated ASEAN's normative framework: mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations, the right of every state to a national existence free from external interference or coercion, non-interference, peaceful set-

⁵ The conference, held in Bandung, Indonesia, was attended by 29 Afro-Asian countries and represented the start of the non-aligned movement during the Cold War.

tlement and renunciation of the threat or use of force. The novelty in the TAC was the establishment of a dispute settlement mechanism, the High Council, to offer its good offices, mediate or recommend other appropriate measures for the prevention or amelioration of disputes among members (<http://www.aseansec.org/1217.htm>). The adoption of this dispute settlement mechanism is a central feature of the tension between norms and practices in the “ASEAN way” (cf. below). The other document adopted at the 1976 summit was the ASEAN Concord, which affirmed continued cooperation on a *non-ASEAN* basis (emphasis added) between the member states in security matters in accordance with their mutual needs and interests. As part of a program of action regarding a framework for ASEAN cooperation, the Concord mentioned ZOPFAN in a rather cautious manner: “Immediate consideration of initial steps towards recognition of and respect for the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality wherever possible”. However, it was also declared that member states, “individually or collectively, shall take active steps for the early establishment of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality” (<http://www.aseansec.org/1649.htm>).

Besides the basic ASEAN documents adopted throughout the association’s first decade, it should be mentioned that during the 1970s and 1980s a number of economic and industrial cooperation projects, as well as preferential trade arrangements, were adopted. However, most of these initiatives made very little progress, and as a scheme of regional economic integration ASEAN plans came to nothing for a long time (Mattli, 1999: 163-6; Jacobson, 1984: 379-83).

New initiatives

After 2000 various initiatives have been aimed at reviving the Association. A summit in autumn 2003 announced the establishment of an ASEAN Community, founded on economic, security and socio-cultural “pillars”. This “Concord II” was largely a statement of intent concerning long-term goals, being standard “ASEAN speak”. The actual way the ASEAN Community would operate remained unclear, and the policy detail would have to be fleshed out at a later date (Ferguson, 2004; Smith, 2004). In talking about an ASEAN security community, for the first time in the Association’s history Concord II pointed to “democracy” as a goal for the global rather than national level.⁶ Among other recent initiatives, the first ASEAN meet-

⁶ The specific wording is: “The ASEAN Security Community is envisaged to bring ASEAN’s political and security cooperation to a higher plane to ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and *with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment*” (emphasis added) (<http://www.aseansec.org/15159.htm>).

ing of defense ministers took place in the spring of 2006 as part of the aspiration to establish an ASEAN security community by 2020 (Strategic Survey 2007: 390-2). The ministers reaffirmed the goal of the ASEAN security community by stating their intention “to bring ASEAN’s political and security cooperation to a higher plane to ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment” – a statement very similar to that adopted as a part of Concord II (cf. above; also <http://www.aseansec.org/18414.htm>).⁷

Other major new initiatives are measures to deal with subjects on the new security agenda, i.e., drug-trafficking, human-trafficking, money-laundering, piracy and terrorism. In Southeast Asia, maritime security and effective measures against piracy in the Straits of Malacca, the Straits of Singapore and in the South China Sea are especially important (Blanchard, 2003), but terrorism is also an urgent problem in the region, where thousands of islands offer hiding places that are impassable to traditional police actions. The November 2001 Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism stated that, among other things, national mechanisms to combat terrorism should be strengthened, cooperation among ASEAN law enforcement agencies should be deepened, and information and intelligence exchanges should be enhanced to facilitate the flow of information on terrorists and terrorist organizations (<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/65902.htm>). Following the Bali bombings a year later, ASEAN reiterated its commitment to fighting terrorism and, on the whole, ASEAN has gone along with broad international efforts to combat terrorism. At the same time, it is worth noting that the Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, signed with the United States in August 2002, included a proviso that the United States and ASEAN both recognized the “principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other states” (<http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/ot/12428.htm>).

An ASEAN Charter

The potentially most important new initiative is the adoption of an ASEAN Charter at the Association’s fortieth anniversary summit held in November 2007. The preparation of an ASEAN Charter was initiated two years earlier, at the ASEAN summit in

⁷ Actually, a meeting of ASEAN defense ministers and senior officials had taken place four years earlier, in Singapore in June 2002. It was convened by a *European* track II organization, the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), but functioned in an official track I mode; cf. Ball, 2004: 46-7. On the track II diplomacy, see section 5.

2005, when an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) was established, consisting of elder statesmen and public servants, one from each country, who were asked to consult widely and to recommend “bold and visionary” ideas for the Charter (<http://www.aseansec.org/18040.htm>). The EPG submitted its report in December 2006, much of it being a severe criticism of many ASEAN procedures. The summit in January 2007 “endorsed” the report, although there were clear differences among members on a number of controversial issues (<http://www.gov.ph/news/?i=18228>). A ten-member drafting committee, known as the High Level Task Force (HLTF), was established to draft the Charter, and a first draft was submitted to the meeting of foreign ministers in July 2007. Some of the most controversial suggestions were dropped or toned down, and after more negotiations, the November 2007 summit finally signed an ASEAN Charter (<http://www.13thaseansummit.org.sg/asean.index.php/web/documents/agreements>). It will probably take a year before it can enter into force after the last member state has ratified it. The Charter is more comprehensive (17 pages) than the usual, more basic ASEAN documents, and only the most conspicuous stipulations in the light of traditional ASEAN aims and principles will be identified. The first to be mentioned on the following list indicate a confirmation of traditional ASEAN ways, while the later ones indicate a change:

- respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all member states;
- non-interference in the internal affairs of member states;
- respect for the right of every member state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion, or coercion;
- decision-making by consultation and consensus;
- nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in the region are prohibited;
- several new decision-making bodies are set up;
- a human rights body is set up to operate in accordance with the terms of reference to be determined by the Foreign Ministers meeting;
- ASEAN is accorded a legal identity;
- adherence to the rule of law, good governance, principles of democracy and constitutional government;
- respect for fundamental freedoms, the promotion and protection of human rights.

The two last-mentioned themes are mentioned three times in the Charter, in the preamble and in the articles on purposes and principles, and they may have the great-

est potential for transforming ASEAN. However, as other stipulations can clearly be used to check any ambition to change ASEAN ways, it is difficult to imagine that the new Charter, if it is ratified by all members, will result in significant changes without controversy. The Charter may have some potential for increasing ASEAN's coherence and efficiency, but it is also precisely subjects like democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights that may cause conflicts between the highly divergent political systems in ASEAN. The Association tried hard, and succeeded, in keeping these matters off the agenda throughout its first forty years, which may not be possible in the future.

4. The “ASEAN Way”: Normative Framework and Practices

The term “the ‘ASEAN way’” is a loosely worded and vague concept with no fixed meaning. It is nonetheless a term favored by ASEAN’s leaders themselves to describe the process of intra-mural interaction and to distinguish it from other, especially Western, multilateral settings. The origin of the expression is obscure, but it seems that it was first used by policy-makers in the founding ASEAN countries in the mid-1970s to argue that the success of ASEAN was due to close interpersonal ties and consultations among ASEAN leaders (Acharya, 2001: 63f.). For elaborating central tenets of the ASEAN way, it is useful to focus upon the behavioral norms of ASEAN members and consider their interplay with practices. The point is that the actual meaning and operational impact of ASEAN’s normative framework has varied over time with different structural and ideational challenges, resulting in a certain tension between norms and practices. In calling attention to that tension, it has to be remembered that many ASEAN principles and norms are not that different from norms in other international organizations, and neither is a contrast between normative framework and practices unique to ASEAN. However that may be, central ASEAN principles and norms and the interplay with practices can be elaborated under four headings: sovereign equality and consensus, non-interference in internal affairs, informality and quiet diplomacy, and defense cooperation.⁸

Sovereign equality and consensus

Respect for the sovereign equality of members states has been a key concept in ASEAN’s diplomatic and security culture and a central component in its identity building ever since the organization was founded in the late 1960s. In operational terms the principle of sovereign equality means decision-making by consensus after extensive consultations. However, the term “consensus” should be read in a modified way. In ASEAN it has been a common understanding that consensus does not always require unanimity on the part of all members (Capie and Evans, 2002: 19-20 and 136-7). What is required is ‘flexible consensus’, meaning that, when there is broad support for a specific measure, the Association may move forward, provided the measure does not threaten the most basic interests of the dissenting state. As there is no clear definition of ‘basic interests’, this decision-making procedure gives a key role

⁸ Besides the key documents, see especially Acharya, 1992 and 2001: 47-79; Bessho, 1999: 39-51; Capie and Evans, 2002: 14-27 and 108-38; Collins, 2000: 89-129; Collins, 2003: 127-59; and Haacke, 2003.

to the Chair and requires a highly legitimate Chair whose decisions that a consensus be declared are considered authoritative even by those who are not entirely happy with the result.

Hence, sovereign equality and its operational implementation through consensus in actual decision-making is a core norm which is adjusted in ASEAN practice, not haphazardly, but following a common stance that one member's specific interest may yield to the Association's common interests. The "common stance," however, is often fragile, as it may be difficult to translate broad, shared principles into action when the actual implementation is disputed. It is expected that members are prepared to defer to the common interests of the Association, indicating a willingness to suffer short-term losses for long-term gains (Collins, 2000: 116). However, as often in organizational decision-making, the actual identification of "special interests" as different from "common interests" easily becomes an exercise in covering up actual political disagreements. In the same way, a willingness to suffer short-term losses for long-term gains is often a choice marked by uncertainty, a procedure that easily entails that the country with the greatest vested interest in a particular conflict enjoys the greatest influence. Altogether, the inclusion of a group of non-free and very poor countries in ASEAN in the second half of the 1990s (cf. the Appendix) has evidently resulted in an even more troublesome decision-making process. In other words, the expansion of the Association has led to the Peter Principle – that is, ASEAN has expanded to the level of incompetence.

Non-interference

The doctrine of non-interference is a close corollary of the principle of sovereignty and has been reaffirmed in all ASEAN's major political statements since the Bangkok Declaration of 1967. In its original form, the doctrine of non-interference had different operational aspects (Acharya, 2001: 57-60; Collins, 2003: 137-40). Four are important. *First*, the domestic political system of a state should never be the basis for deciding its membership of ASEAN. The most obvious examples occurred in 1995, when Vietnam was admitted despite its communist political system, and in 1997, when Myanmar (then called Burma) was granted ASEAN membership despite its brutal military dictatorship. *Secondly*, members should refrain from publicly criticizing the actions of a government, in particular its actions towards its own people. The most extreme example is that ASEAN refused to confront the genocidal acts of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia during 1975-78; moreover, ASEAN did not comment on Indonesia's annexation of East Timor in 1976, nor did it respond

to the military crackdown in Thailand in 1992.⁹ The actual effect of the norm has often been that the ASEAN countries and their neighbors have been able to handle domestic dissent in often brutal ways because they did not need to be afraid that their ASEAN neighbors would criticize them. *Thirdly*, the actions of states should be criticized when they violate the doctrine of non-interference even in cases where interference or an invasion is being directed against a highly despotic regime. Thus the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978, which resulted in the fall of the Pol Pot regime, was criticized by ASEAN as a serious violation of the doctrine of non-interference. *Fourthly*, governments should deny recognition, sanctuaries or other forms of support to ethnic or communist rebel groups that are seeking to overthrow the government of a neighboring state and provide support to other governments in their campaigns against subversive and destabilizing activities. Thus interference is allowed if it is sanctioned by the other country's government. Altogether, the practice of the doctrine of non-interference has been highly ambiguous in that some cases of interference have been palatable to ASEAN governments that are otherwise opposed to foreign interference (Haacke, 2003: 165-90).

In the late 1990s, the doctrine of non-interference faced major challenges and also was questioned by prominent commentators and leading politicians from ASEAN's original members. However, it proved very difficult to find a formula to replace non-interference as a basic ASEAN norm. In the summer 1998, after the serious economic and environmental problems in the area, the foreign minister of Thailand, Surin Pitsuwan, in a speech to the Asia-Pacific Roundtable (on this, see section 5), raised the question of whether it was time to rethink the decades-old policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, particularly if events in one member country had an adverse impact on another member's internal affairs or the general peace and prosperity of the region. After further reflections on the problem in the Thai Foreign Ministry and communications with other ASEAN members who expressed concerns about the suggestion of rethinking the doctrine of non-interference, the Ministry called for "flexible engagement", meaning that fellow members' domestic policies might be brought up for discussion in ASEAN if they affected other members (Henderson, 1999: 48-55; Narine, 1998: 187-9). "Flexible engagement" was not a total rejection of the doctrine of non-interference, but it did imply its dilution. In the political sphere, it sought recognition of the right of a member to criticize strong

⁹ The difference is, of course, that Indonesia and Thailand were founding members of ASEAN, while Cambodia did not become a member until 1999.

violations of human rights or anti-democratic policies in another member state – indeed, a rather strong break with a long-standing ASEAN norm. In the economic sphere, “flexible engagement” called for greater openness in consultations and information sharing, as well as peer review of internal economic policies (Acharya, 2003a: 382-3). The proposal was supported by the Philippines, while other founding states (especially Malaysia and Singapore), as well as new ones (Myanmar and Vietnam) opposed it. The most important reason for opposing “flexible engagement” was that it might pave the way for types of involvement that incumbent governments would find unpalatable, primarily criticism made in public under an ASEAN umbrella (Haacke, 2003: 169; Katsumata, 2004). At an informal session prior to the ASEAN ministerial meeting later in the summer of 1998, a less intrusive approach, namely “enhanced interaction,” was adopted as a compromise, indicating a rejection of flexible engagement and an attempt to maintain a doctrine of non-interference.

Altogether, one can conclude that the brief flirtation with a cautious and tacit approval of public criticism of other members in 1997-98 had a limited effect. Yet, the increased salience of democracy and human rights in international relations may present the ASEAN countries with a cumbersome issue (Caspie and Evans, 2002: 92-7; Collins, 2003: 148). The problem became acute in the autumn 2007 when, in a statement issued after an informal meeting at the United Nations in New York in late September, ASEAN foreign ministers demanded that the Myanmar government “immediately desist from the use of violence against demonstrators” and expressed their “revulsion” to Myanmar Foreign Minister Nyan Win over “reports that the demonstrations are being suppressed by violent force and that there has been a number of fatalities”. Myanmar was strongly urged to “exercise utmost restraint and seek a political solution” (<http://www.aseansec.org/20976.htm>). No further steps, such as economic sanctions, were indicated. Yet, even this cautious manifestation was evidently a break with the long-standing tradition of strict non-interference against the incumbent government of a member state.

Informality and quiet diplomacy

The “ASEAN way” stresses “soft institutionalism”, that is, informality, organizational and bureaucratic minimalism, flexibility, and a quiet and discreet style of low-key and low-risk diplomacy that avoids binding commitments. Actually, when ASEAN was established the word ‘association’ was meant to differentiate it from an organization, thus conveying a flexible style and a sense of informality. Pragmatism, patience and

evolution building by means of small incremental steps toward non-binding agreements have been emphasized. Personal relations and direct dialogue between leaders who trust each other are considered important, while confrontation and acrimony are seen as self-defeating. Informal discussions over dinner or on the golf course are considered more likely to be effective than sitting down to debate policy issues in formal meetings with an official agenda (Kivimäki, 2005: 106). In more recent years, the informality has been less prominent than during ASEAN's formative years, as a proliferation of ministerial meetings and officials' consultations, extending to about 300 meetings a year and covering an increasing range of issue areas, has made it necessary to institutionalize more rule-based procedures. Nonetheless, the difference between the workings of ASEAN and the highly institutionalized workings of another prominent regional institution, the EU, is marked, even though the increasing number of meetings in ASEAN institutions suggests that a certain amount of functional integration is taking place.

The idea of quiet diplomacy emphasizes that discussions begin at an informal level, where differences are aired and a compromise sought. Behind such notions lies the consideration that the relationship between ASEAN members should not be undermined when it is not possible to reach a compromise. It is a central aspect of the "ASEAN way" that adversarial bargaining strategies are avoided. An issue is dropped when compromise is impossible, and contentious issues likely to provoke confrontation or open disagreement are also dropped from the agenda. Conflict *avoidance* has been more important than conflict *resolution*, and controversial issues are swept under the carpet. Thus ASEAN has not sought to resolve the many problems and conflicts between its members. The 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) (see above) established a dispute-settlement mechanism, that is, a High Council, to arbitrate intramural disputes, but it has never actually been used because engaging in formal dispute settlement could be contentious and divisive. Hence, ASEAN is clearly not about formal dispute settlement *per se*, but rather about creating a regional milieu in which such problems do not arise or can be easily managed and contained (Leifer, 1996: 16).

Altogether, the ASEAN style of quiet and informal diplomacy, in which 'conscientious' leaders are trusted to settle onerous problems in comfortable surroundings, may reflect a reluctance to confront the problem of power in an ungoverned international society. Considered in relation to domestic political systems, the ASEAN style of diplomacy also seems to ignore problems of democratic accountability. However, these problems are not unique to ASEAN in international relations.

Defense cooperation

The ASEAN countries have consistently turned down any suggestion that the Association should aim at developing a collective defence agreement, i.e., forming a multilateral military alliance. As the threat perceptions of the member states are rather inward-looking, an alliance is considered both irrelevant and ineffective. Moreover, it has been argued that an alliance might be too provocative to potential adversaries like China (and Vietnam in the past). Accordingly ASEAN states have preferred to deal with China by adopting strategies of engagement rather than containment (Acharya, 1996/2002). The rejection of collective defence agreements have sometimes been adduced as proof of the region's especially peaceful approach to international conflicts.

However, the rejection of collective defence and the preference for cooperative security strategies vis-à-vis China has not implied a general rejection of cooperation among the ASEAN countries in security matters. Also, the preference for engagement rather than containment in relation to China has been combined with different defensive measures, which imply a low-key deterrence of, or hedging against, Chinese military actions, either through developing unilateral military measures or external defence ties. As far as security ties between ASEAN countries are concerned, the founding states (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) have developed bilateral defence arrangements on intelligence-sharing, border security arrangements, joint military exercises and the provision of training facilities. Some of these arrangements originated from before ASEAN was established, but they expanded greatly in numbers and scope in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly by focusing on threats of domestic instability or communist insurgency which might be supported by non-ASEAN countries (China and Vietnam). Furthermore, since one aim was that the defence capabilities of ASEAN countries should be more effective, extra-ASEAN defence agreements have a critical role in the security architecture of the region. Such agreements have been entered into with the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. Indeed, the proliferation of various bilateral defence ties has created what has been termed an "ASEAN defence spider web" or a "virtual" collective defence structure between ASEAN and non-ASEAN countries, with the US as the most important extra-regional supporting power vis-à-vis China (Acharya, 1992/2002: 12f., 2001: 146-51; 2002: 74-8, and 206-10; Leifer, 1996: 15-6). In developing these defence ties, ASEAN countries have always found themselves in a dilemma between an urge for autonomy and the fear of being without outside help in an emergency, corresponding to the classical security dilemma of alliance *vs.* non-alliance politics, one of being caught between entrapment and abandonment.

5. The ASEAN Regional Forum

This section reviews the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) by focusing upon four problems. First, how did the uncertainties and challenges caused by the new regional and global interest and power configurations after the end of the Cold War result in the formation of the ARF in 1994? Secondly, how did ARF represent an attempt to establish a regional security regime based on ASEAN's normative framework, that is, ARF as ASEAN extended? Thirdly, what was the role of the non-official track II diplomacy as part of the attempt to extend the "ASEAN way" to the rest of East Asia and the Asia-Pacific? Finally, ARF is viewed as an attempt to accommodate China as by far the most important rising power in East Asia and to socialize it into ASEAN norms and principles.

East Asia after the Cold War: new challenges

The ASEAN countries certainly welcomed the end of the Cold War and the general reduction of tensions and demilitarization of international relations it was expected to entail. However, the further impact of these benign developments caused different hesitations and speculations about their possible repercussions in the region. The problem was the concern among ASEAN countries that the fall of the Soviet Union would lead the United States to reduce its military deployments in the area, thus creating a 'power vacuum' in the region (Bessho, 1999: 44f.). These post-Cold War concerns appeared after the Soviet Union announced, in 1990, its intention to withdraw its naval and air units stationed in Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. The Soviet withdrawal reduced the utility of the American bases in the Philippines, and in 1991 the Philippine Senate rejected a new base treaty with the United States because of disagreement over the terms on which the leases of Clark Air Base and the Subic Bay Naval Base were to be extended (Emmers, 2003: 110-12). This led to a complete American withdrawal from the two bases, which for many years had been critical to US involvement in the region, resulting in uncertainty in the early 1990s regarding American commitment to regional security in Southeast Asia. The further effects were fears in ASEAN countries of a scramble between China and Japan, the two leading regional powers contending for influence in the Southeast Asian sub-region, to step into the 'military vacuum'. In the end, despite worries about America's reliability and its occasional heavy-handedness, most Southeast Asian countries clearly preferred the United States to be engaged in the area as a flexible regional balancer – the "regional sheriff" – rather than China or Japan, about whom ASEAN countries harbored deep-

seated suspicions (Acharya, 2001: 167-8; Haacke, 2002: 14f. and 136f.; Khong, 1984: 195-6; Odgaard, 2001: 292f.). But there were differences among ASEAN countries themselves about which of the two regional powers would constitute the most serious security problem when seeking to step into a 'power vacuum' in that Indonesia and Malaysia were more fearful of China, while Singapore showed greater anxiety about Japanese remilitarization. Generally, the fears focused mainly on the emergence of China as a major regional power (see below).

In facing the new uncertainties after the end of the Cold War, one option was the creation of a multilateral institution to deal with regional security problems and develop a predictable and constructive pattern of security relations in the area. In 1990 the foreign ministers of Australia and Canada outlined a proposal for a future multilateral security order in Asia, inspired by the "Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe" (CSCE). The initial response of ASEAN policy-makers was ambivalent, primarily because they considered East Asia too diverse for CSCE-type arrangements, but they were ready to accept proposals for looser and more consultative mechanisms for promoting exchange of views on security issues. That approach, after all, corresponded to the "ASEAN Way" and fulfilled the requirement for "Asian solutions to Asian problems" (Acharya, 2001: 170f.; Leifer, 1996: 23f.).

However, the establishment of a multilateral institution to supplement the existing web of security institutions was dependent on the participation of the three main regional players: the United States, Japan and China. The United States was long opposed to the idea of a multilateral arrangement for regional security in East Asia because it saw the set up of a multilateral institution as an alternative rather than a supplement to its long-standing bilateral arrangements. That position changed at the end of the Bush administration (1989-93), however, and when the Clinton administration entered into office, the United States encouraged the establishment of a multilateral security mechanism, which it saw as a diplomatic instrument to complement the bilateral security ties with East Asian countries. As for Japan, it was reluctant to take a leading position in the endeavors to set up a multilateral arrangement, since it realized the historical sensitivities of other East Asian countries to any Japanese attempt to display 'leadership' in the region, but nonetheless it played a very active role behind the scenes as an advocate of forming a multilateral security arrangement. China, like the United States, was initially skeptical of security multilateralism, which it perceived as an attempt to encircle China and to interfere in its domestic affairs. However, China too eventually changed its attitude and realized that security multilateralism could be used to its advantage, which could dampen

its neighbors' fears about its own intentions. In addition, China shared the ASEAN countries' opposition to American pressure regarding human-rights issues and was very reluctant to be excluded from an assembly of regional states which could be used to 'gang up' on it (Emmers, 2003: 116f.; Leifer, 1996: 27f.). Thus all three main regional states preferred, for different reasons, a multilateral arrangement, even one created and formally run by states less powerful than themselves.

The ASEAN countries seized the opportunity to initiate a multilateral setting for dealing with East Asia's security problems. At a meeting of the heads of governments in Singapore in January 1992, it was decided that ASEAN should intensify its external dialogues in political and security matters by using the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMC) with its so-called dialogue partners. The letters "PMC" refer to a series of annual meetings between the ASEAN foreign ministers and their counterparts from countries with the status of "dialogue partner", which had been initiated in the mid-1970s and was convened to coincide with ASEAN's annual meeting of foreign ministers. The "dialogue partners" included Australia, Canada, China, the EU, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the United States (Acharya, 2001: 171). At a meeting in Singapore in July 1993 of foreign ministers from PMC countries – later called "the founding dinner of the ASEAN Regional Forum" – it was recommended that the existing dialogue structure be expanded into a separate gathering of foreign ministers. The gathering would be called the ASEAN Regional Forum and, with eighteen participants (see appendix), it held its first working session in Bangkok in July 1994 (Ball, 1994: 167-8; Emmers, 2003: 112-16). Thus, after the end of the Cold War, the heterogeneous security dynamics of Southeast and Northeast Asia merged to form a single East Asian security complex, i.e. a set of countries whose security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 93f., 144f., 491).

Altogether, considered in the light of the new security challenges in East Asia after the end of the Cold War, the creation of ARF was an expedient diplomatic instrument for ASEAN countries to promote continuing American involvement in East Asia, avoid an independent Japanese security role, encourage a cautious and responsible Chinese policy towards smaller neighbors in the region, and push ASEAN into the front row diplomatically.¹⁰ ASEAN sided with China regarding human rights and democracy, issues that involved interference in domestic affairs and the imposition

¹⁰ Yuen Foong Khong paraphrases Lord Ismay's remark about NATO: ARF seeks to keep the United States in, China and Japan down, and ASEAN relevant (cf. Khong, 2004: 202).

of predominantly Western values. However, when faced with China's military power and the threatened Chinese use of force, ASEAN looked to the United States as the mainstay of peace and stability in East Asia (Whiting, 1997: 301). In the same way, ASEAN enlargement throughout the second half of the 1990s can be seen as way of balancing China's influence in East Asia after the Cold War (Rüland, 2000: 434).

The normative framework: ASEAN extended

The creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum represented the high point in ASEAN's reputation as a norm entrepreneur, i.e. a political actor that actively promotes a set of norms to solve political problems. ARF was an attempt to give ASEAN a pivotal role by extending its distinctive, cooperative security culture to relations between all Asia-Pacific countries. Moreover, ARF was the only multilateral forum covering the wider Asia-Pacific region with a clear security role, and it was an institution in which the major powers among the participants (the United States, China and Japan) conceded at least formal leadership and agenda-setting roles to the minor powers, that is, to ASEAN countries (Acharya, 2002/1995: 181-95). The central position of the ASEAN normative framework within ARF was reflected when the first working session in 1994 agreed, in the words of the Chairman (the Thai minister of foreign affairs), to:

endorse the purposes and principles of ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, as a code of conduct governing relations between states and a unique diplomatic instrument for regional confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, and political and security cooperation. (<http://www.aseansec.org/2879.htm>)

Thus the classic ASEAN normative framework of mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations, the right of every state to enjoy its national existence free from external interference or coercion, non-interference, peaceful settlement, and renunciation of the threat or use of force (cf. above on the 1976 TAC) was adopted as the foundation of the ASEAN Regional Forum. But other aspects of the "ASEAN way" were also present in the making of ARF, like the cautious and incremental approach to security cooperation (often called "the adoption of a comprehensive approach to security") and an aversion to institutionalism and formalism (Acharya, 2001: 174). In understanding the character of ARF as a security organization, it is also expedient to emphasize what it is *not*: like ASEAN, it was never intended as a system of collective security or collec-

tive defense, and it has neither a mechanism for direct conflict management, nor any capacity for autonomous action. However, as a loose Asia-Pacific security regime, the ASEAN regional Forum may have an indirect influence on conflicts by improving the overall regional atmosphere and strengthening cooperative norms (Heller, 1995: 137-8). Ideas on how to do this were presented at the second working session.

At the second ARF meeting in 1995, a “Concept Paper” was presented, which had been drafted in Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and approved earlier in the spring through consultations. The actual appearance of the paper marked a shift away from the informality which has been the hallmark of the “ASEAN way” (Leifer, 1996: 39-44). Moreover, given that it was the outcome of a consultation process between eighteen states, though guided by one, namely Singapore, it presented a rather keen analysis of the security problems in the region of a sort that had not been common in ASEAN activities up to that time. Thus it was emphasized that to preserve and enhance the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region successfully, the ARF must dispassionately analyze the key challenges facing the region, of which there were three :

Firstly, it should acknowledge that periods of rapid economic growth are often accompanied by significant shifts in power relations. This can lead to conflict. The ARF will have to carefully manage these transitions to preserve the peace. Secondly, the region is remarkably diverse. The ARF should recognise and accept the different approaches to peace and security and try to forge a consensual approach to security issues. Thirdly, the region has a residue unresolved territorial and other differences. Any one of these could spark conflagration that could undermine the peace and prosperity of the region. (<http://www.aseansec.org/3693.htm>)

Against this background, the need for a gradual, evolutionary approach in three stages to managing security in the region was stressed. The first stage, the promotion of confidence-building measures, might adopt two complementary approaches: the first provided by ASEAN’s experience in promoting cooperation and creating a regional climate conducive to peace and prosperity, the second by preparing lists of confidence-building measures that ARF participants could explore and implement in the immediate as well as medium and long-term futures. The second stage, the development of preventive diplomacy mechanisms, suggested different measures, for instance, developing a set of guidelines for the peaceful settlement of disputes, promoting the recognition of TAC principles, exploring the idea of appointing

Special Representatives to undertake fact-finding missions, and exploring the idea of establishing a regional risk-reduction centre. However, it has proved increasingly difficult to build a consensus in the ARF on the use of such measures, two divergent views having appeared: a group with an activist view, especially Australia, Canada, the United States and Japan, and a reluctant group consisting of China and most of the ASEAN states, who have been anxious over the possibility that ARF might be used to compromise their sovereignty and lead to interference in their internal affairs (Yuzawa, 2006). As to the third stage, the development of mechanisms for conflict resolution, the “Concept Paper” did not envisage the ARF establishing these in the immediate future. This was rather an eventual goal that participants could pursue as they proceeded to develop the ARF as a vehicle for the further promotion of peace and security. It has proved particularly difficult to reach a consensus on this issue, with China being the most reluctant country to move forward (cf. below).

Regarding the organization of ARF activities, the cautiousness of the paper becomes apparent in its declaration that the ARF should progress at a pace comfortable to all participants. The ARF “should not move ‘too fast for those who want to go slow and not too slow for those who want to go fast’”. Here we come up against what seems to be a critical check on realization of the ASEAN normative framework in East Asia: the notion that the dialogue would only “move at a pace comfortable to all participants”, which “has given China a virtual right of veto over progress from stage to stage” (Henderson, 1999: 70). An alternative and more natural perspective and explanation is that China’s “virtual veto” is not so much a consequence of the actual wording of the paper or the content of the ASEAN normative framework being extended to the rest of East Asia but of changing configurations of interest and power in the region, where China is the prominent rising power. However, before China’s position is considered, another aspect of the ARF process has to be reviewed, namely how the official track I diplomacy in ARF has been supplemented by an unofficial track II diplomacy.

Track II diplomacy

The origin of the track II diplomacy lies in the years immediately after the end of the Cold War, when there was a widespread feeling among East Asian security elites that a reorientation of regional security institutions was necessary. The basic idea was that, in order to build stable and enduring security structures in the region, it was necessary to establish new cooperative networks. In that context, ASEAN became the primary engine of the track II process, which has functioned as the non-official

counterpart to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). In 1991, ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN ISIS), together with other research institutes in the Asia-Pacific region, began a two-year project on Security Cooperation in that region (SCAP). After a number of meetings between participants from institutes in more than twenty countries in East Asia and around the Pacific, the idea of organizing a more structured regional process for informal dialogue and consultation led to an agreement, at a meeting in Seoul in November 1992, to set up a Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). The Council was established a year later.

The idea was that CSCAP should be a non-governmental institution but should involve government officials as well, including senior military personnel, defence civilians and foreign affairs officials, albeit in their private capacities (Ball, 1994: 168f.; Job, 2003: 251). Moreover, government-sponsored and government-supported think-tanks are prominent in CSCAP. The largest and most inclusive of these track II meetings organized by the ASEAN ISIS are the *Asia-Pacific Roundtable* conferences, with over 250 participants from the ARF countries (Kraft, 2000). Actually there is a set of individuals involved in the various track II processes that can be characterized as the “Asia Pacific Track II elite”, whose commitment to regional multilateralism transcends national barriers and who, by virtue of their national positions, have been quite effective in promoting CSCAP as an institutional innovation (Job, 2003: 253). However, apart from some business leaders, no groups representing civil society have been involved in the track II process, suggesting that there may be a need for a track III process where non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as other groups not represented today, could realize a kind of participatory regionalism. As a closed, very elite-centred and patrimonial form of cooperation, ASEAN’s vulnerability is clearly demonstrated through the democratization processes in the region, irrespective the creation of extra ‘tracks’ (Acharya, 2003a). Actually, members of the various unofficial institutions often represent the ‘usual suspects’, which are not very often the most innovative ones in a highly changing region (Kivimäki, 2006).

The key notion in the track II diplomacy is “cooperative security”, i.e. security conceived in broader terms than the absence of military threats and promoted by cooperative ventures rather than through defensive and unilateral action against a distinct enemy, together with mutual understanding and multilateral regionalism (Job, 2003: 244f.). The track II diplomacy is process-oriented rather than results-oriented, in that dialogue and informal discourse are seen as having intrinsic value as confidence-building measures. Norm entrepreneurship and identity building are

considered critical. Such ideas were in tune with the principles and norms cultivated by ASEAN countries over the years, encapsulated in the phrase “the ASEAN way” (cf. above), and together with the ASEAN states, Australia and Canada have been key champions of cooperative security. Canada in particular has emphasized this aspect of its foreign policy, for instance by funding a great part of the track II activities. To provide a ‘laboratory’ where new ideas could be generated and tested and to bring about relatively free discussion of sensitive issues that could not be brought up in official diplomatic fora, it was considered essential that the track II process should be independent of official control (Ball, Milner, and Taylor, 2005: 10f.). However, at the same time official involvement and appreciation has been seen as necessary in order to attract government resources and ensure the practical implementation of the track II process. Thus track II processes have confronted an “autonomy dilemma”, that is, a tension between promoting independent ideas and maintaining close connections with governments and the traditional track I diplomacy. One example is that China made it a condition of its participation in CSCAP that Taiwan and cross-strait relations would never be discussed and that Taiwan should not be represented. CSCAP accepted the Chinese condition for attending (Job, 2003: 273; Kraft, 2000).¹¹

Altogether, the track II activities have been essentially state-centric. The different participants from governments, research institutes and business are selected as national representatives, even if they do not necessarily advocate their governments’ positions. Assessing the general impact of track II activities on the ARF is no easy task: what sorts of “success” indicators should be used, and how do we sort out the impact of track II from track I activities? However, it seems evident that track II processes, in particular the ASEAN ISIS, played a key role in establishing the ARF. As to the later development of ARF, the role of ASEAN ISIS has mainly been instrumental, for instance, in writing the 1995 ARF “Concept Paper” (Job, 2003: 259 and 265-75).

Accommodating the rising China

The problem of accommodating the rise of China in the context of the ASEAN/ARF normative framework has been approached by initially focusing on China’s policy in relation to the South China Sea since the early 1990s and on later changes. Disputes over the South China Sea have sometimes been explosive, with China, the Philippines and Vietnam as the main actors. The direct economic value of the South China Sea is, first, that the seabed is probably rich in oil, gas and sea-based minerals, and secondly,

¹¹ However, it seems that compliance with China’s demand has been slightly eroded; cf. Job, 2003: 256-7.

that it is one of the richest fishing grounds in the world. Also, the South China Sea straddles important sea lanes of communication between the Middle East and North East Asia. Moreover, there are several overlapping claims made by countries bordering the South China Sea, as well as important interests in free navigation rights by non-bordering countries, any of which may cause conflict situations (Amer, 2002a; Blanchard, 2003a: 436; Odgaard, 2001).

China, alongside Taiwan, has the most extensive claims in the South China Sea (Amer, 2002a: 27-8). In February 1992, China's legislature, the National People's Congress, passed a territorial sea law that claimed sovereignty over the South China Sea and authorized the use of force to keep out foreign naval and research vessels (Blanchard, 2003: 436-9). Despite some reassuring rhetoric over the next couple of years, China's stance on sovereignty was defiant and uncompromising. This became directly relevant to ASEAN countries in 1995 when China seized the uninhabited Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands, which was close to and claimed by the Philippines. The Chinese occupation was discovered in February 1995, but might have taken place some months earlier. The incident was seminal, as it was the first diplomatic confrontation between China and an ASEAN state over the disputed Spratly Islands and called into question ARF's ability to extend ASEAN norms of self-restraint to all of East Asia, especially to China as far the biggest and strongest nation in the region. A special reason for this was that China's occupation of the Mischief Reef was a clear challenge to ASEAN's 1992 Manila Declaration on the South China Sea, which had urged restraint in the area and called on all countries to use peaceful means only in resolving disputes in the region (Ba, 2003: 627f.; Leifer, 1996: 31ff.). Both the ASEAN countries and other ARF countries, such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the United States expressed concern, despite divergent attitudes in ASEAN and an initial American refusal to take sides (Odgaard, 2003; Valencia, 1995: 6-7, 42-3). After the Mischief incident, most ASEAN countries eyed China with concern, but not direct alarm, as none of them anticipated a Chinese attack. However, there was a fear that territorial disputes in the area could prompt a forceful assertiveness by China, especially given that China's increasing aggregate economic and military capabilities would change power relations in the region (Odgaard, 2001; Whiting, 1997: 300).

China was long opposed to solving these issues in multilateral institutions and preferred bilateral negotiations with other East Asian countries. For medium and smaller ARF participants, however, the institution was seen as a tool for socializing China to accept the legitimacy of multilateralism and transparency. That is, ARF was considered a means for increasing China's "comfort level" with multilateralism. After

a couple of years, some regional security issues – but not the Taiwan question – were increasingly being discussed within the multilateral ARF framework (Johnston, 2003: 126-40). After the early 1990s, the Chinese policy towards ASEAN and ARF and regional multilateral institutions generally underwent a fundamental change in that a basically suspicious attitude changed, first to uncertainty and then to strongly supporting such institutions (Sørensen and Østergaard, 2006). For example, China has become much more willing to be active in inter-sessional activities and to co-chair Inter-Sessional Support Groups (ISG). In China's policy-making process, its greater involvement in the ARF seems to have occurred at the same time as the emergence of a new group of internationally oriented policy-makers who, especially during the first years, have been vulnerable to criticism from traditional groups, including the Chinese military, for not pursuing China's interests assertively enough (Foot, 1998: 427f.; Hughes 2006). China has become much more proactive in the ARF, which it now emphasizes as a potential basis for developing a cooperative security community in East Asia. In November 2002, China and the ASEAN countries signed the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, in which the parties undertook to resolve their territorial disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to force. Also, the parties undertook to exercise self-restraint, including among other things, to refrain from any action to settle people on the presently uninhabited islands (<http://www.aseansec.org/13163.htm>). In late 2002 the countries also agreed to China's proposal to establish a China-ASEAN free trade area by 2010. Finally, at their October 2003 summit, China acceded to ASEAN's 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, thus committing itself to core elements in the ASEAN normative framework (<http://www.aseansec.org/15271.htm>).

These changes in China's policy certainly represent a major breakthrough in relations between ASEAN and China, and China's willingness to commit itself and act as a "responsible" great power has earned it much goodwill in East Asia. Whatever the reasons for the changing Chinese policy and its further significance, China's participation in ARF has been a learning experience, and the country is now willing to accept a number of obligations and rules that it might not otherwise have done. In other words, ARF has accommodated China's rising power (Yahuda, 2005). Considered from another angle, China has given itself a prominent role in ARF and other multilateral institutions in the region. Chinese leaders have been "socialized" into accepting that working through multilateral organizations is a good way to pursue Chinese interests and reassure concerned smaller neighbors. However, to present the changes in China's policy as simple evidence of ASEAN's normative and ideational influence would be to beg many questions. China's changing behavior

towards accepting a part of the ASEAN normative framework also has to be seen in the context of changing power and interest configurations in the Asia-Pacific region (Busse, 1999; Dosch, 2007).

Another aspect of these changes can be considered by focusing on, first, the situation of the smaller Southeast Asian countries, and secondly, China's position in relation to Japan and Japan's non-Asian ally, the United States. Facing a growing China that has changed its regional policy from relying exclusively on bilateral relations to a much greater emphasis on multilateral institutions, Southeast Asian states are now following a strategy of combining engagement and hedging to protect themselves against domination by a powerful China (Roy, 2005), making great efforts to engage China in ARF and encourage it to participate in multilateral discussions and agreements, thus attempting to socialize it into ASEAN/ARF principles and norms. At the same time, however, they are pursuing a hedging strategy by maintaining a certain level of defense cooperation with the United States. Thus engaging China in ARF is combined with a fallback option of putting in place some of the means to resist China should engagement fail (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 158f.). As for the American-Japanese alliance, this provides China with the best guarantee against Japan trying to become a regional hegemonic power again (Alagappa, 2003: 587f.; Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 174). From this it can be concluded that it is false to pose a dichotomy between, on the one hand, attempts to handle the rise of China by including the country in an ARF/ASEAN normative framework and, on the other hand, attempts to handle China through a balance-of-power policy. In decentralized international society, which lacks a superior legitimate rule-making authority, cooperation and deterrence often work together (Odgaard, 2001). In the actual regional context, multilateral security institutions in the region work as a compliment to, rather than a substitute for, bilateral arrangements (Acharya, 1996/2002). And American alliances with countries in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region provide the best guarantee against the hegemony of a regional power, namely China.

6. Conclusions

The main conclusion is that neither ASEAN nor the ASEAN Regional Forum can be regarded as independent actors with the institutional capacity to reshape relations between states in the region from being a security regime to becoming a security community. That conclusion is neither sensational nor unexpected. Only when compared to the more exalted representations of ASEAN's exceptional capacity as a norm entrepreneur (cf. the Introduction) may it seem a novelty. In any case, it is appropriate to try to pin down what can be concluded about the actual role and influence of ASEAN and ARF in East Asia's security architecture. The point is that as multilateral security institutions ASEAN and ARF have probably *dampened down* great power rivalry in East Asia. To determine how this has been done, it is expedient to apply the three types of security orders, identified in section 2, as a starting point, namely community-based, hegemonic and balance of power orders. While the first represents an ideational and normative leadership type, the other two represent power-based types of leadership. The role of ASEAN and ARF as community-based institutions can be explained most fruitfully within the space created by the two closely related power-based orders: the US-centered hegemonic order of "hub and spokes" bilateral alliances, and the balance of power characteristics of relations between, on the one hand, the growing economic and military power of China, and on the other hand, Japan and the smaller countries in East Asia that are allied to the United States. At the same time it is worth noting that the power-based and ideational types of leadership are entwined in that the US-centered hegemonic order works best if American ideas overlap with other countries' ideas.

As for ASEAN's role within the broader East Asia and Asia-Pacific region during the early 1990s, it was one of seeing and catching an opportunity to push for what stronger powers could agree on. In continuation of this, this study presents substantial evidence that many of the successful endeavors through ARF to manage the consequences in the East Asian region of the demise of the Soviet Union, the rise of China and the draw-down of American forces has been due to a clear recognition by governments of the dynamics of changing power configurations in the area (Garofano, 2002: 513f.). In that sense, the conclusion clearly points to the primary role of the hegemonic and balance of power orders and the secondary, adjunct role of the community-based orders in East Asia's security architecture. Thus the community-based orders have played a role which can be considered important *exactly because changing power relations in the region after the end of the Cold War opened a window to letting*

ASEAN's ideational leadership play an active role. Even if both China and the United States participate in ARF, clearly there are limits to the two countries' willingness to acquiesce in the ASEAN normative framework and its extension to ARF.

Another conclusion concerns the internal working of ASEAN and its significance for ASEAN's role in East Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. The new initiatives, especially those related to the new security agenda, to maritime security and to terrorism, may increase ASEAN's coherence and efficiency. Moreover, if and when the new Charter is ratified and implemented, ASEAN's institutional capacity to exert normative influence on East Asia's security architecture may be enhanced. However, the critical point is that all such improvements or reformations of ASEAN's inner workings will only have a marginal impact because *ASEAN's role in shaping the security architecture in East Asia is limited compared to those of the two critical powers: China and the United States.*

A final point worth noting is that ASEAN has undoubtedly contributed to the absence of any major war between its member states since it was founded forty years ago. ASEAN has not pursued distinct peace-making activities in relation to specific conflicts in the region, but its diplomatic norms and practices have exercised a benign influence on the overall climate of regional relations in Southeast Asia. In that sense the Association has promoted peace in the region and moved it closer to a security community, as ASEAN's founding fathers had hoped back in 1967. To be sure, that conclusion, like other conclusions in this report, is based on *counterfactual* reasoning, meaning that there can be no definitive proof of its validity. But it still seems a valid conclusion that ASEAN has prevented the outbreak of war among its members.

Appendix: Participants in ASEAN and ASEAN Regional Forum

ASEAN	Member since	ASEAN Regional Forum	Member since
Indonesia	1967	Indonesia	1994
Malaysia	1967	Malaysia	1994
The Philippines	1967	The Philippines	1994
Singapore	1967	Singapore	1994
Thailand	1967	Thailand	1994
Brunei	1984	Brunei	1994
Vietnam	1995	Vietnam	1994
Laos	1997	Laos	1994
Myanmar (Burma)	1997	Myanmar (Burma)	1996
Cambodia	1999	Cambodia	1995
		Australia	1994
		Canada	1994
		China	1994
		The European Union	1994
		Japan	1994
		New Zealand	1994
		Papua New Guinea	1994
		Russia	1994
		South Korea	1994
		United States	1994
		India	1996
		Mongolia	1998
		North Korea	2000
		Pakistan	2004
		Timor-Leste	2005
		Bangladesh	2006
		Sri Lanka	2007

Shaded: original participants

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