Regionalism, Institutional Change, and New Military Missions in the Asia Pacific

Amitav Acharya & Tan See Seng[1]

Terms like "post-September 11" or "post-post-Cold War" are liberally used today by pundits to describe the period following the terror attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. This new "era" would likely retain some similarities with the past, but these would be outweighed by certain differences. These differences pose a normative challenge to longstanding norms that underpin regional multilateral cooperation in the Asia Pacific. This challenge to regional norms did not originate with September 11; in this regard, the recent Asian economic crisis, among other things, might make a more suitable candidate.

September 11 has undoubtedly exacerbated the gravity of that challenge. Continued pressure upon regionalism as understood and practiced in the Asia Pacific—in multilateral institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and, at the sub-regional level, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—would likely affect how security would be managed in the region. Nevertheless, it is not immediately apparent whether significant institutional change is in the offing, and, to that end, whether multilateral military missions in the Asia Pacific region would continue to evolve and consolidate. An overall picture of regional continuity seems more evident even in the midst of change.

Against this backdrop, we seek to address the following questions:

- How and to what extent has norms which traditionally underpin Asia Pacific regionalism evolved? In this respect, what institutional changes have taken place or are taking place?
- In the light of this fundamental normative challenge to regionalism, the current US reengagement in the Asia Pacific region, and the global war on terror, what patterns of change and of continuity in the mission of the region's militaries can be discerned, particularly in the context of regional security cooperation?

We begin by analysing some of the normative challenges facing Asia Pacific regionalism. Several key developments and events in the region have raised doubts over the viability of longstanding norms that have traditionally underwritten Asia Pacific regionalism. In this respect,

we offer some preliminary speculations on possible emerging roles (especially peacekeeping, anti-terror cooperation) for Asia Pacific militaries. The possibility that the modest steps hitherto taken by Asia Pacific countries in the area of peacekeeping may be derailed by the more urgent region-wide concern with terrorism cannot be discounted.

Challenges Facing Asia Pacific Regionalism

Aside from watershed events such as the end of the Cold War and September 11, the evolving military role in the region is also shaped by specific institutional changes in Asia Pacific regionalism.[2] Four main characteristics distinguish the rise of regionalism in the Asia Pacific. These include: the importance of "soft power" over structural or hegemonic leadership; the preference for "soft institutionalism" over legalistic and formalistic cooperation; the importance of cultural norms and identity in institution building, including the salience of the "ASEAN Way"; and, state centrism.

As the Asia Pacific region enters the 21st century, major changes have affected the regional environment that call into question these main features of regionalism. Partly induced by the Asian economic crisis during the 1997-99 period, these changes also reflect broader and more long-term geopolitical and economic shifts in the international system. These challenges can be grouped into five main areas:

(1) Developments that militate against longstanding norms which guide regional co-operation;
(2) The rise of East Asian regionalism and its consequences for ASEAN-styled regionalism;
(3) The functional imperative towards legalization in Asia Pacific regionalism and the pressures this puts to bear on ASEAN's preference for "soft regionalism";
(4) The ongoing "democratisation" of Southeast Asian regionalism; and
(5) The impact of September 11 on the region.

The Normative Challenge to Sovereignty

The first major area of change concerns norms which underpin regional multilateral

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Studies (IDSS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Tan See Seng is an assistant professor at IDSS.
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cooperation.[3] Among the norms that played a critical role in the development of ASEAN is the principle of non-interference in the domestic or internal affairs of member states. This principle has since been challenged by four developments:

(1) The Asian economic crisis which exposed the reluctance of ASEAN members to provide timely early warning to each other out of deference to this norm;

(2) The growing seriousness of trans-national challenges to national stability and regional order. Two examples include the forest fires in Indonesia and the resulting haze which affected neighbouring states, causing serious economic and health concerns; and the problem of drug trafficking and refugee flows out of Myanmar, which had a lot to do with Thailand's more interventionist attitude towards Myanmar's domestic affairs.

(3) ASEAN's failure to provide a timely response to the bloodshed in East Timor during the course of its separation from Indonesia. These events damaged the Association's credibility at providing "regional solutions to regional problems" — a failure born out of ASEAN members' deference to strict non-interference.

(4) The process of internal political change in the region, especially the democratisation process in Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia, which have led them to adopt a more open attitude towards foreign criticism of their domestic issues.

Thailand's call for replacing ASEAN's "constructive engagement" policy (rooted in non-interference) to a more intrusive approach called "flexible engagement" met with resistance from members, especially Myanmar and Vietnam. Nevertheless, the Association's decision in 2000 to institute a "Troika" system — consisting of three ASEAN representatives, including the current, previous and forthcoming chair of the ASEAN Standing Committee — which could undertake preventive diplomacy and provide rapid diplomatic response to unfolding crisis situations indicated a shift from the previously rigid non-interference doctrine. This shift was further underscored by the Association's development of financial cooperation, including a conduct of "peer reviews" on national economies and the development of a so-called "ASEAN Surveillance Process."

ASEAN remains and will continue to remain divided on the issue of non-interference. Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos are clearly opposed to any departure from this doctrine, while

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[3] The temptation for some may be to read these changes as indicating a discernable shift in regional elite thinking away from realist power politics, the traditional model of Asia Pacific security, to liberal institution-alism. Elsewhere others have sought to make a case that these institutionalist leanings in the post-Cold War Asia Pacific experience, though in contravention of neo-realist principles, are not necessarily antithetical to realist thought as understood within the classical realist tradition. See Seng Tan with Ralph A. Cossa, "Rescuing Realism from the Realists: A Theoretical Note on East Asian Security," in Sheldon W. Simon, ed., *The Many Faces of Asian Security* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), pp. 15-47.

Thailand and to a lesser extent the Philippines are most active in pushing for a shift. Within ASEAN generally, however, there is a greater willingness to re-examine the issue of non-interference in the light of emerging trans-national challenges to the region.[4] Indonesia has indicated a similar shift. Overall, East Asian regional institutions remain firmly wedded to the principle of non-interference.[5] But recent challenges to the doctrine are not insignificant. They have resulted in at least one ASEAN summit (in Singapore in November 2000) discussing the issue of domestic political change in Myanmar in the presence of its chief of state.[6] In the economic sphere, the Association's efforts at developing an economic "peer review" is but a limited challenge to non-interference.

The Logic of an East Asian Framework

A second key development in regional multilateral cooperation concerns the development of East Asian regionalism, as evidenced by the growing interest and momentum for an "ASEAN Plus Three" (APT) framework. Comprising the ten ASEAN members and China, Japan and South Korea, this initiative can be seen as a response to the Asian economic crisis, particularly the West's perceived lukewarm assistance to the crisis-hit regional economies. The APT appeals to ASEAN for three reasons. First, it gives the Association a fresh start, proving to the world that the grouping has not lost all sense of purpose and relevance stemming from its perceived failure to offer an effective response to the crisis. Second, the APT framework can enable the pursuit of more concrete forms of East Asian regional financial cooperation, including the proposal for an Asian Monetary Fund mooted by Japan in 1997, which withered in the face of strong US opposition. Third, the framework can be an useful way for ASEAN to engage both China and Japan in managing the region's economic and security problems without having to submit to the political demands of the West (such as those concerning human rights, democracy and good governance) and the supposedly "alien" modalities of multilateral cooperation being pushed by the Western members of ARF and APEC.

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[4] As Fidel Ramos, the former President of the Philippines put it, "If a rising tide lifts all boats, it is equally true that the fire next door will endanger all neighbors. [ASEAN's member states must seek] a new balance between national sovereignty and regional purpose." See "Think About Pax-Pacifica, Says Ramos," *The Straits Times*, 4 March 2000. Available at: http://hplusproxy.jarvard.edu:800/:3719.html. Accessed on 4 March 2000. Similarly, Adian Silalahi, Director General for ASEAN affairs in the Indonesian Foreign Ministry, has noted: "We still adhere to those principles [of ASEAN], but I believe that on this issue [non-intervention] we are more open now. It is no longer a principle a principle which cannot be discussed. Indonesia is more open, more flexible because of the democratisation process." Cited in Meidyatama Suryodiningrat, "Will RI Commit ASEAN's Sin?" *The Jakarta Post*, 26 July 2000, p. 1.

[5] The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) remains stymied by opposition to any departure from the non-interference doctrine on the part of key members, especially China. The ARF's preventive diplomacy agenda is seen by Beijing as a potential source of threat to this norm; hence Beijing's insistence on limiting any preventive diplomacy mechanisms developed by the ARF to strictly inter-state problems only.

[6] Surin Pitsuwan, "Future Directions for ASEAN," *Trends in Southeast Asia,* no. 10 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, September 2001), p. 13.

Advocates of the APT have made strong claims regarding its potential contribution. Nevertheless, the APT concept faces a number of serious obstacles.[7] Neither China nor Japan seems to be willing to accept the level of engagement in this forum expected of them by ASEAN. Japan remains cautious about the creation of permanent standby financial arrangements to deal with future economic crises, while China has been adept at stalling the Association's demand for concessions on the South China Sea dispute, including agreement on a credible and binding code of conduct. In view of the fact that two of the major players in the APT framework seem reluctant to meet the Association's expectations, not much should be expected of this forum in the foreseeable future. Other regional institutions, such as ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), will continue to remains relevant in addressing regional problems.

During 2002, Sino-ASEAN cooperation received a new momentum as a result of China's offer of a free trade area with ASEAN, as well as the Sino-ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea announced at the APT meeting in Cambodia in November. Japan's countervailing economic offer served to highlight a competitive dynamic within the APT membership.[8] The Sino-ASEAN Declaration in the South China Sea fell well short of hopes for a binding code of conduct; while disapproving occupation of new islands and accepting ambiguous language that allowed for the entire South China Sea to be covered within the scope of the declaration, China refused to accept Philippine demands for the erection of new military structures in islands already occupied. The APT, as Ali Alatas points out, is unlikely to develop a significant security role for itself. This, and the idea of an East Asian Community "built on the basis of common values, is still a distant vision."[9]

The leadership of APT remains weak and uncertain and its geographic scope contested. Japan, despite seeking the leadership of an East Asian monetary system, remains reluctant to develop mechanisms that work independently of IMF and therefore the US. China is a potential leader of the APT, especially on economic matters, although this is constrained by continued regional suspicions over its security role. Japan has openly called for the inclusion of Australia and New Zealand. But Malaysia pointedly and successfully opposed a bid by Australian to secure an invitation to a summit with ASEAN; and while India's participation was endorsed by ASEAN, India remains formally outside of the APT framework. In short, the emerging East

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[7] Considering the future of Asia Pacific regional institutions and, more specifically, that of the emerging APT framework, C. Fred Bergsten contends that: "the new Asian challenge [to the west] will be political and especially institutional." C. Fred Bergsten, 'The New Asian Challenge," Institute for International Economics, March 2000, p. 1.

[8] Amitav Acharya, "An Opportunity Not to be Squandered," *The Straits Times*, 12 November 2002.

[9] Ali Alatas, "ASEAN Plus Three Equals Peace Plus Prosperity," *Trends in Southeast Asia*, no. 2 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, January 2001), pp. 2-3.

Asian regionalism has not been spared from the vicissitudes of identity politics, the bane of both ASEAN as well as the ARF.

The Functional Imperative for Legalization

A third source of change in Asia Pacific regionalism is the functional imperative towards legalization which challenges the ASEAN model of soft regionalism as the preferred way of economic and security institution-building and the role of ASEAN as the leader of the process. Since the Asian economic crisis, ASEAN has come to be regarded as "ineffective and a sunset organisation."[10] The challenge to the ASEAN model is most pronounced in the case of the ARF, where ASEAN has occupied the "driver's seat." Defenders of the status quo see any shift from this as a dangerous move; deprived of ASEAN's moderating influence and neutral-minded leadership, the ARF could degenerate into a stage for Sino-US bickering leading to the disengagement of one or both parties from the forum. This in turn would ensure the collapse of the multilateral experiment in the Asia Pacific.[11] Yet, critics see the Association's leadership as having been deficient in guiding the ARF past intra-ARF stalemates over confidence-building and preventive diplomacy measures, including the US reluctance to permit significant maritime confidence-building measures and China's objection to a comprehensive approach to preventive diplomacy. ASEAN thus faces the need to find some way of sharing its leadership of the ARF, which addresses the concerns of both sides.

The issue of ASEAN's diplomatic leadership of Asia Pacific regionalism is linked to the continued relevance of the ASEAN Way, which no longer commands the attention and respect it once did.[12] The hallmarks of the ASEAN Way — informalism, organizational minimalism, preference for consensus over legalization — are under pressure as being outmoded in coping with the new challenges it faces. The "Troika" system, partly a response to ASEAN's failure in dealing with the East Timor crisis, is one example of the Association's development of new institutional mechanisms. There is now a growing demand for a secretariat for the ARF and more regularized meetings to deal with security issues at hand, as opposed to the once a year

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[10] Singapore's Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar. Cited in "Thongchai Nonthleeruk, "Fine Words But Little Action at S.E. Asia Talks," *The Business Times* (Singapore) Online Edition, 25 July 2000, p. 1. Available at: http://business-times.asia1.com.sg/reuters/btasian200007251.html. Accessed on 7 August 2002.

[11] Tan See Seng, et al, *A New Agenda for the ASEAN Regional Forum*, IDSS Monograph no. 4, (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2002).

[12] ASEAN built a creditable record of cooperation for over three decades by emphasizing consensus, organizational minimalism, avoidance of legalistic approaches, glossing over of divisive intra-mural issues, and preference for gradual and evolutionary steps to cooperation. But the ASEAN Way was founded upon strong inter-personal ties among its founders, which has been diluted by its own expansion. And critics question whether such an approach reflecting the unique historical and social context of sub-regional Southeast Asia would be applicable in the larger and far more complex Asia Pacific region.

ministerial sessions.

Some areas of ASEAN cooperation have become increasing legalized with provisions for monitoring compliance by regional mechanisms with legally binding dispute-settlement authority backed by sanctions: the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty[13]; mechanisms associated with the ASEAN Free Trade Area[14]; the ASEAN Agreement on Trans-boundary Haze Pollution,[15] and so on. These agreements challenge the ASEAN model of soft regionalism. Nevertheless, acknowledged political and "cultural" obstacles continue to temper the functional logic behind the Association's move towards legalization. Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has captured the dilemma succinctly when she noted:

> One of the ways to make ASEAN continue to be relevant is to make agreements binding. But another way is to make sure that when there is a new cataclysmic development in the world, ASEAN knows how to respond, taking into account our cultural diversities, the different social organizations and the different historical antecedents."[16]

The Democratisation of Southeast Asian Regionalism

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[13] The SEANWFZ Treaty allows any member state to seek clarifications from other members and ask the Treaty's Executive Committee to investigate and send fact-finding missions to potential Treaty violators "concerning any situation which may be considered ambiguous or which may give rise to doubts about the compliance of that State Party [the suspected violator] with this Treaty." It also provides a dispute-settlement mechanism, which includes referral of the dispute to arbitration by the Executive Committee or to the International Court of Justice. Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, Bangkok, Thailand, 15 December 1995. Available at: http://www.aseansec.org/3636.html.

[14] More significant in terms of its coverage of issue areas is the mechanism for formal and binding dispute-settlement covering ASEAN economic cooperation, broadly defined. Though developed in the context of the ASEAN Free Trade Area, the mechanism applies to forty-seven existing economic agreements including those on investment, joint industrial ventures, currency swap, food, petroleum and energy security, tourism, intellectual property etc., and all future ASEAN economic agreements. The decision of the highest authority (ASEAN Economic Ministers) of this dispute-settlement mechanism, which can hear appeals (if any) of the Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM), "shall be final and binding on all parties to the dispute." The mechanism also provides for sanctions against non-compliance, which includes the right of the winner to seek compensation against the other party and failing that, to seek suspension of AFTA and related concessions or other obligations to the latter under AFTA and forty-seven "covered" agreements. "Protocol on Dispute Settlement Mechanism." Available at: http://www.aseansec.org/4924.html.

[15] The ASEAN Agreement on Trans-boundary Haze Pollution, signed in 2002, has been described by the UN Environment Programme as the "first international treaty addressing trans-boundary air pollution outside of Europe" and as a "legally binding" instrument. While the Agreement carries no "punitive measures," it imposes national obligations on member states to punish illegal loggers, take speedy action against outbreak of fires, establish early warning systems, exchange information and technology and provide mutual assistance, and establishes a number of mechanisms and institutions including an ASEAN Coordinating Centre to facilitate such national responses. Julia Yeow, "ASEAN Signs World First Environmental Agreement," Agence France-Presse, 10 June 2002.

[16] Julia Clerk, "Nations Come Together for Common Prosperity," *International Herald Tribune*, 31 January 2002. Available at: http://www.iht.com/articles/47274.html.

A fourth area of change in regional cooperation lies in the ongoing "democratisation" of Southeast Asian regionalism. Regional cooperation in Southeast Asia has been an essentially statist and elite driven project. The engagement of the civil society has been minimal. The so-called Track-II processes are sometimes cited as examples of the participation of the civil society in regional institution-building. But in reality, these processes are dominated by government-sponsored or – supported think tanks led by individuals with close ties to their respective governments. Moreover, a key principle of Track-II — the participation of government officials "in their private capacity" — has been essentially a myth; seldom have these officials been able to rise above national interests and concerns.

Several developments have now combined to bring about a change in this situation. Foremost among them is the rise of trans-national issues, including environment and refugees, in which NGOs have traditionally been key players both in terms of their possession of knowledge and their pursuit of causes and campaigns to highlight the demands of civil society which may run counter to state policy.[17] For example, the NGO campaigns about environmental degradation, and the human rights situation in Myanmar have increasingly been pursued at a regional level. Regional and international cooperation in this regard is adopted as a way of overcoming the constraints imposed by limited domestic resources and support, especially in cases where the home governments remain intolerant of NGO activism. Another factor behind the rise of civil society regionalism is domestic political changes in several countries leading to democratisation. Political openness in Philippines, Thailand and now Indonesia has involved the empowerment of NGOs with a regional and trans-national agenda. As Surin Pitsuwan, the Foreign Minister of the Thai government under Chuan Leekpai put it, "ASEAN must try to reach out to the people."[18]

Greater external support for Asian NGOs, induced by post-Cold War policy initiatives towards human rights promotion and sustainable development, has helped the regional NGO movement. This is now supplemented by the call for "human security," espoused both by Western countries and Japan. At the root of the human security concept is the recognition of threats to the safety and dignity of the individual.[19] The attendant shift from state or regime security naturally provides a powerful conceptual justification for a closer involvement of the

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[17] The "emancipatory" role of NGOs and civil society actors in deconstructing a human security discourse that is strongly state-oriented is discussed in Tan See Seng, "Human Security: Discourse, Statecraft, Emancipation," in David Dickens, ed., *The Human Face of Human Security: Asia-Pacific Perspectives* (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 2002), pp. 30-43.

[18] "Opportune Time to Change, Says Surin", *The Nation*, July 20, 2000. Available at: http://202.44.251.4/nationnews/2000/200007/20000720/10985/html.

[19] Amitav Acharya, "Human Security in the Asia Pacific: Puzzle, Panacea or Peril?" (Bhubaneswar, India: Centre for Peace and Development Studies, August 2000). Available at: http://www.cpdsindia.org/.

civil society and social movements in regional cooperation that had traditionally been the exclusive preserve of governments.

Regional action among the NGOs has been undertaken as a way of overcoming limited resources and suppression by national authorities in authoritarian Asian states. NGOs in Asia remain reluctant to collaborate with inter-governmental regional institutions and continue to pursue their own separate networking and advocacy activities on a range of issues, including human rights in Myanmar, environmental protection, poverty and social justice and anti-globalisation. The main exception to this reluctance are two rounds of the ASEAN People's Assembly (held in Batam in 2000 and Bali in 2002), attesting to a modest effort by both governments and civil societies to enter into a dialogue over social and security issues. These meetings attest to a growing recognition by the region's official regionalism of the importance of engaging the regional civil society, but there is a still a long way to go before the region makes a full-scale shift towards such "participatory" regionalism.[20]

The Impact of September 11

Since September 11, terrorism has come to dominate the security perceptions and agenda of Southeast Asian governments. Southeast Asia has been termed by some analysts as the "second front" in the global war on terror. This view, though contested, rests on the belief that with its defeat in Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda elements have shifted their attention to Southeast Asia. Southeast Asians who trained in Afghanistan have returned home — with one analyst estimating the number of trained terror operatives at four hundred, out of which only a quarter of these have been apprehended[21] — where they could respond to the Al Qaeda leadership's periodic call for terrorist strikes (both low and high-impact) against targets, especially entertainment spots frequented by Western tourists.

In this view, Southeast Asia offers an attractive home to international terrorism, thanks to a combination of factors: multiethnic societies, weak and corrupt regimes with a tenuous hold over peripheral areas, ongoing separatist insurgencies that lend themselves to exploitation by foreign elements, governments in general weakened by the financial crisis, and newly created democratic space in some of its larger polities such as Indonesia and the Philippines which have found it difficult to mobilize public support for security regulations to ensure preventive suppression of terrorist elements.[22] The discovery of a terrorist plot in Singapore in December

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[20] Amitav Acharya, "Democratization and the Prospects for Participatory Regionalism in Southeast Asia," *Third World Quarterly* (forthcoming.)
[21] Rohan Gunaratna, noted expert on Al Qaeda who is currently an associate professor at IDSS.
[22] The authors find many elements of this logic questionable: Singapore does not fit the image of a weak,

2001 targeted specifically at the US military installations and personnel stationed there underscored the intra-regional dimension of the challenge. The suspected perpetrators of the planned attacks are believed to be members of an organization, Jemaah Islamiah, whose objectives include the creation of a pan-Southeast Asian Islamic state comprising the Muslim-majority areas of southern Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and southern Thailand. The combination of the pan-regional blueprint and the trans-regional training and support network of its adherents has contributed to the perception of an even larger threat to Southeast Asian security, transcending local or national grievances and fault lines.

The agenda of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia since September 11 reflects the growing recognition of this challenge. But caught in a moment of weakness caused by intra-mural bickering, the burdens of membership expansion and the lingering effects of the Asian economic crisis, Southeast Asian regional institutions have not been able to offer a strong response to the emerging trans-national challenge, beyond the usual official statements and declarations. APEC's own reaction has also been largely at the declaratory level. President George Bush's attendance at the APEC Summit in Shanghai in 2001 served to underscore the importance it attaches to building a regional coalition against terror.

But beyond this symbolic move, the focus of America's war on terror continues to be Southern Asia and the Middle East. The ARF, encouraged by the US and India, has gone somewhat further, and adopted a series of measures aimed at cutting off the funds for terrorists. Most of these steps, however, are commitments to comply with measures proposed and adopted earlier by the United Nations, rather than entirely new regional initiatives conceived by the ARF. And given the complexity and global dimensions of the terrorist financial reach, regional action can only yield a limited result in addressing the problem.

The impact of terrorism on regionalism in Southeast Asia is double-edged. It emerges as a common challenge that could galvanize regional cooperation. It could lead to new areas cooperation, including information exchanges, and measures to deal with money laundering and illegal migration. But such cooperation faces a number of constraints. The perception of the severity of the terrorist challenge varies even within ASEAN, making it difficult to devise common responses. Indonesia has been the key example of this, when Jakarta repeatedly refused to crack down on elements identified by its neighbours as leaders of Al Qaeda linked terrorist organizations. The Bali bombings of October 12, 2002 has since prompted Jakarta to toughen its stance on terrorism, including the passage of internal security measures, but the government

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corrupt liberal regime; and other parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East exhibit similar conditions, and should compete with Southeast Asia as a haven for fugitive Al Qaeda elements.

risks domestic opposition to such measures, which will still constrain its response to terrorism.

Moreover, some of the stronger measures against terrorism have been undertaken outside the framework of regional institutions. This includes the trilateral pact initially between the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia providing for information exchanges and other forms of cooperation. Anti-terror cooperation with the US is also evident in the form of a US-ASEAN agreement providing for intelligence sharing. Bilateral agreements have once again proved to be more useful than multilateral means, with the US-Philippines joint training and operations in southern Philippines and the US-Malaysia accord against terrorism constituting important examples. Domestic political considerations prevent some national governments to fully support the war on terror launched by the United States and its allies, who are members of larger Asia Pacific regional groupings such as ARF and APEC. This may make regional cooperation somewhat more attractive, but this is countered by differing perceptions, limited resources and divergent political imperatives of the members of regional institutions. Finally, the increased American strategic attention to Southeast Asia in the wake of September 11 constitutes a perceptual challenge to the credibility of regional institutions whose professed objective is to offer "regional solutions to regional problems."

This section has looked at five areas of change: developments that militate against longstanding norms which guide regional cooperation; emerging East Asian regionalism and its consequences for ASEAN-styled regionalism; the quiet march towards legalization in Asia Pacific regionalism and the pressures this puts to bear on ASEAN-styled "soft regionalism"; the democratisation of Southeast Asian regionalism; and, the impact of September 11 on the region. The Asian economic crisis and the threat of terrorism have been major forces driving the need for change. While the domestic and international circumstances which shaped regionalism in the Asia Pacific during the early 1990s have changed significantly over the past decade, regional institutions have done a poor job of adapting to them.

In short, the overall picture is one of continuity rather than change. While some important shifts are occurring in ASEAN, regionalism in the Asia Pacific remains under-institutionalised and closely wedded to the principle of state sovereignty. While it remains an important force in shaping the international relations of Asia Pacific, it also faces significant challenges to which it must adapt in order to remain relevant. The Asian economic crisis and the challenge of September 11 calls for a more flexible form of regionalism, one that takes a less rigid view of non-interference, one that addresses a wider range of trans-national issues than geared to state or regime security, and one which is more responsive to the demands of the civil society. The signs that such changes are in the offing are as yet limited, however. Unless this changes, regionalism

will have a limited relevance to the future security and economic order of the Asia Pacific.

Whither Asia Pacific Military Missions?

In the light of the above analysis of the state of Asia Pacific regionalism today, we offer some preliminary observations below on the problems and prospects of emerging military missions. Various possibilities exist, but we shall reserve the bulk of our comments to two types of emerging missions: peacekeeping and anti-terror collaboration.

Regional Peacekeeping

In *An Agenda for Peace*, former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali conceptualised the broadening of peacekeeping activities — i.e., the employment of militaries as "forces for good" — such that peacekeeping now becomes a part of a continuum that includes peacemaking and peace-building.[23] However, it has not always been clear, in practice, where peacekeeping ends and peace-building begins. Militaries begin taking undertaking new roles in peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, while maintaining their conventional ability to fight wars. More often than not, this lack of coherence results in "mission creep."

Demands on the UN (and, increasingly, regional institutions) to keep the peace grew rapidly in the 1990s, which witnessed a quantum jump in the number of authorised peace operations, a broadening of activities undertaken by peacekeeping missions, an increased willingness to use force and to give UN approval for state-based interventions, and a willingness to intervene in some cases without the consent of warring parties. Underlying the new activism of UN peace-keeping was the implicit acknowledgment that preserving human security was as important as respecting state sovereignty in collective efforts to guarantee or impose peace.

As is well known, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is based on a model of cooperative security developed by ASEAN. This has involved extending ASEAN-based norms and principles to the wider Asia Pacific region, notably, an informal process of dialogue and consultation as well as a mode of ASEAN-styled conflict avoidance and management. The Association has promoted within the ARF its own practices of self-restraint and consensus-building and favoured an informal security dialogue over legally binding codes. Through the ARF, ASEAN has successfully institutionalised a multilateral security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific despite the US's preference for bilateral structures and China's suspicion of multilateralism.[24]

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[23] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking, Peacekeeping*, Report of the Secretary General, June 17, 1992 (New York: United Nations).
[24] Khong Yuen Foong, "Making Bricks Without Straw in the Asia-Pacific?" *The Pacific Review*, vol. 10, no. 2

Two specific periods can be discerned where the ARF debates on peacekeeping are concerned.[25] The first, from 1995-1998, produced some modest results, which principally included inter-sessional activities and seminars that focused on information exchange and the formulation of recommendations on the training of peacekeepers. ARF members were encouraged in these sessions to subscribe individually to the standby arrangements of the UN. However, the willingness to deploy militaries as part of ARF peacekeeping operations was largely lacking.

Lasting between 1998-2002, the second period proved even more disappointing where peacekeeping was concerned. Beyond the simple exhaustion of interest in the subject, the ARF debates on peacekeeping suffered from the debilitative effects of the region-wide financial crisis of 1997-98. The need to focus on domestic problems diminished the importance and relevance of the ARF. The East Timor crisis in September 1999 indicated that the ARF was not only unwilling, but also lacked the institutional capacity to contribute to peacekeeping operations (PKOs).[26] Though some of its members were part of INTERFET, the ARF did not become involved in the East Timor crisis and made no contribution as a regional institution to humanitarian intervention in Timor.[27] Furthermore, this latter period witnessed a significant retreat in how the ARF discussed the subject of peacekeeping.[28] For example, the ARF meeting of 2001 barely mentioned the issue of peacekeeping.[29]

In sum, most ARF member states accept a conventional understanding on peacekeeping, namely, national militaries operating under UN auspices and guided by the principles of

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(1997), p. 291.

[25] This section partly draws from Ralf Emmers, "Regional Organizations and Peacekeeping: A Study of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)," paper prepared for Cosmopolitan Militaries in the 21st Century, Australian National University, Canberra, 28-29 November 2002.

[26] For a discussion on the East Timor crisis of 1999 and the ineffectiveness of regional institutions, see Derek McDougall, "Regional Institutions and Security: Implications of the 1999 East Timor Crisis," in Tan and Boutin, *Non-Traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia*, pp. 166-196.

[27] States that contributed troops to INTERFET included Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, New Zealand, Canada, Britain, France and Italy.

[28] The ARF debates on peacekeeping were influenced by the adoption of a Concept Paper during the second ministerial meeting in August 1995. The question of peacekeeping was mentioned both in Annex A and B, together with confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, non-proliferation and arms control, and maritime security cooperation. Annex A referred to two objectives on peacekeeping: the holding of "Seminars/Workshops on peacekeeping issues" and the "Exchange of information and experience relating to UN Peacekeeping Operations." Annex B spoke of the need to "Explore the possibility of establishing a peacekeeping centre." The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper, 1 August 1995.

[29] Although a couple of meetings were held on peacekeeping at the level of the ISM and ISG, the ARF Chairman's Statement for 2001 declared that confidence building would remain "the foundation and main thrust of the whole ARF process. Chairman's Statement, the Eighth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Hanoi, Vietnam, 25 July 2001.

neutrality and non-use of force.[30] The ARF has constantly repeated that peacekeeping remains an issue for the UN. Through the adoption of UNSC resolutions, the UN is regarded in East Asia as the only inter-governmental organization possessing the necessary international legitimacy to allow for military intervention in conflicts and humanitarian crises.[31] The operational aspect to peacekeeping within the ARF has been limited to the sharing of experiences and the formulation of recommendations on the training of peacekeepers.

Anti-Terror Cooperation

The impact of September 11 brought another significant shift in the evolving mission of military forces: the inclusion of an anti-terror dimension to its already expanded (and still expanding) agenda. That this event represented a watershed in international security is no longer a matter for serious debate. As one analyst has suggested, September 11 has powerful implications for three of the most important debates on international order and change following the end of the Cold War: Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilisations" thesis, which stressed civilisation-based or cultural sources of international conflict[32]; John Mearsheimer's "back to the future" thesis, which anticipated greater chaos and instability with the end of bipolarity[33]; and, Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis,[34] which pronounced the final triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism over all other ideological competitors and approaches to world order.[35]

It is only since the September 11 terror-attacks in the United States that the threat of international terrorism has provided the ARF participants with a new common denominator for cooperation. The seriousness of the threat was later confirmed by the devastating bomb attacks on the island of Bali, Indonesia, on October 12, 2002 that killed almost 200 people. The importance that the September 11-inspired "new terrorism" holds for the Asia Pacific is most evident in Southeast Asia, especially the Southeast Asian archipelago with its huge Muslim population and porous borders. A recent study noted that this area, which consists of states such

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[30] Lorraine Elliott and Graeme Cheeseman, *Cosmopolitan Theory, Militaries and the Deployment of Force*, Working Paper 2002/8 (Canberra: Australian National University, Department of International Relations, November 2002), p. 39.
[31] McDougall, "Regional Institutions and Security: Implications of the 1999 East Timor Crisis," p. 186.
[32] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1997).
[33] John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security*, vol. 15 (Summer 1990), pp. 5-56; and, John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future, Part II," *International Security*, vol. 15 (Fall 1990), pp. 194-199.
[34] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Penguin, 1992).
[35] Amitav Acharya, "State-Society Relations: Reordering Asia and the World After September 11," in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne, eds., *World in Collision: Terror and the Future of the Global Order* (London: Palgrave/ New York: St. Martins, 2002).

as Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore, is today commonly viewed as the "second front in the war on terror" in the aftermath of the US-led defeat of the radical Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which provided sanctuary to Al Qaeda.[36]

In contrast to the inordinate emphasis by Washington on the use of military means to root out and destroy Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations, Southeast Asian governments by and large adopt holistic strategies to combat the scourge while not excluding the military if needed. Southeast Asian governments and elite circles responded to the September 11 attacks on the US with considerable empathy. There was no "clash of civilizations." They also recognized the vulnerability of the world's sole superpower to the new, post-modern threat of transnational terrorism. But at the popular level, there was a general understanding that the US support for Israel is a "root cause" of the terrorist menace. In the Muslim majority countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, there was especially strong popular resentment against the US for what was seen as it arrogant and unjust treatment of the Palestinian people.

As the two factors countered each other, American strategic predominance and its unilateralism complicated the picture. The war against the Taliban created new perceptions about American hegemony throughout Southeast Asia. The US dramatically enhanced its strategic role in the region, especially in the Philippines, where it conducted joint "exercises" with local troops against the Abu Sayaf group. The US also signed an agreement with ASEAN providing for cooperation on a number issues, including intelligence exchanges. US-Malaysia relations improved significantly. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed, known from his strong criticism of US hegemony, visited Washington and won recognition for Malaysia as a modern Muslim state which has taken a firm stand against radical Islam. Indonesia's President, Megawati, became the first leader of a Muslim-majority nation to visit the White House after the September 11 attacks. Her open support for the US, later retracted due to domestic pressures, won her a considerable increase in American aid. More recently, the US, pushed by Paul Wolfowitz, a former American ambassador in Jakarta, is considering restoration of military aid to Indonesia. US Singapore-relations, already cemented by agreements to support US military deployments out of Singapore facilities, have been furthered strengthened. Even Myanmar has pledged to "stand side by side" with the US in fighting terrorism, which it sees as a common menace.

Finally, Southeast Asian governments have made public pronouncements of support for the global war against terror, as expressed by the UN Security Council Resolutions 1368 and 1373.

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[36] Kumar Ramakrishna and Andrew Tan, "The New Terrorism: Diagnosis and Prescriptions," in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna, eds., *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), p. 4.

The ASEAN states have also issued an ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism. Multilateral cooperation in intelligence-sharing, establishing uniform laws and counter-terrorism was stepped up under an Action Plan adopted in May 2002.

Other Possible Missions

Beside peacekeeping and anti-terror cooperation, other new military missions that could potentially emerge in the Asia Pacific region are: humanitarian assistance, anti-piracy cooperation, the joint patrolling of the sea-lanes of communication (SLOCs), etc. Providing assistance in complex humanitarian emergencies, such as disaster relief and humanitarian aid to conflict situations, is clearly linked to the expanded (and expanding) coverage of peace operations today. The experiences of Asia Pacific militaries involved in UNTAC, INTERFET, and UNTAET operations clearly demonstrate the salience of military involvement in providing humanitarian assistance. Under the aegis of umbrella organizations such as the UN's Office for Coordinating Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), Asia Pacific militaries have worked with (or alongside) NGOs such as Medicins Sans Frontiers (MSF) or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to humanitarian crisis management efforts.[37] Growing concern over maritime terrorism and port container security has given a new impetus to anti-piracy cooperation in the Southeast Asian archipelago. Another possibility to be considered might be joint patrolling of sea-lanes of communication (SLOCs) in the Asia Pacific region.

Conclusion

We have sought to address several major changes in the Asia Pacific region which call into question norms that underpin the existing regional security architecture and diplomatic framework. While these developments underscore the need for fundamental institutional change in order to meet new regional realities, it remains unclear, however, whether the region's governments are prepared to move forcefully in those directions. The preceding discussions of the prospects and problems of regional peacekeeping and anti-terror collaboration suggest that the prevailing norms of national sovereignty, though increasingly under challenge, remain the cornerstone of Asia Pacific regionalism. Hence, while some institutional change is taking place, the overall picture of the region is one of continuity. In this respect, on one hand, the region seems ripe for new military missions to evolve. On the other, the apparent intransigence of some states towards change may mean that Asia Pacific regionalism as it exists today would quickly slide into irrelevance if it changes too slowly or refuses to budge.

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[37] Tan See Seng, Sinderpal Singh, and Melina Nathan, "Building Peace in Southeast Asia: Can NGOs and Peacekeepers Cooperate in Conflict and Humanitarian Crisis Management?" Paper prepared for UN Peace Operations and the Asia Pacific Region, IDSS-UNU-SPF Workshop, Tokyo, 12-13 February 2003.

A recent study called for more robust institutionalisation in Asia Pacific regionalism, particularly one backed up by a problem-solving mindset and approach.[38] Noting that while the ARF's minimalist framework has served divergent member interests in the Forum reasonably well, the report pointed out that institutional deficiencies which rendered the Forum powerless to deal with the economic crisis and the East Timor problem meant that substantive change was necessary in order for the ARF to successfully deal with new regional realities and to preserve its relevance. Where regional peacekeeping and anti-terror collaboration are concerned, some of the recommended changes the study made would be essential, such as the need for the ARF to pursue a thematic and problem-oriented agenda, establishing a secretariat, introducing greater flexibility in the relationship between the ARF Chair and the ASEAN Chair, build closer ties with the UN, setting up a risk reduction centre, promote enhanced defence participation within the ARF, create a special ARF task force on terrorism, etc.[39] Without these specific changes called for to the Forum, it is difficult to see how regional peacekeeping, counter-terror cooperation, and other new multilateral military missions can assume more aggressive and expansive forms than what is currently in place.

Finally, although the regional concern over terrorism has elicited some collective responses, it is uncertain however whether these would eventually translate into meaningful and substantive regional collaboration in areas such as peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. The question of terrorism has dominated the recent ARF meetings, which has further diminished the little importance given to peacekeeping within the institutional process. Whether regional security management can proceed to more demanding expressions of security cooperation to accommodate the transformed environment of post-September 11 Asia Pacific ultimately remains to be seen.

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[38] Tan, et al, *A New Agenda for the ASEAN Regional Forum.*
[39] Tan, et al, *A New Agenda for the ASEAN Regional Forum*, pp. 13, 60-70.