ASEAN Security Community: An Initiative for Peace and Stability

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Abstract

This paper looks at developments in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leading toward the formation of a security community. The first section gives an overview of developments in ASEAN's political cooperation, which represent the preliminary steps in the formation of a security community. The second section lays out the changes in the strategic environment in Southeast Asia that gave rise to the formation of a security community. The third section looks at the 2003 Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, the 2004 Vientiane Action Programme, and the 2006 ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) which were the major developments leading toward the formation of the ASEAN Security Community (ASC). The conclusion is that with the exception of the ADMM, the ASC is still delivering scant results, and that more pragmatic policies are required for the sake of effective security cooperation in the future. In this regard, it would be effective for ASEAN to cooperate in addressing non-traditional security issues.

Introduction

This paper looks at developments in ASEAN leading toward the formation of a security community. A security community comprised of sovereign states may be defined as a group whose members can maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change for a long time.[1] The ASC is a framework to facilitate political and security cooperation in ASEAN. Discussions relating to its formation began within ASEAN in 2003, stemming from a proposal put forward by Indonesia. The ASC discussions are still underway and the cooperative framework has yet to be fully formed. However, over the period from 2003 to 2006, the discussions gave rise to a number of concrete results paving the way toward the establishment of the ASC, including the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (the Bali Concord II) of 2003, which called for the establishment of the ASC; the Vientiane Action Programme of 2004, which put forward the policy challenges to be overcome in order to form the ASC; and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting, which represents the first step in the formation of the ASC. At the ASEAN Summit in Cebu, the Philippines, held in January 2007, it was agreed that the ASC would be formed by 2015, five years earlier than originally planned. Subsequently, it was announced in the chairman's statement of the November 2007 ASEAN Summit in Singapore that the ASC should evolve into a "Political-security Community." Moreover, the Second ADMM, which took place just before the Singapore Summit, issued a three-year work program for defense cooperation.

Rather than a military alliance, the ASC is a framework based on the idea of comprehensive security

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[1] Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 16.

with the strategic thrusts of conflict prevention, peaceful conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace-building. A framework of this nature represents one of the ultimate goals of ASEAN, which has achieved a record of political cooperation since its inauguration. The Bangkok Declaration of August 8, 1967, the de facto founding declaration of ASEAN, states the objective for the creation of ASEAN as, first and foremost, cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres; it only touches on political and security cooperation in abstract terms, however, stating that a goal of ASEAN is "to promote regional peace and stability."

Nonetheless, political cooperation was, to some extent, the implicit aspiration of all five original ASEAN members (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand), and for this reason they have stepped up political cooperation since ASEAN's establishment substantially. The development of a cooperative framework led to a series of significant results: the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) declaration in 1971; the conclusion of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 1976; the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994; and the conclusion of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEA-NWFZ) in 1995.

However, ASEAN's political cooperation faced a series of internal and external difficulties from the end of the 1990s to the beginning of the 2000s. The economies of the Southeast Asian countries were thrown into turmoil by the Asian economic crisis of 1997, and the economic upheavals spread to the political and social spheres. Despite being a regional cooperative association, however, ASEAN was unable to cope effectively. In the aftermath of the crisis it was pointed out that ASEAN was unable to function adequately and had systemic insufficiencies. These discussions were not limited to economic considerations, but spread as far as the very nature of ASEAN as a multilateral cooperative framework that included political and security cooperation. In addition, with regard to political cooperation, it was not just that the intrinsic limitations of ASEAN had become apparent. The world woke once again to the threat of terrorism in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US in 2001, while in Southeast Asia, there was increased activity by Jemaah Islamiah (JI) and Abu Sayyaf (ASG), Islamic fundamentalist organizations suspected of having connections to Al-Qaeda. These changes to the internal and global security environments point to the need for a tight-knit cooperative structure between the ASEAN members. This paper examines the significance of the formation of the ASC and its prospects for the future on the basis of historical developments since the establishment of ASEAN and the changes in the security environment; at the same time it considers the developmental process and the various stages in the development of the ASC. The paper is comprised of three sections: the first section gives an overview of developments in ASEAN's political cooperation representing the preliminary steps in the formation of a security community; the second section lays out the changes in the strategic environment in Southeast Asia that gave rise to the formation of the ASC; and the third section looks at the developments from the start of discussions of the ASC up to the present day.

I. Development of ASEAN's Political Cooperation: Discovering Concepts of Security

In the absence of any treaty drawn up for the establishment of ASEAN, the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 has become its de facto founding document. The declaration sets out the purposes for establishing ASEAN as, first and foremost, economic growth, social progress and cultural development

through joint endeavors. However, while the preamble and the purpose for establishing ASEAN make mention of promoting regional peace and stability, no direct reference is made to political or security cooperation.[2] Nonetheless, ASEAN was launched against the backdrop of the temporary cessation of the conflict between Malaysia and the Philippines over Sabah, and Indonesia's *Konfrontasi*, policy of confrontation, toward Malaysia. In this sense, the political significance of the launch of ASEAN was that regional solidarity was once again being fomented. However, since the regional conflicts had only just been wrapped up there was still insufficient trust between the ASEAN members to set about building a cooperative framework to address security, an issue that impacted on the very existence of nations. To this may be added that it was felt necessary at that time, during the height of the Cold War, to avoid socialist countries or nonaligned nations outside the region taking a hostile view of ASEAN as an enemy military alliance of pro-American, anticommunist countries.[3] For these reasons, any declaration at the time pertaining to political or security cooperation was avoided.

In addition, while the five original members of ASEAN recognized the importance of security cooperation, they differed over the extent to which cooperation was needed. Indonesia believed that security cooperation was necessary to maintain equilibrium with China, whereas Singapore had found its own security through cooperation with the British Commonwealth of Nations. The remaining three countries recognized the need for security cooperation, but saw it as something to be aimed for in the future. With no wish to form a military alliance, they felt that ultimately they had no choice but to rely on American military power for security.[4] The highest common denominator for the formation of cooperation within ASEAN over security was the notion of collective political defense advocated by then Thai Prime Minister Thanat Khoman.[5] This entailed confidence-building to prevent conflict breaking out within the region and preventing the major powers outside the region from intervening in any regional conflict.[6] It is important to note that ASEAN is not a military alliance and since its inception, it has aspired to comprehensive security cooperation in the broadest sense of the term. ASEAN continues to adhere to this aspiration in the current discussions over the ASC.

The fact that the launch of ASEAN took place against a backdrop of political and security problems intensified substantive political cooperation within ASEAN from the start. The intensification of political cooperation can be accounted for by the huge changes in the relations between Southeast Asian countries and neighboring powers from the end of the 1960s onward. First, the UK announced the withdrawal of British troops from the former British territory of Malaya. The US took the decision to reduce the number of its troops stationed in Southeast Asia as the Vietnam War was drawing to a close. Conversely, the socialist powers of the Soviet Union and China were becoming increasingly interested in Southeast Asia. Given this international situation, Malaysia envisaged the neutralization of Southeast Asia guaranteed by the powers of the US, China, and the Soviet Union.[7] After a meeting

2 "The ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)," Thailand, 8 August 1967 <http://www.aseansec.org/3628.htm> Accessed on 29 January 2007.

3 Yoneji Kuroyanagi, *ASEAN 35nen no Kiseki* (*35 Years of ASEAN*) (Tokyo: Yushindo, 2003), pp. 38-40.

4 Ibid, p. 39.

5 *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol. Two, Part Two, From World War II to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 288.

6 Susumu Yamakage, *ASEAN: Simboru kara Sisutemu he* (*ASEAN: From Symbol to System*) (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1991), p. 107.

7 Heiner Hänggi, "ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept," (Pacific Strategic Papers 4, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), pp. 12-5.

of foreign ministers in Kuala Lumpur in November 1971, ASEAN adopted a declaration on the neutrality of Southeast Asia. The declaration stated the determination of the ASEAN members to exert the necessary efforts to secure the recognition of, and respect for, Southeast Asia as a "Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN)," free from any form of interference by outside powers; it also stated that Southeast Asian countries would make concerted efforts to broaden the areas of cooperation that would contribute to their strength and solidarity, and closer relationships between them.[8] This became known as the ZOPFAN Declaration, and while it lacked effectiveness in the sense that it did not call on the powers outside the region to guarantee the neutrality of Southeast Asia, it still was groundbreaking in that ASEAN had indicated a joint approach toward extra-regional relations for the first time.[9] Also, the section of the preamble of the declaration that deals with the United Nations Charter alludes to the principles of abstention from threat or use of force and peaceful settlement of international disputes, and this spirit would later become one of the cornerstones of the ASC.[10]

The end of the Vietnam War in April 1975 and the transformation to socialism of the three countries in Indochina were doubly significant for the security of ASEAN. First, while ASEAN was essentially a grouping of anticommunist nations, the hostile power had appeared in an adjoining region. Second, the fiasco in Vietnam had weakened US involvement in Southeast Asia.

In response to these radical changes in the security environment, the ASEAN members tried to boost their own security by tightening their cooperative framework. The First ASEAN Summit was held in Bali, Indonesia, in February 1976, with the Declaration of ASEAN Concord (the Bali Concord) adopted at the meeting. The declaration contained a number of objectives and principles to be taken into account in pursuit of political stability, including strengthening national and ASEAN resilience, the early establishment of the ZOPFAN, peaceful processes in the settlement of intra-regional differences, and the promotion of peaceful cooperation among the nations of Southeast Asia. It also had a political program of action as a framework for ASEAN cooperation, which included meetings of the heads of government of the member states to be held as and when necessary; signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia; settlement of intra-regional disputes by peaceful means as soon as possible; immediate consideration of initial steps towards recognition of and respect for the ZOPFAN wherever possible; improvement of ASEAN machinery to strengthen political cooperation; study on how to develop judicial cooperation including the possibility of an ASEAN Extradition Treaty; and strengthening of political solidarity by promoting the harmonization of views, coordination of positions, and, where possible and desirable, taking common actions.[11] The Bali Concord put political cooperation at the top of the objectives of ASEAN, the first publicly released document to do so.[12]

The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), which was concluded at the First ASEAN Summit, stipulated the peaceful settlement of all intra-regional disputes as part of ASEAN's political cooperation. The TAC called for cooperation within the region on the basis of

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[8] "Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration," Malaysia, 27 November 1971 <http://www.aseansec. org/3629.htm> Accessed on 23 January 2007.

[9] Yamakage, *ASEAN*, p. 133.

[10] "Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration."

[11] "Declaration of ASEAN Concord," Indonesia, 24 February 1976 <http://www.aseansec.org/1649.htm> Accessed on 23 January 2007.

[12] Yamakage, *ASEAN*, p. 138.

the fundamental principles of mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations; the right to self-determination; and non-interference in the internal affairs of one another. As a means toward the peaceful settlement of disputes, Article 14 stipulated the establishment of a High Council comprising a representative at the ministerial level from each of the signatory nations to settle disputes. Article 15 stipulated that the High Council may act as a committee of mediation with the agreement of the parties in dispute. In fact, the High Council was never established following the conclusion of the TAC, and as yet has played no part in the resolution of actual disputes. Nonetheless, the fact that the idea existed is of itself noteworthy. It should also be noted that Article 6 set out the intention to form an ASEAN community, and Article 18 stated that the TAC would be open to accession by all other states in Southeast Asia.[13]

Since the 1970s, ASEAN had reinforced its collective power of diplomacy. Japan's massive production of synthetic rubber posed a threat to the natural rubber industry in Southeast Asia. Facing this rubber problem, ASEAN demanded, as a group unified to apply pressure, that Japan should have ministerial-level talks with ASEAN. On the request of ASEAN, Japan and ASEAN established a forum for negotiations and both sides finally agreed that Japan would control the production and export of synthetic rubber.[14] ASEAN also successfully demonstrated to the rest of the world its ability to foment a relationship of mutual trust among members and act together in relation to issues of regional security through its response to the problem of Cambodia, which developed in the late 1970s.[15]

The establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994 was an event that demonstrated heightened political and security cooperation both within ASEAN, and between ASEAN and external powers. During the 1990s, there was an upheaval in the security environment of Southeast Asia; this was a result of the huge changes in ASEAN's relationships with the US, China and Russia. These changes were brought on by the end of the Cold War and the resolution of the Cambodia problem. Moreover, China openly proclaimed its territorial expansionism during this period, occupying the islands of the South China Sea. ASEAN members began to have misgivings regarding these developments in China.[16]

ASEAN addressed this situation through a region-wide security dialogue encompassing the Asia-Pacific region, with ASEAN itself as the base for the dialogue. The Joint Communiqué of the Twenty-fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held in Kuala Lumpur in July 1991 stated the view that ZOPFAN, the TAC, and the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC) process were appropriate bases for addressing the regional peace and security issues in the 1990s.[17] The Singapore Declaration of 1992, released at the Fourth ASEAN Summit in Singapore in January 1992, stated that the leaders of the ASEAN members had agreed to establish a forum to facilitate the same security dialogue over a wider region that ASEAN members had originally had, in order to ensure the security of

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[13] "Declaration of ASEAN Concord," "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia," Indonesia, 24 February 1976 <http://www.aseansec.org/1217.htm> Accessed on 25 January 2007.

[14] Kuroyanagi, *35 Years of ASEAN*, pp. 73-4.

[15] Michael Leifer, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: Extending ASEAN's Model of Regional Security," (Adelphi Paper 302, London: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 16.

[16] Koichi Sato, *ASEAN Rejimu: ASEAN niokeru Kaigi Gaiko no Hatten to Kadai* (*The ASEAN Regime: Developments and Tasks of Conference Diplomacy in ASEAN*) (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 2003), pp. 137-8.

[17] "Joint Communiqué of the Twenty-fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting," Kuala Lumpur, 19-20 July 1991 <http://www.aseansec.org/956.htm> Accessed on 13 February 2007.

the Asia-Pacific region.[18] The decision to hold the ARF was made at the AMM of July 1993. The ARF was an ambitious attempt to expand the intra-regional security cooperation methods of confidence building and preventative diplomacy that ASEAN had developed to the Asia-Pacific region.[19] ASEAN was attempting to build a security framework that would also include the participation of the powers outside the region, and the fruit of its initiatives after the ARF was the conclusion of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEA-NWFZ) in December 1995.[20]

ASEAN has thus built up a record of political and security cooperation since it came into being in 1967. This was possible because the small nations of Southeast Asia, which are normally at the mercy of the major powers, banded together to improve their own autonomy and establish regional security in a cooperative initiative aimed at national and regional stability. A unique conceptual structure for security has emerged throughout this process, and the related notions and ideas have become the cornerstone of the ASC concept.

II. ASEAN's Turning Point: Changes in the Security Environment

The ASC concept was developed against the backdrop of changes in ASEAN's strategic environment from the latter half of the 1990s up until the present day. These changes were wrought by the expansion of ASEAN, the Asian economic crisis, and the increasing threat of terrorism. The end of the Cold War brought about a fundamental shift in ASEAN as it gave the opportunity for ASEAN, which came into being as an anti-communist grouping, to develop into a regional institution that encompassed Southeast Asia, regardless of differences in ideology or political system. Also, Myanmar and the socialist countries in Indochina, which had previously been regarded as hostile to ASEAN, became members. Vietnam was the first to join, in 1995, followed by both Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and finally Cambodia in 1999; ASEAN thus grew to be an organization that included all 10 Southeast Asian nations. The birth of ASEAN10 meant that the organization included the political diversity of all the member nations. Strictly speaking, the political systems of the five original ASEAN members should all be classified separately; at the very least, however, these countries have embraced pluralist democratic systems. In contrast, new members Vietnam and Laos are socialist, and Myanmar is under military rule.[21] This political diversity has given rise to a situation of political division within ASEAN, and is one of the factors impeding cooperation in the field of security.

The currency crisis that developed with the Thai baht in July 1997 led to substantial drops in the value of the currencies of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. This threw the Southeast Asian economy into turmoil, and there was a marked drop in the economic growth rate of these countries. The economic turmoil was even felt in the field of national defense; repercussions of the economic

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[18] "Singapore Declaration of 1992," Singapore, 28 January 1992 <http://www.aseansec.org/5120.htm> Accessed on 13 February 2007.

[19] Leifer, "The ASEAN Regional Forum," pp. 22-3.

[20] Susumu Yamakage, *ASEAN Pawah: Ajia-Taiheiyo no Chukaku he* (*ASEAN Power: Towards a Center for the Asia-Pacific Region*) (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1997), p.181; "Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone," Bangkok, Thailand, 15 December 1995 <http://www.aseansec.org/3636.htm> Accessed on 20 February 2007.

[21] Susumu Yamakage, "Tenkanki no ASEAN: Kakudai, Shinka, Arata na Kadai (ASEAN at its Turning Point: Enlargement, Deepening, and New Issues)," in Susumu Yamakage, ed., *Tenkanki no ASEAN: Arata na Kadai heno Chosen* (*ASEAN at its Turning Point: The Challenges of New Issues*) (Tokyo: The Japan Institute of International Affairs, 2001) pp. 10-1.

slump spread to national budgets, causing massive reductions in defense budgets. The Asian economic crisis led to the collapse of the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia, which had dominated ASEAN as a leader for many years. The collapse of the regime meant that Indonesia lost its leadership role, and with its cohesive power gone, ASEAN's external clout was reduced. Moreover, ASEAN was unable to take unified action as an organization at the time of the economic collapse, and was criticized for its failure to function.[22]

In addition to these changes, the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 2001 have made terrorism the focus of security throughout the world. The existence of international terrorist networks, in particular Al-Qaeda, came to the attention of the world in the aftermath of 9/11. In Southeast Asia, attention turned to the activities of extremist Islamic groups connected to Al-Qaeda, such as JI and ASG. Over the four years from 2002 to 2005 there has been a succession of major terrorist attacks in Indonesia, with the involvement of JI suspected in all of them. In Southern Thailand, attacks using bombs and guns have continued since January 2004, resulting in more than 2,800 deaths as of the end of 2007. Despite the denials of the Thai government that the disturbances in the south of the country are connected to extremist Islamic groups from other countries, international terrorist organizations and Southeast Asian separatist or independence organizations are widely believed to be involved.[23] With regard to the ARF, a symbol of region-wide security cooperation led by ASEAN, results have been seen at institutional level; for example, the meeting has been made a regular, annual event and, since 1996, members of national defense authorities have participated. However, the limitations of the ARF, such as the extremely slow pace of transition toward the preventive diplomacy originally envisaged, are now being pointed to.[24]

These changes in the internal and external strategic environments led to the conception and development of the ASC. The proposal for creating the ASC was put forward by Indonesia, and Rizal Sukma, Executive Director of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS),[25] an independent think tank based in Jakarta, played a central role in formulating the plan. Sukma presented a paper entitled "The Future of ASEAN: Towards a Security Community" at the seminar "ASEAN Cooperation: Challenges and Prospects in the Current International Situation," which was held at the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations in New York on June 3, 2003.[26] In this paper, he put forward the awareness of the issues leading up to the ASC proposal, and the details of the concept.

First of all, Sukma notes by way of background that there had been discussions over the declining role of ASEAN in terms of internal cooperation and external relations since the end of the Cold War, particularly following the 1997 Asian economic crisis. Sukma posits that ASEAN lost the diplomatic centrality it had enjoyed during the 1980s and early 1990s as a result of the hasty expansion of membership to 10 countries, fundamental political and economic changes in original member countries such as Thailand and the Philippines, and the collapse of the Suharto regime in Indonesia, which had, until then, played a central role within ASEAN. He also notes that as the world has entered the age of terrorism since 9/11, ASEAN is once again posed with the tremendous challenge of proving itself

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[22] Kuroyanagi, *35 Years of ASEAN*, pp. 138-9.

[23] *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 17 February 2007.

[24] Sato, *The ASEAN Regime*, pp. 155-60.

[25] For information on CSIS, see <http://www.csis.or.id/default.asp>.

[26] Rizal Sukma, "The Future of ASEAN: Towards a Security Community," (Paper presented at a seminar on "ASEAN Cooperation: Challenges and Prospects in the Current International Situation," New York, 3 June 2003).

as an organization worthy of its existence.[27]

As Sukma's discussion makes clear, the proposal for the ASC was based on the recognition of ASEAN's declining status following the Asian economic crisis and the growing threat of terrorism. Also, Indonesia, which held the ASEAN presidency for a year starting July 2003, aimed to be reinstated as the leading power of ASEAN. Moreover, it was recognized that with talks being held on economic integration within ASEAN there was a need to build a framework for political and security cooperation that would be in balance with economic progress.[28]

The fact that a member of an Indonesian strategic think tank was involved in the planning of the ASC meant that the experiences of track-two diplomacy were still very much alive, in the sense that academia was being put to use in the arena of policy-making practice. There are a number of arguments from an ASEAN studies standpoint regarding the relationship between ASEAN and the security community. These generally take the theoretical consideration of a security community advanced by Karl Deutsch as their starting point, and there is a considerable body of work looking at whether or not the case of ASEAN fits the theoretical framework, and to what extent additional theoretical considerations would be necessary if it does not. On the basis of the work to date, Donald K. Emmerson provides a useful analytic framework for ASEAN as a security community at the present stage, that is, whether ASEAN in its current state has the primary qualities of a security community, and whether such intentions, with respect to a security community, constitute beneficial policy objectives.[29] This body of work is reflected in the principle of comprehensive security in the ASC concept.

Another example of synergy between academia and practice is a growing devotion to non-traditional security.[30] ASEAN has recently been interested in non-traditional security concerns, including terrorism and piracy, illegal migration, environmental degradation, pandemic diseases, and natural disasters. Along with and based on arguments in the academic society, ASEAN has developed the ASC concept, which focuses on non-traditional security as one of its major fields of cooperation for the purpose of realizing a "comprehensive" security community. Sukma's paper also referred to the salience of addressing non-traditional threats.[31]

III. Progress of Discussions Regarding the ASC: Learning From the Past?

A. The 2003 Bali Concord II: Agreement on the Formation of the ASC

The image of the ASC developed from the principle of a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia that was set forth with the adoption of the ASEAN Vision 2020 at the 1997 ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur. A peaceful and stable Southeast Asia is one where each nation is at peace with itself and where the

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[27] Ibid.

[28] *Xinhua News Agency*, 22 July 2003.

[29] Donald K. Emmerson, "Security, Community, and Democracy in Southeast Asia: Analyzing ASEAN," *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (August 2005), p. 169.

[30] As some academic accomplishments, see: Andrew T.H. Tan and J.D. Kenneth Boutin eds., *Non-Traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Select Publishing for Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2001) and Mely Caballero-Anthony, Ralf Emmers and Amitav Acharya eds., *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Dilemmas in Securitisation* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006).

[31] Sukma, "The Future of ASEAN."

causes for conflict have been eliminated through respect for justice and the rule of law and through the strengthening of national and regional resilience.[32] With this basic image kept intact, the discussions on the formation of the ASC began in 2003. From the very start, Indonesia, the country that made the original proposal, declared that the ASC should be a different framework for security cooperation than a military pact or military cooperation agreement. In a statement dated May 26, 2003, Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said that the ASC should be understood in a broader sense, encompassing politics and peace. Hassan stated that the aim of the ASC was to avoid a situation like that in Iraq, where the failure to establish a regional mechanism for political cooperation had brought on intervention by third-party countries—recognition of the issues relating to the ASC concept was thus linked with the chaos at the time surrounding the reconstruction of post-war Iraq. Hassan stressed the need for examining what kind of cooperation would be possible in the political and security fields, giving the example of maritime security as an issue of particular importance for ASEAN's security.[33]

The deliberations on the ASC began with the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), and Indonesia informally proposed the ASC concept at the Thirty-sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held in Phnom Penh on June 16–17, 2003. The proposal included a counter-terrorism center, training in peacekeeping activities, a center for cooperation against non-traditional threats, and regular meetings of ASEAN police and national defense ministers. For some countries, the ASC concept called to mind the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), a military alliance during the Cold War. Indonesia responded by confirming that it continued to respect ASEAN's fundamental principles of non-interference, respect for national sovereignty, consensus-based decision-making, and the renunciation of the threat or use of force. At the same time, it stressed that the ASC was not a military alliance. Other countries in attendance such as the Philippines and Malaysia treated Indonesia's proposal with caution, indicating that they needed time to examine the concept.[34]

Following from these discussions, Indonesia formally proposed the ASC concept at the Ninth ASEAN Summit held in Bali on October 7–8, 2003. The result of the discussions was that the countries participating in the summit agreed to twelve points in the basic framework of the ASC concept.[35] Based on this agreement, the summit adopted the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II). This was a fundamental declaration on the nature of ASEAN that took the place of the Bali Concord I adopted in 1976 at the First ASEAN Summit, and it had monumental significance in the history of ASEAN as it declared the formation of the ASEAN Community by 2020. As a backdrop to this, the preamble indicated the need to further consolidate the achievements of ASEAN as a dynamic, resilient, and cohesive regional association, as well as the need to further strengthen ASEAN's guidelines in achieving a clearer and more coherent path for cooperation. The Bali Concord II gave three pillars on which the ASEAN Community was to be founded: the ASC; the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which would ensure economic cooperation; and the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community (ASCC), which would promote cooperation in the social and cultural spheres.[36]

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[32] "ASEAN Vision 2020," <http://www.aseansec.org/5228.htm> Accessed on 26 February 2007.

[33] *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, 27 May 2003.

[34] *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, 27 May 2003; *Jakarta Post*, 16-18 June 2003; *Straits Times*, 21 July 2003.

[35] *Jakarta Post*, 8 October 2003.

[36] "Declaration of ASEAN Concord II" (Bali Concord II) <http://www.aseansec.org/15159.htm> Accessed on 12 January 2007.

The preamble to the Bali Concord II reaffirmed commitment to the principles enshrined in the Bangkok Declaration, the ZOPFAN Declaration, the TAC, the Bali Concord I, and the SEA-NWFZ, and it reiterated that the TAC is an effective code of conduct for intra- and extra-regional relations of ASEAN. The declaration following the preamble lays out fundamental understanding on a number of issues relating to security. The first of these is that environmental degradation, maritime security cooperation and the enhancement of defense cooperation among ASEAN countries are matters of common concern for the ASEAN members. The declaration then notes the importance of willingness to share information on these matters of common concern, fomenting the habit of consultation to discuss political issues, and settling long-standing disputes through peaceful means. Moreover, the declaration notes that the ARF will remain the primary forum for enhancing political and security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, and that based on this recognition, ASEAN will enhance its role in further promoting cooperation within the ARF.[37]

Given these premises, the Bali Concord II sets out the basic framework of the ASC as follows. First of all, the aim of the ASC is to ensure that ASEAN countries live at peace with one another and with the world in a just, democratic and harmonious environment. It then stipulates that ASEAN members shall rely exclusively on peaceful measures to settle intra-regional differences. It further states that the ASC seeks comprehensive security with broad political, economic, social and cultural aspects, rather than a defense pact, military alliance or joint foreign policy. The ultimate aim of the ASC is to establish modalities for norms-setting, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building. In addition, as in the preamble, the basic framework for the ASC mentions maritime security and the importance of the ARF.[38]

The contents of the Bali Concord II make it clear that the ASC concept is the culmination of the security cooperation fostered by ASEAN since its inception. It lists by name the various treaties and declarations concluded by ASEAN in the past and the statement in the preamble that ASEAN members "are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manner" is similar to the expression used in the ZOPFAN Declaration. Also, both the preamble and the ASC basic framework reaffirm ASEAN's basic principles of non-interference and consensus-based decision-making. The ASC concept was developed against the backdrop of changes in ASEAN's internal and external security environment, but it would appear that the ASC represented a continuation of ASEAN's existing policy and a regeneration of ASEAN's conceptual basis rather than a new departure reflecting these changes. This may also be seen in the fact that the ASC puts forward the High Council, which was originally proposed in the TAC but never actually established, as a means for peaceful conflict resolution. The fact that the notion of a community was put forward should not be underestimated. While ASEAN may not have had the sort of cohesiveness seen in, for example, the European Union, it is noteworthy that ASEAN had demonstrated its will to further its cooperative framework in the midst of a new security environment.

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

B. The 2004 Vientiane Action Programme: An Abstract Plan of Action

Indonesia continued to push for the formation of the ASC during 2004, and the ASC concept was discussed at various ASEAN meetings. At the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) held in Bangkok on January 8, the member countries discussed giving shape to the ASC concept in the context of how it would cope with transnational crimes such as terrorism, drug trafficking and human trafficking.[39] At a meeting of high-level ASEAN officials on February 20, Indonesia submitted a draft plan of the ASC in the form of over seventy proposals, most of which had a fixed time frame. The proposals were ambitious, calling for the advancement of democracy, the protection of human rights, commitment to regular elections, the untrammeled flow of information, and the creation of open, tolerant, and transparent societies.[40] They included the establishment of an ASEAN peacekeeping force by 2012 and the establishment by 2010 of an ASEAN peacekeeping center to train this force. The proposals also included creating a network to link existing and planned peacekeeping centers in ASEAN countries. The proposals stipulated that the ASEAN peace-keeping force would collaborate closely with the United Nations and would not only respond to emergency situations within the region, but would also act outside the region with the agreement of countries accepting its presence.[41]

The background to Indonesia's proposal of an ASEAN peacekeeping force as part of the ASC concept can be seen in the unrest surrounding the independence of East Timor in 1999. Because it had been mainly Australia that sent in troops to restore order, Indonesia felt that ASEAN—including Indonesia itself—had been unable to deal effectively with a problem on its own doorstep, thus laying the way open to intervention from extra-regional countries.[42] At the Fourth UN-ASEAN Conference, held in Jakarta on February 24–25, 2004, Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan said that given the great number of security problems that ASEAN faced, there was an urgent need for ASEAN members to strengthen their own mechanisms for conflict resolution, which would include a peacekeeping force. He explained his reasoning by noting that most conflicts in the world were currently not between nations, but were domestic conflicts that had the danger of spilling over into other parts of the region.[43]

The other countries took Indonesia's peacekeeping force proposal away to study it, and the peacekeeping force was again discussed at the informal ASEAN foreign ministers' retreat held on March 3–4 at Ha Long, Vietnam. However, Singapore rejected the proposal on the grounds that ASEAN was not a security organization, and was thus an unsuitable forum to take on the role of peacekeeping; Thailand was also dismissive on the grounds that the proposal amounted to no more than one of the multitude of security issues facing the region. Vietnam said that it was too early to establish a peacekeeping force, stressing that the various member countries all had different policies regarding the independence of the government and the military.[44] Objections were also expressed by military-

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[39] *Straits Times*, 8 January 2004. "Joint Communiqué of the Fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC)," Bangkok, 8 January 2004 <http://www.aseansec.org/15649.htm> Accessed on 28 February 2007.

[40] *Jakarta Post*, 21, 26 February 2004, Barry Wain, "ASEAN – Jakarta Jilted: Indonesia's neighbors are not very supportive of its vision of a regional security community," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 June 2004.

[41] Barry Wain, "Regional Security – ASEAN Apathy: Indonesia proposes a regional peacekeeping force, but neighbors show little interest," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 May 2004.

[42] Ibid.

[43] *Jakarta Post*, 25, 26 February 2004.

[44] *Reuters News*, 4 March 2004; *Jakarta Post*, 8 March 2004.

run Myanmar, one-party Laos, and Brunei, an absolute monarchy.[45]

There was no disagreement between countries over the general idea of ASEAN members cooperating under the ASC framework to take steps to cope with terrorism and other non-traditional threats or disputes breaking out within the region. However, every country except Indonesia remained resolutely cautious toward the specific proposal of founding a peacekeeping force, which had implications regarding sovereignty. Additionally, the ASEAN members saw Indonesia's eagerness to develop the ASC concept simply as ambition to exclude outside powers and make itself once again the leader of ASEAN, and so they became increasingly wary of the ASC concept.[46] It has also been pointed out that in terms of the usual procedures, Indonesia had not carried out sufficient advance negotiations with the other member countries, with the result that it was unable to persuade them to accept its proposal.[47]

During the thirty-seventh AMM, held on June 29–30, 2004, the ASEAN foreign ministers discussed an action plan that set out a course toward implementation of the ASC concept. Vietnam and other latecomers to ASEAN strongly opposed all of the proposals put forward by Indonesia, such as the establishment of a human rights commission in every country and the establishment of an ASEAN peacekeeping force. The eventual agreement went no further than general principles, with no indication of when they would be put into effect.[48] The AMM Joint Communiqué mentions the ASC in abstract terms throughout, saying that it would lead to an ASEAN that is at peace with one another and with the world at large, strengthen ASEAN's capacity to deal with traditional and non-traditional security issues, strengthen ASEAN relations with countries outside the region, and enhance ASEAN's role as the ARF's primary driving force. Regarding the ASC Plan of Action, the communiqué went no further than lauding the efforts of Indonesia and the senior officials in developing the plan and stating that the plan would be recommended for adoption at the Tenth ASEAN Summit in November of that year.[49]

All ASEAN members other than Indonesia thus took a passive attitude toward the concrete implementation of the ASC. This is not say, however, that every country had totally rejected giving shape to the ASC concept. In fact, following the unofficial foreign ministers' meeting of March 2003, at which the establishment of an ASEAN peacekeeping force was discussed, then Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar of Singapore stated that there was the possibility that at some time in the future the issue of establishing a peacekeeping force would come into view.[50] As one official put it, the idea to settle intra-regional disputes by ASEAN, not by external intervention, can itself be accepted by the member states.[51] However, declarations going as far as this appear somewhat premature at the present time.

The Tenth ASEAN Summit was held in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, on November 29, 2004. The Chairman's Statement announced the adoption of the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) to realize the end goals of the ASEAN Vision and the Bali Concord II at a time when Southeast Asia

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[45] Wain, "ASEAN – Jakarta Jilted."

[46] Ibid.

[47] Interview by the author of personnel connected to the ASEAN Secretariat, 17 July 2007.

[48] John McBeth, "ASEAN Insecurity," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 July 2004.

[49] "Joint Communiqué of the 37th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting," Jakarta, 29-30 June 2004 <http://www.aseansec. org/16192.htm> Accessed on 23 February 2007.

[50] *Reuters News*, 4 March 2004.

[51] Interview by the author of personnel connected to the ASEAN Secretariat, 17 July 2007.

faced changes in the regional and international situation such as terrorist attacks and avian flu.[52] The VAP began with items related to the ASC; it stated that the ASC subscribes to the principle of comprehensive security, and that it viewed political and social stability, economic prosperity, and equitable development as strong foundations for the ASEAN Community. It went on to put forward the five strategic thrusts of the ASC: political development; shaping and sharing of norms; conflict prevention; conflict resolution; and post-conflict peace-building. These were to be implemented with a focus on actions that could be achieved by 2010.[53]

I would like to examine these strategic thrusts in more detail. The first, political development, is a commitment to promote a political environment in which ASEAN members settle intra-regional differences peacefully, and regard security within the region as fundamentally bound by geographic location, common vision and shared values. The strategies for political development include better understanding and appreciation of the political systems, culture, and history of member countries, mainly through track-two activities. They also include cooperation over an institutional framework to facilitate the flow of information between member countries and over the development of legal infrastructure. The strategic thrust of shaping and sharing of norms means forming the norms of good conduct in a democratic, tolerant, and open community as a way of strengthening ASEAN's solidarity, cohesiveness, and harmony. The strategies for this include developing an ASEAN Charter, encouraging accession to the TAC by non-ASEAN countries, full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, compliance with the ZOPFAN and SEA-NWFZ protocols, and also the conclusion of an ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement, an ASEAN convention on counter-terrorism, and an extradition treaty.[54]

The three strategic thrusts in the second half are all concerned with conflict resolution. First, confidence building, greater transparency of defense policies through the publication of defense white papers, the creation of an early warning system, strengthening of the ARF, and an ASEAN arms register to be administered by the ASEAN Secretariat were put forward as means for conflict prevention. Use of existing peacekeeping centers, respect for peaceful settlement of disputes and joint conduct were put forward as means for conflict prevention, and the means for post-conflict peace-building include developing human resources, establishing a humanitarian crisis management/ assistance center, educational exchanges and promotion of a culture of peace.[55]

While novel items such as an early warning system or an arms register appear from time to time in the parts of the VAP concerned with the establishment of the ASC, much of it follows existing frameworks and is generally abstract. There is, therefore, a need to formulate more specific policy in the future in order to form an effective framework that can contribute to conflict resolution within the region. However, it would appear that ASEAN's achievement for the time being is an indication in documentary form of the directionality to be taken to resolve the security issues within the region.

C. Formulation of the ASEAN Charter (2005−2007): Reexamination of Non-interference

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[52] "Chairman's Statement of the 10th ASEAN Summit," Vientiane, 29 November 2004 <http://www.aseansec. org/16631.htm> Accessed on 14 February 2007.

[53] "Vientiane Action Programme," <http://www.aseansec.org/VAP-10th%20ASEAN%20Summit.pdf> Accessed on 14 February 2007.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

As already mentioned, ASEAN was a loose regional cooperative mechanism with no founding treaty. However, a move started in 2006, which marked the 40th anniversary of ASEAN's founding, to draw up a legal charter aiming toward the establishment of an ASEAN community. The ASEAN members agreed on the formulation of a charter at the ASEAN Summit held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005. This was based on the recognition of the importance of having an appropriate institutional framework able to meet the challenges of realizing an ASEAN community, and was to serve as a firm foundation for ASEAN in the formation and development of an ASEAN community.[56] ASEAN also decided at the Kuala Lumpur summit to establish an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to formulate the charter. The objective of the EPG was to provide practical recommendations on the directions and nature of an ASEAN Charter appropriate to the establishment of an ASEAN Community on the basis of ASEAN norms, values, and goals.[57]

In the formulation of the charter, a point of particular interest in relation to the discussion of the ASC is the reevaluation of the principle of non-interference. On April 17–20, 2006, the EPG carried out specific examinations aimed at drawing up a draft of the charter, during which they reevaluated the method of consensus-based decision-making that ASEAN had long adhered to and discussed whether or not to shift from the long-held principle of non-interference within the region.[58] The EPG was chaired by former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Musa Hitam, who said that a clause was considered stipulating some form of punitive sanctions to be imposed on member countries that violated the charter.[59] The EPG submitted guidelines that included these points to the ASEAN Summit in December; after the summit gave its approval, work began on drafting the charter.

Despite the fact that the principles of non-interference and consensus-based decision-making had been maintained in the Bali Concord II of 2003, the proposal to revise these principles appeared during the formulation of the charter. The backdrop to the argument for revision was the issue of Myanmar. Western countries continued to strongly condemn Myanmar, which was under military rule, for its lagging progress toward democratization and suspected suppression of human rights. It was in light of this situation that it was suggested that the non-interference principle could be changed such that ASEAN could seek resolution of the internal affairs of member countries and impose punitive sanctions in the case of non-compliance.[60] In the context of forming the ASC, this meant that the internal affairs of member countries would be resolved by the ASC, a collective framework. The issue of changing the long-held fundamental principle of non-interference had been very carefully avoided in the original discussions over the ASC; nonetheless, reexamination of the principle was unavoidable at the stage of drawing up the ASEAN Charter in order for ASEAN as a regional grouping to implement more effective policy.

However, in the drafting process of the charter, the proposal to revise the principle of non-

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[56] "Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Establishment of the ASEAN Charter," Kuala Lumpur, 12 December 2005 <http://www.aseansec.org/18030.htm> Accessed on 23 February 2007.

[57] "Terms of Reference of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on the ASEAN Charter," <http://www.aseansec.org/18060.htm> Accessed on 23 February 2007.

[58] *Straits Times*, 18, 19 April 2006.

[59] *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 19 April 2006.

[60] Sanae Suzuki, "ASEAN Kensho (ASEAN Charter) Sakutei nimuketa Torikumi: Kenjin Kaigi (EPG) niyoru Teigensho wo Chusin ni (Efforts Toward Formulating the ASEAN Charter: The Proposals of the EPG)," *Ajia Keizai* (*Asian Economy*), Vol. 48, No. 6 (June 2007), pp. 73, 77.

interference encountered strong opposition. At the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Manila on July 29–30, 2007, no agreement was reached concerning the revision. There were apparently vehement objections to changing the non-interference rule from the relatively new members, which joined the association in the 1990s. The conclusion was postponed until the ASEAN Summit in November.[61]

Eventually, the debate ended up with adherence to the long-standing principle. At the summit held in Singapore on November 20, the ASEAN member states signed the charter, which reaffirmed respect for non-interference, as stipulated in the preamble. The issue of introducing articles on sanctions, such as suspension of membership or expulsion, was left to the future. However, the charter defines that in case of a serious breach or non-compliance of the charter, the matter shall be referred to the ASEAN Summit for decision. Hereafter, the focus will be shifted to how the charter should be applied to specific cases, operating as an effective framework for the ASEAN Community.

D. ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (2006–2007)

The issue of non-interference had been included in the discussions over the ASC, and it resurfaced during the process of formulating a charter. Meanwhile, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) was held—this was one of the results arising in 2006 from the movement to form the ASC. The Vientiane Action Programme, adopted at the Tenth ASEAN Summit in November 2004, contained the ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action, which related to the establishment of the ASC. The ASC Plan of Action had set working toward convening an annual ADMM as one of its objectives, with the aim of enhancing confidence-building measures to prevent conflict.[62]

ASEAN defense officials had previously held the annual Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), a special advisory committee on security cooperation established in 1996. The SOM had served as a joint conference of high-level officials in the field of security, and in May 2004 it proposed that the ASEAN Secretariat draft a concept paper on the establishment of the ADMM. The concept paper drawn up by the secretariat stated that the ADMM would complement the existing security dialogues of cooperative frameworks such as the ARF. The objectives of the ADMM given in the concept paper were to promote regional peace and stability through security dialogues; to give guidance to the existing security dialogues within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its dialogue partners; to promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of security issues as well as enhancement of transparency and openness; and to contribute to the establishment of the ASC and to promote the implementation of the VAP. The paper lists the agenda of the ADMM as an exchange of views on regional and international security issues; voluntary briefings on defense policies; discussion on related activities outside the ASEAN process; discussion on interaction with external partners; and review of ASEAN defense cooperation. In addition, the paper stipulates that the ADMM shall be guided by the fundamental principles of ASEAN enshrined in the TAC, and that the ADMM shall be the highest ministerial defense and security consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN, reporting directly to the heads of government of ASEAN. Moreover, the ADMM is to be assisted by an ASEAN Defense

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[61] *Straits Times*, 31 July 2007.

[62] "ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action," <http://www.aseansec.org/16826.htm>, <http://www.aseansec.org/16829.htm> Accessed on 23 February 2007.

Senior Officials' Meeting, and is to work closely with the AMM and the SOM.[63]

The First ADMM was held in Kuala Lumpur on May 9, 2006. Myanmar was absent from the meeting, but the defense ministers of the remaining nine ASEAN members attended. Views were exchanged on maritime security, terrorism, the situation on the Korean Peninsula, and the future of the ARF. The participants examined the transnational crime issues of drug trafficking and human trafficking, as well as disaster prevention measures that also included measures to deal with avian flu.[64] The defense ministers also confirmed the formation of the ASC by 2020.[65] A joint press release was issued after the meeting, which announced that the defense ministers had discussed the above-mentioned agenda and that they had agreed upon the establishment of the ASC. The ministers also confirmed the objectives of the ADMM as set out in the concept paper, in addition to which they confirmed that the ADMM should be open, flexible and outward-looking, and should actively engage ASEAN's friends and dialogue partners.[66] However, the press release did not touch on the establishment of an ASEAN peacekeeping force. This indicated that the ASEAN members had not come to an agreement over the establishment of an "ASEAN armed force" at that time.[67]

One of the objectives of the ADMM is to complement the ARF. Underlying the establishment of this objective was the intention for ASEAN to unite to reincarnate the ARF as an effective platform. The Thirteenth ARF was held on July 28, 2006, the final day of a series of foreign ministers' meetings relating to ASEAN. Prior to the meeting, North Korea had launched a ballistic missile on July 5, and the question of North Korea thus became the central topic on the agenda. As all the participants of the Six-Party Talks were members of the ARF, these countries tried to find a platform for discussions. North Korea refused to take part in the discussions, however, and the problems of the Korean Peninsula were discussed by the five remaining participant countries of the Six-Party Talks along with five other countries, including Malaysia, which chaired the ARF. In addition, the Chairman's Statement expressed concern over North Korea's missile launch.[68] North Korea subsequently hardened its attitude, hinting that it might withdraw from the ARF. The ARF managed to provide a platform for discussions aimed at resolution of the issues of North Korea, which constitute East Asia's biggest concern, but no specific developments toward resolution were seen. There is as yet no effective linkage between the movement for formation of the ASC and the restoration of the ARF.

The ADMM has come to be convened on an annual basis. The Second ADMM took place on November 14, 2007 in Singapore. The meeting issued a joint declaration, which reaffirmed reinforced cooperation among the ASEAN militaries through seminars, workshops, training and joint exercises. The declaration also specified that ASEAN would establish an ADMM-Plus to deepen relationships with its dialogue partners.[69] Furthermore, in a three-year work program issued at the

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[63] "Concept Paper for the Establishment of an ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting," <http://www.aseansec.org/18511.htm> Accessed on 23 February 2007.

[64] *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, 9 May 2006.

[65] *Straits Times*, 10 May 2006.

[66] "Joint Press Release of the Inaugural ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting," Kuala Lumpur, 9 May 2006 <http://www.aseansec.org/18412.htm> Accessed on 23 February 2007.

[67] *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, 8 May 2006.

[68] "Chairman's Statement of the Thirteenth ASEAN Regional Forum," Kuala Lumpur, 28 July 2006 <http://www.aseansec.org/18599.htm> Accessed on 23 February 2007.

[69] "Joint Declaration of the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Enhancing Regional Peace and Stability," Singapore, 14 November 2007 <http://www.aseansec.org/21135.pdf> Accessed on 25 June 2008.

meeting, the ADMM displayed a willingness to cooperate in disaster relief and emergency operations for humanitarian purposes, and other non-traditional security matters.[70] As exemplified in the work program, ASEAN has been striving to materialize its vision of security cooperation, mainly in non-traditional security issues.

More specifically, the association clearly intends to accumulate cooperative experience in disaster relief operations. In this regard, ASEAN's recent efforts to deal with the deadly cyclone Nargis, which hit Myanmar in May 2008, should be noted. ASEAN played an important role in holding an international aid conference, mediating between the Myanmar military junta and the international community. ASEAN dispatched an aid assessment team to cyclone-hit areas as well. Surin Pitsuwan, incumbent ASEAN Secretary-general, praised ASEAN for successfully opening a new space of security cooperation.[71] Given ASEAN's considerable experience of cooperation in the field of non-traditional security problems, it is not unreasonable to have high hopes for the future prospects of the ASC.

Conclusion and Prospects

The Twelfth ASEAN Summit was held in Cebu, the Philippines, on January 13, 2007. The Chairperson's Statement was released after the discussions. The statement announced that the ASEAN Community, including the ASC, would be established by 2015, five years earlier than originally planned.[72] The acceleration by five years of the plan appears to have come against a backdrop of two contradictory understandings. The first is the understanding that the environment for forming the ASC had been put in place; this was an expression of the confidence in the cooperative framework of ASEAN, comprising its achievements in political cooperation since its inception. The other was the sense of crisis that the ASEAN Community had to be formed as quickly as possible. The background to this was the need to adapt to changes in the security environment such as the threat of terrorism, and to resolve political problems within the region such as the problem of Myanmar.

The ASC concept was a policy by ASEAN to deal with the changes in the security environment of Southeast Asia following the end of the Cold War, particularly those brought on by ASEAN's expansion, the Asian economic crisis and the increasing threat of terrorism. At the same time, the concept itself was an attempt to once again give the cooperative organization of ASEAN practical effectiveness in the peaceful resolution of conflict by making use of ZOPFAN, the TAC, the ARF and the SEA-NWFRZ, which were non-military security cooperation frameworks previously established by ASEAN. From the point of view of confidence-building, this had the backing of the conviction that ASEAN was actually functioning and had a record of achievement. As of 2007, the ASC is now slated for formation in 2015 and it is thus not yet clear exactly what effects in terms of security will be seen as a result of the formation of the ASC. In addition, with the exception of the hosting of the ADMM, the actual substance of the ASC defined in the action plan and elsewhere is extremely abstract. Moreover, ASEAN is forced to take into account the involvement of the powers outside the

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[70] "ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Three-year Work Program" <http://www.aseansec.org/21214.pdf> Accessed on 25 June 2008.

[71] "New ASEAN emerging from response to Myanmar cyclone" <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/southeastasia/view/354833/1/.html> Accessed on 20 June 2008.

[72] "Chairperson's Statement of the 12th ASEAN Summit, H. E. the President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, 'One Caring and Sharing Community'," Cebu, Philippines, 13 January 2007 <http://www.aseansec.org/19280.htm> Accessed on 17 January 2007.

region in its own security, and is reliant on their involvement. For this reason, it may well be difficult for ASEAN to complete its security entirely on its own.

However, the cooperative framework of ASEAN, which was just a loose grouping, now has the chance to leap to a far higher plane that overcomes its previous constraints in dealing jointly with political and security issues. Among the proactive initiatives aiming at the creation of the ASEAN Community, the formation of the ASC can perhaps be expected to produce gradual results after the fashion of ASEAN, even if these are not the immediate effective and physical results brought about by a regular military alliance. In this regard, it is appropriate for ASEAN to seek cooperation in addressing non-traditional security threats, such as natural disasters. Even though there are at present no disputes between countries in the region such as there were at the time of the establishment of ASEAN, there is, for example, still the possibility that the problem of Myanmar might intensify and develop serious discord in the region. With this as the reality of the ASC, there is a need to pay close attention to whether or not it is formed. It would be necessary, therefore, to follow carefully how ASEAN develops security cooperation under the ASEAN Charter, and whether the ASC can evolve to establish an "ASEAN armed force."