



Does the ARF Have a Role in ASEAN's Pursuit of Regional Security in the Next Decade?

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War renewed attention on regionalism and a reconsideration of the role of regional security organisations in promoting international peace and security. However, the capacities of regional organisations differ, particularly when analysed within the general framework of preventive diplomacy, balance of power arrangements and peace operations.

Post 1992, the small and medium-sized states in Southeast Asia underwent significant geo-strategic changes and since that time we have witnessed the rise of China and the revitalisation of US interest in the region. Southeast Asians view ASEAN as central to enabling broad cooperation across the region and ensuring balance of power arrangements. While ASEAN is reticent to discuss security issues directly, its members believe that their security is best maintained by engaging the great powers in multi-lateral endeavours via institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which is an extension of ASEAN.¹ However, debate continues as to whether ASEAN 'is about making process, not progress' or whether it is the critical vehicle for the creation of a diplomatic community that will lay the foundations for improved cooperative security across the region. The ARF, created by ASEAN as a framework for cooperation has regularly been criticised for its inability to *break free* of the dialogue framework due to its employment of ASEAN style of a consensus based approach and adherence to the ASEAN principle of non-interference in members' internal affairs.

Until the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 ASEAN was generally considered the most successful regional organisation in the developing world; in the last decade it has

¹ Sheldon W. Simon, 'Whither Security Regionalism', in Richard. J. Ellings and Aaron. L. Freidberg with Michael Wills (eds.), *Strategic Asia, 2003-4*, Seattle, The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005, p. 26.

faced questions over its relevance as a security actor in a rapidly changing environment.² While members of ASEAN agree on the importance of respecting territorial integrity, sovereignty and the unity of member countries, the state practices of individual ASEAN countries have not always reflected this philosophy.

This paper will argue that if a security community is a result of states cooperating through bilateral relationships and multilateral forums in order to develop dependable expectations of peaceful change, then the ARF as an extension and instrument of ASEAN has stalled at the confidence building and preventative diplomacy stage. The paper will argue that the relative success associated with the modest yet valuable contribution made by the ARF over the preceding fifteen years toward regional stability in order to prevent conflict is not enough, primarily due to the geopolitical changes across the region in the last decade. As an institution that is based largely on the “ASEAN Way” the ARF in its current guise is unable to continue to make meaningful contributions that address the expectations and security concerns of some of its members and the ARF risks becoming irrelevant if it cannot demonstrate an ability to make a tangible contribution to ASEANs pursuit of regional security into the next decade.

Academic assessment of the ARF could be viewed as pessimistic, there are however, certain successes that are to be lauded. The ARF has brought to the fore various issues that are relevant to the security concerns of members across the region. This is what differentiates it from ASEAN, where the question of security does not play a pivotal role, since its political agenda is focused on broader economic issues of the region.

The paper will propose that if the ARF is to make a more definitive contribution to preventative diplomacy and conflict resolution then a more pro-active engagement in the areas of preventative diplomacy and conflict resolution is required. Alternatively, a repositioning of the ARFs role to support ASEANs intent into the next decade is required. In doing so the ARF will continue to contribute to the maintenance of regional stability and importantly, the ARF will remain a relevant element of Southeast

² Sheldon W. Simon, ‘Whither Security Regionalism’, in Richard. J. Ellings and Aaron. L. Freidberg with Michael Wills (eds.), *Strategic Asia, 2003-4*, Seattle, The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005, p. 270.

Asia's security architecture. To achieve this, the ARF may also need to reconsider the requirements of the 1995 ARF Concept Paper.

This paper will (i) provide a history of ASEAN and the ARF; (ii) describe the achievements of the ARF in the development of a multilateral security framework in Southeast Asia; (iii) provide a critical assessment of this progress; (iv) address the criticism direct toward the ARF and consider some of the principal problems affecting the process; (v) discuss what this suggests for the future in terms of regional security challenges; and outline implications for the future of security multilateralism for the region and Australia.

Background

Security Architecture. Professor William T. Tow suggests that a precise definition of security architecture continues to elude regional policy makers.³ For the purpose of this paper the term architecture should be read as 'an effective concept by which to accurately understand the regional security framework within a rapidly evolving security environment'.⁴ In terms of a security architecture, at the end of WWII Asian states tended to pursue traditional approaches to their individual security policies.⁵ While there were some low-key ambitions to establish multilateral security bodies in the early years of the Cold War, many of the Asian states sought bilateral alliance and cold war alliances as a means to ensure their security interests.⁶

³ William. T. Tow, 'Emerging Asia-Pacific security architecture: The Australia-Japan Factor' Speech to the 4th Australia and Japan 1.5 Track Security Dialogue, Canberra, 10-11 December , 2007, p.23, available at:< http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/resarch/h19_australia/Australia_Japan_1.5_dialogue.pdf>, accessed on 27 April 2012

⁴ William. T. Tow, 'Emerging Asia-Pacific security architecture: The Australia-Japan Factor' Speech to the 4th Australia and Japan 1.5 Track Security Dialogue, Canberra, 10-11 December , 2007, p.23, available at:< http://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/resarch/h19_australia/Australia_Japan_1.5_dialogue.pdf>, accessed on 27 April 2012.

⁵ Sheldon Simon's view that the Asian littoral is divided into three geopolitical sub-regions is accepted: Northeast Asia (comprising the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC), Japan, Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK – 'North Korea'), Republic of Korea (ROK – 'South Korea'), Taiwan and the Russian Far East), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka) and Southeast Asia (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam).^[1] Simon, Sheldon, 'ASEAN and Multilateralism: The Long, Bumpy Road to Community', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2008, pp. 264-292.

⁶Ralf Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in ASEAN and the ARF* London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, pp. 11-13.

Over the last five decades, however, the geopolitical landscape across the entire Asia-Pacific has been transformed. The security architecture of the region has been characterised by the relationships between former communist bloc countries, the American hub-and-spoke alliance system and the broader regional frameworks primarily centred on ASEAN.⁷ Almost every country in the region has established an elaborate web of diplomatic, security or economic partnerships with other countries.⁸ Over the last five decades several region wide institutions have also emerged with ASEAN at the core. These include the ASEAN Regional Forum, in which foreign ministers participate; the ASEAN + 3 which include Japan, China and South Korea; the expanded ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM); the ADMM Plus; and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

Factors Influencing Changes to Security Architecture. Geopolitical relationships in Asia have been described as fluid and several factors continue to generate a genuine interest in increasing security cooperation across the Asia-Pacific.⁹ The reasons for this include the economic opportunities of globalisation and the associated vulnerabilities of terrorist activity and organised crime groups seeking to exploit networks of finance and trade. Additionally, health threats such as the spread of infectious disease are more likely through increased intra and inter-state travel; and the expansion of agriculture networks a by-product of increased globalisation continue to contribute to the increased likelihood of security threats across the region.¹⁰

Many regional countries also recognise that they are exposed to new threats from abroad and are acknowledging for the first time, with any real sense of concern, transnational and multidimensional threats such as climate change, food supply, soil

⁷ Ryo Sahashi, 'The Rise of China and the Changing Regional Security Architecture', *US-Japan Papers* 2011, p. 2, available at : < <http://www.jcie.org/researchpdfs/USJapanPapers/Sahashi.pdf>>, accessed on 21 April 2012.

⁸ H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, *Keynote Address by President of Republic of Indonesia to the Shangri-La Dialogue*, Singapore, 1 June 2012, available a : < <http://www.presidensby.info/index.php/eng/pidato/2012/06/01/1867.html>>, accessed on 15 June 2012.

⁹ H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, *Keynote Address by President of Republic of Indonesia to the Shangri-La Dialogue*, Singapore, 1 June 2012, available a : < <http://www.presidensby.info/index.php/eng/pidato/2012/06/01/1867.html>>, accessed on 15 June 2012.

¹⁰ Nick Bisley, 'Security Architecture the Asian Way', *Building Asia's Security, The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 49, No. 408, p. 22, available at : < <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=tadl20>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

erosion and water management catchments issues that need to be addressed.¹¹ Finally shifting global power configurations such as the rise of China and India, the re-emergence of Russian strategic weight and both the economic challenges faced by the US and the recent refocus on Asia are all contributing to the various degrees of uncertainty in regional strategic thinking related to security.¹²

Rod Lyon in his paper on possible strategic shocks in Asia reinforces the point by suggesting that there is also potential for the manifestation of threats across the Asia-Pacific region.¹³ An examples of the exacerbation of existing issue is the fact that the future of the six – party talks, initiated by the nuclear development program of North Korea, remain unclear. In the Taiwan Strait, political tension remains high due to the political and military pressure from mainland China related to Taiwan's democratisation and pursuit of independence. China's increased presence and interest towards the Indian Ocean, territorial disputes in relation to the South China Sea and the less than transparent but intensive build-up of maritime and air power are causing regional actors to seek a counter to this build-up. Political instability in Southeast Asian states such as Thailand and the Philippines and the delicate balance of the strategic relationships among the major powers such as US, China, Japan, Russia and an emerging India are all contributing to an uncertain security climate.¹⁴ Moreover, relations between some combinations of ASEAN members are sporadically tense, and have sometimes even threatened to deteriorate into armed conflict (as was the case on the border between Thailand and Cambodia in 2008–9).¹⁵

There is, however, awareness among Southeast Asian policy makers that China is gradually allowing itself to be engaged and bound to security institutions and their

¹¹ Caballero-Anthony Mely, 'Non-traditional Security, Regionalism and the State in Southeast Asia', *Transnational Trends: Middle Eastern and Asian Views*, 2008, pp.137-154, available at: <<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=95198>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

¹² Nick Bisley, 'Security Architecture the Asian Way', *Building Asia's Security, The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 49, No. 408, pp.21 - 22, available at: <<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=tadl20>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

¹³ Rod, Lyon, 'Possible Strategic Shocks in Asia', speech to The 4th Australia and Japan 1.5 Track Security Dialogue, Canberra, 10-11 December 2007, pp. 14-34.

¹⁴ Kaneda Hideaki, Vice Admiral (ret), speech at the 4th Australian and Japan 1.5 Track Security Dialogue, Canberra, 10-11 December 2007.

¹⁵ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of Regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 155.

norms and that these institutions could be a means by which the small to medium powers in the region could pursue an equilibrium.¹⁶

In summary, globalisation, uncertainties of power transition, the precarious balance of power arrangements; and an indication of opportunities for engagement, coupled with the recognition of broader ‘non-traditional ‘security threats have set the conditions which call for greater security cooperation across the entire Asia-Pacific.¹⁷

A Security Community and the Importance of Cooperative Security

Security Community. Developed by Karl Deutsch and his associates in the 1950’s, a security community is a concept that was developed to explore ‘the conditions and processes of long – range or permanent peace’.¹⁸ It describes groups of states that have developed a long-term habit of peaceful interactions and ruled out the use of force in settling disputes with other group members. The concept offers both a theoretical and analytic framework for studying the impact of international (including regional) institutions in promoting peaceful change in international relations.¹⁹ A security community is also distinguished by a ‘real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way’.²⁰ Herein lays the importance of both confidence building measures to assist in the development of the community and efforts required to develop methods of engaging in Preventative Diplomacy. Both are required to prevent, and, or address potential conflict within the community and will be discussed further in this paper.

¹⁶Ryo Sahashi, ‘The Rise of China and the Changing Regional Security Architecture’, *US-Japan Papers* 2011, p.132, available at :< <http://www.jcie.org/researchpdfs/USJapanPapers/Sahashi.pdf>>, accessed on 21 April 2012.

¹⁷Nick Bisley, ‘Security Architecture the Asian Way’, *Building Asia’s Security, The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 49, No 408, p. 23, available at:<<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=tadl20>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

¹⁸ Shaun Narine, ‘ASEAN In The Twenty-First Century: A Sceptical View’, *Cambridge Review Of International Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 3, September 2009, p. 377, available at:<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ccam20>, accessed on 26 April 2012 and Karl W. Deutsch, *Political Community in the North Atlantic Area: International Organisations in light of Historical Experiences*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957, p. 5.

¹⁹Amitav, Acharya, ‘Constructing a Security Community in Southeast ASIA’ ASEAN and the problem of regional order’, 2nd Edition, *Politics in Asia Series*, Routledge, New York, Introduction, p.1, 2009.

²⁰Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 1..and Karl W. Deutsch, *Political Community in the North Atlantic Area: International Organisations in light of Historical Experiences*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957, p. 5.

Security Communities are also marked by the absence of a competitive military build-up or arms race involving their members.²¹

Cooperative Security. Academic opinion on what kinds of mechanisms are needed to entice states to cooperate is divided. Some suggest the most popular instrument is international institutions. This division of opinion is further compounded by a lack of consensus as to what such security institutions actually are.²² An intuitive understanding of international security institutions would suggest as a minimum: state commitment to a rules based approach supported by regular meetings; procedures; adequate resources; a permanent headquarters; and a productive secretariat to provide appropriate administrative support.²³

Based on this description, Southeast Asia is yet to develop into a true security community that is underpinned by an adequately developed cooperative security framework because the regional security architecture of Southeast Asia is still very messy. Not all countries in the region are included in the multilateral institutional framework, for example Timor Leste is still not part of ASEAN²⁴ and the institutions that support the hub of this community (ASEAN), for example the ARF, are not structured or resourced appropriately. The issue of institutional structure and resource allocation will be discussed in detail in a latter section of this paper. Furthermore, in terms of incorporating the intersection of great power interests in the region and its security architecture, Ron Huiskens provides an assessment of ASEAN endeavours to promote a security community. He highlights the point that while Southeast Asia was free of prospects of interstate conflict and was strengthening its credentials as a de facto Deutschian 'security community', managing intersection of the great power interests in

²¹Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p 6.

²²Nick Bisley, 'Security Architecture the Asian Way', *Building Asia's Security, The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 49, No. 408, p. 23, available at:<<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=tadl20>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

²³Nick Bisley, 'Security Architecture the Asian Way', *Building Asia's Security, The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 49, No:408, p. 23, available at:<<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=tadl20>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

²⁴H Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Republic of Indonesia, *Keynote Address to The 11th IISS Asia Security Summit, The Shangri-La Dialogue*, Singapore, 01 June 2012.

the region, the US and China would continue to pose a challenge for ASEAN,²⁵ as demonstrated at the 2012 ARF Ministerial Meeting.²⁶

It is clear that in the last decade a new and diverse security framework has started to emerge across Southeast Asia. Globalisation is binding Asian states that now place a high priority on managing the vulnerabilities that globalisation has created.²⁷ New alliances have emerged, these include the alliances of: Japan-US-South Korea; and Japan-US-Australia. Additionally there has been the creation of new opportunities for engagement such as the six-party talks, the establishment of new institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation for resolving specific problems and disputes, various adhoc cooperation efforts; not to mention the significance of the comprehensive military build up among several of ASEAN and the ARFs member states.²⁸ To remain effective and to ensure regional stability this evolving security architecture should be balanced by and supported through an established and cooperative security community.

Given both the proliferation of institutions evolving within Southeast Asia's security architecture, the expansion of several of the militaries of ASEAN and ARF member states; and the challenge of 'managing' the interaction and relationship of the great powers of the US and China it is worthwhile to review the future of ASEAN and specifically the role of the ARF in ASEANs pursuit of a regional security framework for Southeast Asia into the next decade.

²⁵Ron Huisken, 'Southeast Asia: Major Power or Finishing School?', in N.S Sisodia and Sreeradha Datta (eds.), *Changing Security Dynamics in South East Asia*, Working Paper No 408, New Delhi, Magnum Books, 2008, p. 11.

²⁶ Tan Seng Chye, *ASEAN way fails in South China Sea dispute*, 9 Jul 2012, available at: <http://www.afr.com/p/opinion/asean_way_fails_in_south_china_sea_j4CAGRHH29I7sUAIodOUxL>, accessed on 20 Jul 10.

²⁷ Nick Bisley, 'Security Architecture the Asian Way', Building Asia's Security, *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 49, No. 408, 2009, p. 125, available at: <<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=tadl20>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

²⁸ Nick Bisley, 'Imaging Alternatives', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 49, No. 2009, pp.112-120, available at: <<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=tadl20>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

History of ASEAN and the ARF

ASEAN

The years that preceded the emergence of ASEAN were distinguished by regional conflict and disrupted relationships.²⁹ Two key sources of antagonism within the region at the time were the Indonesian opposition to the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963; and the Philippines' claim to the British colony of North Borneo (Sabah).³⁰ ASEAN was formed in 1967 following the Bangkok Declaration of 8 August by the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei joined in 1984 and Vietnam in 1995. ASEAN continued to expand with the admission of Myanmar and Laos in 1997. There are now 10 Southeast Asian member countries.

ASEAN covers a spectrum of economies that have demonstrated either actual or potential for prosperity due to the Asia-Pacific Basin achieving impressive economic growth rates over the last five decades; this created the basis of commonality and interest in preserving and advancing this prosperity among the member states which continues five decades on.³¹ The Association's founding document – The Bangkok Declaration, claimed for the countries of Southeast Asia 'a primary responsibility of strengthening the economic and social stability of the region and ensuring their peaceful and progressive national development', and stated that 'they were determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference'.³² It should be noted, however, that the statement's political intent was not reflected in ASEAN's aims and purposes; which only called for cooperation in 'economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields'.³³ This exclusion of pursuing stability and security as a mandate in the founding documents may well have restricted ASEAN and subsequently the ARF in the proceeding decades.

²⁹ Ralf, Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in ASEAN and the ARF*, New York, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 11.

³⁰ Ralf, Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in ASEAN and the ARF*, p. 11.

³¹ Description of ASEAN, in Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newman (eds.), *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*, Suffolk, Penguin Books, 1998, p. 35.

³² Jeannie Henderson, 'ASEAN's Record', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 39, No. 328, 1999, pp. 15 -16.

³³ Jeannie Henderson, 'ASEAN's Record', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 39, No. 328, 1999, p. 16.

It has been suggested that while ASEAN was an attempt to institutionalise the rapprochement between Malaysia and Indonesia and to create a framework to build certainty and trust into relations within Southeast Asia – the founders did not have a clear program for achieving this aim, hence one possible reason for the exclusion of any reference to security in the organisations founding documents.³⁴ Nevertheless, while ASEAN may not have been conceived as a conventional security organisation, in its attempts to reverse Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia in the 1980's, the organisation did demonstrate that it could play an important role in regional security through political consultation as opposed to a collective military strategy.³⁵

From its inception, ASEAN embedded a non-interference norm that stipulated consultation, consensus and non-interference in its members' internal affairs as well as any disagreements with other members. In the first decade ASEAN played a confidence building role opening new channels for communication between countries that had been isolated, consumed by conflict or ignorant of the events confronting the broader region.³⁶ The ASEAN approach was not geared towards external threats and was seen as a soft security approach when compared with the US bi-lateral arrangements across Asia, that were predominately geared to external threats.³⁷

For the first two decades multi-lateral defence cooperation was excluded from ASEAN's agenda, but confidence building, common membership and the opportunity for dialogue did establish an environment that allowed for bilateral military cooperation between member states that flourished by the early 1990's. This was not to be interpreted as the basis for establishing a formal ASEAN defence community. In summary, Michael Leifer suggests that ASEAN is best understood as a relatively informal, institutionalised expression of 'cooperative security'.³⁸

³⁴ Jeannie Henderson, 'ASEAN's Record', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 3, No. 328, 1999, pp. 15-16

³⁵ Noel M. Morada, 'The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and Evolution', in Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada, (eds.), *The Cooperative Security in the Asia Pacific: The ASEAN Regional Forum*, New York, Routledge, 2010, pp. 13-14.

³⁶ Noel M. Morada, 'The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and Evolution', in Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada, (eds.), *Cooperative Security in the Asia Pacific: The ASEAN Regional Forum*, New York, Routledge, 2010, pp. 13-14.

³⁷ Sheldon W. Simon, 'Whither Security Regionalism', in Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Freidberg with Michael Wills (eds.), *Strategic Asia, 2003-4*, Seattle, The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005, p. 271.

³⁸ Michael Leifer, 'The ASEAN peace process: a category mistake', *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 12, No 1, 1999, London, Routledge, 1999, p.17.

Principles, Norms and the ASEAN Way

Ralf Emmers described the ASEAN Way as an informal style of diplomacy for cooperation and conflict avoidance; and a process orientated and networked based model of cooperation rather than the bureaucratic arrangements found in other organisations, such as the European Union.³⁹ He suggests that the ASEAN Way can be analysed as a traditional inter-governmental approach to cooperation dependant on narrowly defined interests of the participating states.⁴⁰ Herein lays one of the potential restrictions of ASEAN and its off shoot the ARF. ASEAN states had various motivations for joining ASEAN and supporting the establishment of the ARF. Their opinions as to what constitutes a stable security environment in the region continue to vary. Worthy of note is that while a key motivation for ASEAN establishing the ARF was geared towards keeping China and the US involved in regional security, the organisation also welcomed the participation of India and Japan in its initiatives.⁴¹ ASEAN countries like Vietnam were concerned about China's increasingly assertive role over territorial disputes in the maritime domain, while Indonesia is more sanguine about China's economic expansion and subsequent global engagement and intent. On the US presence, Singapore strongly favours a robust posture, while Malaysia prefers a low key US presence. Therefore it is important to note and acknowledge that there were different motivations and interests in security related matters among ASEAN and subsequently membership of the ARF.⁴²

ASEAN Way of Diplomacy. From its formation, ASEAN operated on the principal of non-interference in the internal affairs of Southeast Asian countries, a position formalised in the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). The TAC also created a 'high council' for formal dispute resolution among member states, but this has never taken place.⁴³

³⁹ Ralf Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in the ASEAN and the ARF*, RoutledgeCurzon, New York, 2003, p. 23.

⁴⁰ Ralf Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in the ASEAN and the ARF*, New York, RoutledgeCurzon, p. 23.

⁴¹ Sheldon W. Simon, 'Whither Security Regionalism', in Richard. J. Ellings and Aaron. L. Freidberg with Michael Wills (eds.), *Strategic Asia, 2003-4*, Seattle, The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005, p.269.

⁴² Michael Leifer, 'The ASEAN peace process: a category mistake', *The Pacific Review*, Vol 12, No 1, 1999, pp. 26-17, available at:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09512749908719276>, accessed on 8 May 2012..

⁴³ Jeannie Henderson, 'ASEAN's Record', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 39, No. 328, 1999, p. 16.

Twenty five years post the establishment of ASEAN, the end of the Cold War geopolitics led to a significant degree of uncertainty across the Southeast Asian region. The gradual expansion of ASEAN itself became more apparent and a marked change from its actions in the first decade of existence was prompted by the US involvement in the region coming into question following the closure of US bases in the Philippines, the unresolved territorial disputes in the South China Sea, increased nuclear proliferation, and the instability on the Korean Peninsula.⁴⁴ During this period the Associations experience over Cambodia laid the foundations for the broader diplomatic role that ASEAN would seek during this time.

ASEAN leaders attending the 1992 summit agreed that the Association should intensify its external dialogue on political and security matters using the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference. The 1992 Singapore Summit also established the Asian Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) initiating an economic reform program in an attempt to deepen cooperation between ASEAN members and address concerns related to both the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) states becoming inward looking trade blocs to Southeast Asian export opportunities.⁴⁵ Even though by 1995 the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) and AFTA Plus did not transform the region dramatically, they did represent a plausible attempt at market integration and a step up from early and loose concepts of cooperation between states and forerunner to the subsequent success of economic integration achieved by Asia Pacific Economic Community (APEC)⁴⁶ and The World Trade Organisation (WTO).⁴⁷ The APEC forum established in 1989 was initially a dialogue between the 18 Asia-Pacific economies and by 1994 had adopted a specific goal of regional free trade and investment for developed and developing countries of the region. The formative meeting for regional security dialogue encompassing ASEAN, its dialogue partners, China, Russia, Vietnam, Laos and Papua New Guinea took place in 1993, the first working session followed in 1994. The success of APEC had demonstrated a willingness of ASEAN members to engage with non member states and the broader Asia-Pacific community. In terms of the development on institutions that focused on

⁴⁴ Jeannie Henderson, 'ASEAN's Record', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 39, No. 328, 1999, p. 20.

⁴⁵ Jeannie Henderson, 'ASEAN's Record', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 39, No. 328, 1999, p. 22.

⁴⁶ History of APEC found at APEC Website, available at: < <http://www.apec.org/>>, accessed on 26 May 2012.

⁴⁷ Jeannie Henderson, 'ASEAN's Record', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 39, No. 328, 1999, p. 23.

the specific security issues of the ASEAN member states and the broader Asian region the ARF was seen as a natural progression from the APEC forum and gave impetus to the idea of regional security dialogue. APEC and ARF therefore emerged as complementary processes giving structure and building upon the architecture of a post-cold-war Asia – Pacific.⁴⁸

The ASEAN Regional Forum

The end of the Cold War created a power vacuum which might have resulted in new kinds of conflicts and rivalry involving external powers.⁴⁹ Therefore, it could be suggested that ASEAN's central aim in establishing the ARF was to sustain and enhance the peace and prosperity of the Asia Pacific Region by way of political and security dialogue to be achieved through a gradual evolutionary approach.⁵⁰ In addition to the intra-regional challenges, ASEAN countries were also confronted with the transnational challenges of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the fear of US isolationism and the emergence of powers across the region, namely China and India. This necessitated ASEAN to review the changing circumstances of the region, reassess existing security provisions and adopt a different approach to addressing potential intra-state conflict.⁵¹

ARF Process. Katsumata suggests that the ARF is different from other multilateral arrangements. The ARF process involves almost all the parties involved in security affairs in the Asia-Pacific Region – encompassing Southeast Asia, North Asia (with the exception of Taiwan), Far East Russia, North America and Oceania.⁵² The underlying goal of the ARF was to create the conditions for a stable distribution of power among the three major Asia-Pacific states of China, Japan and the United States that would underpin regional order.⁵³

⁴⁸ Jeannie Henderson, 'ASEAN's Record', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 39, No. 328, 1999, p. 23.

⁴⁹ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 192.

⁵⁰ Ralf Emmers and See San Tan, *The ASEAN Regional Forum and Preventative Diplomacy: Built to Fail?*, *Asian Security*, Vol 7, No 1, 2011, p.53.

⁵¹ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 149.

⁵² Hiro Katsumata, 'ASEAN's Cooperative Security Enterprise: Norms and Interests in the ASEAN Regional Forum', *Critical Studies of the Asia-Pacific Series*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, p 9.

⁵³ Michael Leifer, 'The ASEAN Regional Forum', *Adelphi Paper*, No 302, 1996, p. 19.

The first working session of the ARF was in Bangkok on 25 July 1994 with 18 founding members.⁵⁴ The ARF was the first multilateral security forum covering the wider Asia-Pacific region and is still the only regional security framework in the world today which includes the major powers of the international system: USA, Russia, Japan, China and the EU.⁵⁵ The ASEAN parentage construct of the ARF ensured that the security framework, in the making, was heavily influenced by ASEAN norms. It introduced the relatively new norm at the time - inclusiveness, which is central to the idea of a cooperative security framework.⁵⁶ As pointed out by Gareth Evans the Australian Foreign Minister at the time, the purpose of the ARF was to build security *with* others rather than against them.⁵⁷ The ARF having been built on the Asian style of diplomacy⁵⁸ was not however designed or equipped to resolve disputes.⁵⁹

Richard Woolcott, the special envoy tasked by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, to promote the latter's 'Asia Pacific Community', suggested that the ARF membership was too large.⁶⁰ Michael Leifer noted that the ARF had structural limitations in that it could not create a stable balance, and in fact, it relied on one to remain viable.⁶¹ Not unlike ASEAN which moulded the ARF in its own image, the ARF model was designed to address regional security on a cooperative basis rather than create a power base from which to move forward.⁶² This created an artificial barrier for the ARF in that the ASEAN construct limited the institution it created, rather than created a less restricted security related version of itself, whose form it mirrors. For example, non ASEAN dialogue partners have a limited sense of shareholding within the ARF group and it would appear that issues that are not of direct concern to ASEAN countries are

⁵⁴ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of Regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 198.

⁵⁵ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of Regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 199.

⁵⁶ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 199.

⁵⁷ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 199.

⁵⁸ Non-interference in the internal affairs of the states, non-use of force, pacified settlements of disputes, consensus decision making, and preference for non-binding and non – legal approach.

⁵⁹ Hiro Katsumata, 'Establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum: Constructing A Talk Shop Or A Norm Brewery?', *The Pacific Review*, Vol 19, No.2, 2006, p.194.

⁶⁰ Richard Woolcott, *Towards the Asia Pacific Community, Asialink Essays*, No 9, 2006, p.3.

⁶¹ Helen. E.S. Nesadurai, 'ASEAN And Regional Governance After The Cold War: From Regional Order To Regional Community', *The Pacific Review*, Vol 22, No. 1, March 2009, p.97.

⁶² Koro Bessho, 'An Asia-Pacific community?', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol 39, No 39, 1999, :pp.70-71.

not addressed seriously by the forum. Therefore it has been argued that the extent to which the ARF can be developed as an institution that can address the broader issues of non ASEAN members across the region is constrained by ASEANs confidence in its own identity and its approach to multilateral institutions.⁶³ An alternative view, however, is that the ARF, founded on ASEAN Principles can be viewed as one of the key elements of regional peace and has been described as a grouping of both like minded and non-like minded states with common security threats that straddle the expanse of the Asia-Pacific.⁶⁴

The participants of the first ARF Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok in July 1994 recognised ‘the need to develop a more predictable and constructive pattern of relations for the Asia-Pacific region’ and agreed that in the initial phase, the ARF would concentrate on enhancing the trust and confidence amongst participants and thereby foster a regional environment conducive to maintaining the peace and prosperity of the region. To achieve this the Ministers agreed to a ‘dispassionate’ analyse of the key challenges facing the region acknowledging that the periods of rapid economic growth were often accompanied by significant shifts in power relations which could lead to conflict. Secondly, that the region was remarkably diverse with different approaches to peace and security requiring a consensual approach to security issues. Finally, the region had a residue of unresolved territorial and other differences by way of example the Spratley Islands and the South China Sea, any of which could spark conflagration that could undermine the peace and prosperity of the region.⁶⁵

The Ministers noted that over time, the ARF would have to gradually defuse these potential problems, and concerned that it would be unwise for a ‘young and fragile process’ like the ARF to tackle all these challenges simultaneously determined that a gradual evolutionary approach was required over three stages. Stage I: Promotion of Confidence-Building Measures (CBM); Stage II: Development of Preventive

⁶³Koro Bessho, ‘An Asia-Pacific community?’, *The Adelphi Papers*, 39:325, Routledge, New York, 1999, p. 72.

⁶⁴ Caballero-Anthony Mely, *Regionalisation of peace in Asia: Experience and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership, Working Paper No 42*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Singapore, 2003, pp. 9-10.

⁶⁵ The ARF Concept Paper found at: < <http://www.aseansec.org/3635.htm> >, accessed on 10 Apr 2012.

Diplomacy Mechanisms (PDs); and Stage III: Development of Conflict-Resolution Mechanisms. This was then communicated via an ARF Concept Paper.⁶⁶

Concept Paper

The Concept Paper was circulated by ASEAN at the second ARF meeting in August 1995. The paper was not entirely adopted by ARF in its entirety; however was to serve as the blueprint for the ARFs three stage approach to achieve its primary goals that were further broken down into short term and long term implementation considerations and various methods of approach.⁶⁷ The categorisation was to be incremental and the measures to achieve the goals varied. The measures ranged from dialogue on security perceptions, provision of voluntary statements on defence policy, the sharing of white papers or equivalent documents, through to more ambitious CBMs such as prior notice of military exercises of region wide significance. Chinese reservation of the concept paper is the reason conflict resolution was reworded to the vague term of elaboration of approaches to conflict and why the issues like that of the South China Sea disputes are dealt with via direct Beijing to ASEAN and completely outside the ARF framework.⁶⁸ In relation to Stage II work on PD, the ARF has made some progress on developing the ARF 'Concept and Principals of Preventative Diplomacy' and although a work plan on preventative diplomacy was agreed to in June 2011, there is still no firm timeframe for moving from one stage to the next.⁶⁹ There has been no progress on implementing Stage III initiatives.

Achievements of the ARF in the Development of a Multilateral Security Framework in Southeast Asia

The ARF ability to tangibly demonstrate its achievements in contributing to ASEANs development of a multilateral security framework for Southeast Asia and specifically

⁶⁶ The ARF Concept Paper found at: < <http://www.aseansec.org/3635.htm> >, accessed on 10 Apr 2012.

⁶⁷ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 200.

⁶⁸ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 201.

⁶⁹ Caballero-Anthony Mely, *Regionalisation of peace in Asia: Experience and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership, Working Paper No 42*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Singapore, 2003.P.11.

how effective these contributions have been in maintaining peace and security in the region could be viewed as inconclusive.

To date the ARF has made progress predominately in the CBMs area. This has been achieved by fostering constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues during annual meetings.⁷⁰ The ARF efforts comprise of comprehensive, year round cooperative security activities, providing several avenues for dialogue at many levels. Foreign Ministers attend the annual meeting and multiple opportunities exist for government and non-government actors to interact via workshops, and inter sessional meetings and support. Mely offers that most analysts would agree that the ARF has played a critical role in decreasing the probability of war between members and that the adoption of the ASEAN Way by the ARF directly contributes to a sense of Asian solidarity, builds confidence and has increased trust among its members.⁷¹

The ARF is the first and only pan-regional security construct for the Asia Pacific. The ARF is essentially a component of the hybrid security architecture of the region that is made up of multiple bilateral security arrangements and ASEAN at the core of the region's multilateral institutions.⁷² It is unique in that it was not created in the aftermath of war like the European institutions that developed post WWII and in the shadow of the cold war.⁷³

Implicit in its conceptualisation was ASEAN's ability to bring together under a single security umbrella China and the United States, two large powers that were not well disposed to the perceived constraints of the regional multilateral processes. It also

⁷⁰ Caballero-Anthony Mely, *Regionalisation of peace in Asia: Experience and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership, Working Paper No 42*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Singapore, 2003.p. 11.

⁷¹ Caballero-Anthony Mely, *Regionalisation of peace in Asia: Experience and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership, Working Paper No 42*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Singapore, 2003 p.13.

⁷² Nick Bisley, 'Security Architecture the Asian Way, Building Asia's Security', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 49 No. 408, p. 128, available at:<<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/aboutThisJournal?journalCode=tadl20>>, accessed on 15 May 2012.

⁷³ Sisowath Doung Chanto, "The ASEAN Regional Forum – The Emergence of 'Soft Security': Improving the Functionality of the ASEAN Security Regime", *The Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP)*, p. 41, found at:> <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/singapur/.../d+c2003-3-chanto.pdf>>, accessed on 10 Jun 2012.

created the environment to bring together the entire Asia Pacific community of major, middle and lesser powers.

The lack of measures to enable the ARF to compel actors to certain types of behaviours may make the ARF imperfect, but it has not rendered the forum totally ineffective.⁷⁴ The ARF fulfils the normal and expected functions of a forum in that it has established a number of confidence building measures. For example Japan has described the forum as a vehicle for enhancing the overall diplomatic climate between regional countries and as an important element of Japanese policy for engaging with China and North Korea.⁷⁵ More importantly the ARF does bring countries together in a grouping that is inclusive regardless of regime differences.⁷⁶ In the context of employing multilateralism as a means of enhancing a security framework, the ARF has been the vehicle that has allowed the region to engage both China and the US and integrate their presence into the system of regional order and reduce the likelihood of the development of a US strategy of containment.⁷⁷ Evelyn Goh in her paper on regional security strategies stated that the key purpose of the ARF as created by ASEAN was to enmesh the US into the region's institutions so as to reduce uncertainty about continued US commitment to the region. This 'superpower entrapment' was seen as a vital determinant of regional stability. Others, like the Vietnamese harbour a defensive enmeshment concept that views institutional membership as a means of constraining Chinese aggression.⁷⁸

Finally the formation of the ARF representing more than half of the world's population, nearly half the world's gross domestic product, at least five important regional powers (the US, China, Russia, Japan, Russia and India), and now 27 states

⁷⁴ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 1st edition, New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 332.

⁷⁵ Yuzawa, 2007, p 177

⁷⁶ Sisowath Doung Chanto, 'The ASEAN Regional Forum – The Emergence of 'Soft Security': Improving the Functionality of the ASEAN Security Regime', *The Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP)*, p. 42 found at: > <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/singapur/.../d+c2003-3-chanto.pdf>>, accessed on 10 Jun 2012.

⁷⁷ Sisowath Doung Chanto, 'The ASEAN Regional Forum – The Emergence of 'Soft Security': Improving the Functionality of the ASEAN Security Regime', *The Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP)*, p. 42, available at: > <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/singapur/.../d+c2003-3-chanto.pdf>>, accessed on 10 Jun 2012.

⁷⁸ Evelyn Goh, 'Great Powers And Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies: Omni-Enmeshment, Balancing And Hierarchical Order', *Working Paper No 84*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, July 2005, pp. 7-8.

with often widely divergent security perceptions and interests, is an exceptional outcome by any standard. In summary several Southeast Asian states such as Thailand and Singapore see the major powers of the US, China, Japan, Korea and India actively involved in the region by means of good political relationships, a degree of defence dialogue and exchange; and preferential economic exchange facilitated via engagement and exchange through the ARF.⁷⁹

In 2009 issues of the ARF Document Series 2006-2009, the Secretary General of ASEAN Dr Surin Pitsuwan reported that while the ARF had largely focused on dialogue and in developing practical areas of cooperation since its inception in 1994, developments in the middle of the first decade of the 21st Century had demonstrated the ARFs steady pace of evolution towards becoming an action orientated forum, responsive to the needs of the region.⁸⁰ The achievements included: the conduct of inter-sessional meetings on counter terrorism and transnational crime, disaster relief; and maritime security, with a view to contributing to the region's collective security objectives. Additionally he reported the adoption of the ARF Vision Statement 2009, setting out the forums vision of a peaceful, stable Asia-Pacific region, its purpose functions and direction up to 2020. Finally the report highlighted the need for the ARF to enhance visibility of the organisations aims and activities as a means of strengthening itself so that it continued to serve its objectives.⁸¹

The 9th Annual Global Strategic Review⁸², conducted in September 2011 provided a snap shot of tangible CBMs activities to date that included: the establishment of a number of Inter-sessional Support Groups (ISG) and Inter-sessional Meetings (ISM) on CBMs, Search and Rescue Coordination Cooperation, Peacekeeping Operations and Disaster Relief. Besides the substantive output of these meetings, which suggest areas where security cooperation can be advanced, the meetings socialise all members in a

⁷⁹ Evelyn Goh, 'Great Powers And Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies: Omni-Enmeshment, Balancing And Hierarchical Order', *Working Paper No 84*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, July 2005, p.-8.

⁸⁰ 2009 issue of ARF document series 2006-2009, available at :<
www.aseansec.org/publications/ARF06-09.pdf>, accessed on 16 June 2012.

⁸¹ 2009 issue of ARF document series 2006-2009, available at :<
www.aseansec.org/publications/ARF06-09.pdf>, accessed on 16 June 2012.

⁸² The 9th Annual Global Strategic Review⁸², Plenary Session 4, 11 September 2011, available at:<
[www.iiss.org/conferences/global-strategic-review/global-strategic-review-2011/Speech By](http://www.iiss.org/conferences/global-strategic-review/global-strategic-review-2011/Speech%20By)>, accessed on 21 June, 2012

nascent regional security community and have progressed to the conduct of actual HADR and Maritime Security Exercises.⁸³ Additionally it was noted that over time the ARF membership had become more open in contributions made to the ARF Security Outlook publication demonstrating a level of improved transparency in sharing defence and security policy from across the region.⁸⁴

In terms of progress in the area of PD in March 2008 the Co-Chair's report of the ARF workshop on CBMs and PD in Asia and Europe highlighted that the ARF was in transition phase from confidence building to developing preventative diplomacy initiatives facilitated due to increase in mutual trust among ASEAN countries and increased ARF participation.⁸⁵

Critical Assessment of This Progress

As far back as 1994 debate ensued as to whether the ARF, modelled on the ASEAN Way would be an effective instrument of regional order.⁸⁶ There are many conflicting views of how the ARF conducts its business.⁸⁷ Michael Leifer's view was that the prerequisite for a successful ARF may well have been the prior existence of a stable balance of power that would allow for a multilateral venture such as the ARF to proceed in circumstances of some predictability. Meaning that, to succeed, the ARF required the existence of a stable balance and would remain ineffective if it was required to establish one.⁸⁸ Another view is that the ARF is a process orientated organisation due to the absence of any alliance arrangements among the Asian states,

⁸³ Peter Ho, 'The Rise of a Militarised Asia – Global Implications', *Speech to the , 9th Annual Global Strategic Review* , Plenary Session 4, 11 September 2011, available at:<[www.iiss.org/conferences/global-strategic-review/global-strategic-review-2011/Speech By](http://www.iiss.org/conferences/global-strategic-review/global-strategic-review-2011/Speech%20By)>, accessed on 21 June, 2012

⁸⁴ Peter Ho, The Rise of a Militarised Asia – Global Implications, speech to the *9th Annual Global Strategic Review* , Plenary Session 4, 11 September 2011, available at:<

<https://www.google.com.au/search?q=9th%20annual%20global%20strategic%20review&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&source=hp&channel=np>

⁸⁵ <http://www.dfat.gov.au/arf/>, p1

⁸⁶ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 207.

⁸⁷ John Ravenhill, 'East Asian Regionalism: Much Ado About Nothing?', *Review of International Studies*, 2009, pp.219-220, available at://www.britishternationalstudiesassociation.org.doi:10.1017/S02602105090008493>, accessed on 12 May 2012.

⁸⁸ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 207.

and that the membership preference to move incrementally at a pace that is comfortable for all participants slows progress.⁸⁹ Secondly, the ARF's maintenance of informality to ensure adherence to the ASEAN Way is ineffective. Finally, the use of the terms comprehensive and cooperative security rather than a collective and common security approach, relied too much on consensus of all members in order to progress issue and delayed progress in order to ensure adherence to process.⁹⁰

To summarise, the ARF has been described as a *sui generis*⁹¹ organisation with no established precedent to follow and gives credence to the adage that the ARF is nothing more than a 'talk fest'. However, when reviewing the criticism that has been directed to the ARF one should be cognisant of the genesis of the institution and in particular the consistent theme of requiring 'a balance of power' to exist as a pre-requisite for regional order; and the mechanisms to achieve this.

The future of the ARF as a regional security framework ultimately will depend on its contribution to regional peace and stability. The contribution required will be determined by what mechanisms it has available to ensure stability, its own evolution and the type of challenges it has had to previously face and what it may need to face in the future. A review of several papers in this area presents a scorecard of mixed response and that is due to the various benchmarks used to assess ARF effectiveness. Differing expectations based on differing assumptions also contribute to the controversy. If *realist* assumptions are employed, then the ARF is a failure because it has failed to address, much less resolve, any major flashpoint like the Korean peninsula or the issues associated with the South China Sea and paint a dismal picture of ASEAN

⁸⁹ Caballero-Anthony Mely, *Regionalisation of peace in Asia: Experience and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership, Working Paper No 42*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, 2003, p.12

⁹⁰ Caballero-Anthony Mely, 'Regionalisation of Peace in Asia: Experience and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership', *Working Paper No 42, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies* Singapore, 2003, p.12 and Simon Sheldon, 'ASEAN and its Security Offspring: Facing New Challenges', *Strategic Studies Institute*, United States Army War College, August 2007, pP. 22.

⁹¹ Caballero-Anthony Mely, *Regionalisation of peace in Asia: Experience and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership, Working Paper No 42*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, 2003, p.12.

and the ARF.⁹² However, if “constructivist” assumptions are applied, then the ARF has a fairly creditable past and room to grow in the future.⁹³

The 1995 Concept Paper is a good benchmark in which to begin an assessment of the effectiveness of the ARF but the evaluation should not be limited to a comparison of the achievements as laid out in the paper alone. Alternating views on the effectiveness of ASEAN and the ARF can be distilled from the writings of realist academics such as Michael Liefer; and the constructivist approach that have featured predominately in the work of Amitav Acharya.⁹⁴ Therefore factoring in the establishment of the concepts of a Security Community and Cooperative Security through the ARF response to the 1997-1998 Asian Financial; and the disputes surrounding the South China Sea as examples have also been taken into account

Concept Paper. One could question as to why, fifteen years since the inception of the Concept Paper, the ARF has not markedly progressed beyond Stage I. The ARF conducts annual ministerial meetings, inter-sessional activities and multiple Track 1 and Track II meetings in addition to the establishment of various formal and informal networks across the Asia-Pacific region. Is the delay because of a sense of constraint, given that the ASEAN member states always provide the venue of the ARFs annual meeting and that all inter-sessional study groups, which consist of two states, always include an ASEAN member? Most importantly ASEAN consensus principles are always applied to the conduct of ARF deliberations constricting the opportunity of progressing issues more rapidly via a majority type vote. While the guiding principle for the ARF is to protect the sovereignty of its members and uphold the fundamental principle of ASEAN as laid out in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation does this impede progress?

⁹² Helen, E.S Nesarurai, ‘ASEAN And Regional Governance After The Cold War: From Regional Order To Regional Community’, *The Pacific Review*, Vol.22, No. 1, p.95, March 2009, available at:<<http://www.informaworld.com/journals/101080/09512740802651169>>, accessed on 26 April 2012.

⁹³ Mohamed Jawhar, ‘The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Critical Appraisal’, available at <<http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/jawharpaper.htm>>, accessed on 20 June 2012.

⁹⁴ Sarah Eaton and Richard Stubbs provide a discussion on the two approaches. This can be found in: Is ASEAN Powerful? Neo-Realist Verses Constructivist Approaches to Power in Southeast Asia, *The Pacific Review*, Vol 19, No 2, 2006, pp 135-155, 2006, available at:<<http://www.informaworld.com/journals/101080/09512740500473148>>, accessed on 26 April 2012.

As outlined previously in this paper, the 1995 Concept Paper outlined a three stage evolutionary process. To date the ARF has made progress predominately in the CBMs area with little progress having been made in developing PD mechanisms until 2005. This resulted in some critics dismissing the ARF as nothing more than a talk-shop.⁹⁵ In reviewing the ARFs cooperative security agenda it could be suggested that the adoption of the ASEAN Way has had both utility and some constraint.⁹⁶ The ARF through the use of the ASEAN Way of informal and incremental steps, with an emphasis on non-binding agreements and voluntary compliance has managed the establishment of an initial set of CBMs. However, Desmond Ball argued, that in an attempt not to impede on core national interests the measures adopted so far do not address the issues of territorial claims, expanding defence capabilities and operations, nor do they provide insight into internal political processes – limiting transparency in policy making and sovereignty issues.⁹⁷

Asian Financial Crisis. Critics such as Jeannie Henderson contend that ASEAN and the ARF was incapable and irrelevant in responding to the urgent economic and political crisis that confronted the organisation during the 1997-1998 Asian Financial Crisis rendering it ineffectual in addressing real rather than potential points of conflict.⁹⁸ Prior to the crisis of 1997 Asian economies were seen as dynamic having experienced rapid economic growth through the 1980's and early 1990's. The Financial crisis commenced in Thailand and rapidly progressed to Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. The crisis revealed a number of vulnerabilities of both ASEAN and the ARF. ASEAN required over 12 months to develop the Hanoi Plan of Action⁹⁹ as a guide to resolving the crisis and preventing a recurrence in the future. Similarly, given the crisis demonstrated the inextricable interrelated links between economic, political and security trends and the potential to affect the security relations across the region, the ARF was unable to deliver an immediate, coherent or collective

⁹⁵ Caballero-Anthony Mely, *Regionalisation of peace in Asia: Experience and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership, Working Paper No 42*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, 2003, p.15

⁹⁶ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 201.

⁹⁷ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 201.

⁹⁸ Jeannie Henderson, *Reassessing ASEAN, Adelphi Paper 323*, IISS, Oxford University, London, 1999, p.17.

⁹⁹ 'ASEAN At A Cross Roads', *Far East Economic Review*, 13 Aug 1998, available at <www.feer.com>, accessed on 29 April 2012.

response to the crisis nor did it demonstrate any process' for dealing with the potential fallout of the crisis.¹⁰⁰

South China Sea. Southeast Asian security has been confronted by the territorial disputes of five ARF members¹⁰¹ and Taiwan related to access to fisheries and oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea for decades.¹⁰² The last 10 years in particular the ARF has been dominated by discussions around territorial disputes between China and ASEAN states in the South China Sea and concerns related to the escalating tensions between the United States and China in relation to the unresolved disputes. At the 2010 Ministerial Meeting, the United States Secretary of State's statement reasserted US. interests in preserving freedom of navigation and regional security with respect to the South China Sea and the speech was read as a show of solidarity with smaller ASEAN states and a rebuke to an increasingly assertive China with expansive claims in the disputed waters. While confident of progress on the issue there remains no resolution to the issue.¹⁰³ In July 2012 and for the first time in the history of ASEAN, a joint communiqué was not released following closing of the 2012 Foreign Ministers' meeting due to the inability of the participants to come to an agreement regarding territorial disputes in the South China Sea. No consensus was reached on a Code of Conflict largely because China refused to discuss the matter, as they wanted to deal with issues on a country-country to basis. This is consistent with China's previous stance on the issue demonstrated in 2002 when China in conjunction with ASEAN produced the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea that contained a 10 point action plan. While China did sign the declaration with the ASEAN members, China resisted any other discussion with the ARF on the issue.¹⁰⁴ In 2010 an attempt was made by 12 states to use the ARF as the forum to express their views and own national interests related to the South China Sea. Again these attempts

¹⁰⁰ 'Beyond the Asian Financial Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities for US Leadership', *United States Institute of Peace – Special Report*, 23 February 1998, found at < <http://www.usip.org/publications/beyond-asian-financial-crisis-challenges-and-opportunities-us-leadership>>, accessed on 26 July 2012.

¹⁰¹ The five countries are China, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei.

¹⁰² Muthu Rajendran, *ASEANs Foreign Relations: The Shift to Collective Action*, Kuala Lumpur, Arenabuku, 1985, p. 83.

¹⁰⁴ Nguyen Hong Thao, The 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea: A Note, *Ocean Development and International Law*, Vol. 34, 2003, 9. 281 and Michael Kingsford, 'Can the ASEAN Regional Forum have a Role in Maintaining Regional Security' *Shedden Papers*, Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Australian Defence College, March 2012, p. 7.

failed when China rebuked these attempts of the ARF members to raise the issue through the forum.¹⁰⁵

The failure to issue a communiqué in 2012 is not because of the ARFs inability to find some minimal agreement among ASEAN states. It arose instead from a disagreement about whether ASEAN could, after China yet again refused to discuss the issue in the multilateral setting such as the ARF, issue a collective ASEAN statement to articulate even minimum principles such as freedom of navigation or the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the South China Sea.¹⁰⁶

This created some division among ARF members. One group in this divide are ASEAN states that did not feel they could assert the Association's autonomy in the face of Chinese objections. The alternating view being that some members incensed by China's assertive behaviour and encouraged by U.S political and military support are now insistent on a tougher ASEAN stance against China. In hewing to their respective positions, both sides not only blocked an ASEAN communiqué for the first time, but also threatened to regress ASEAN-China diplomacy on the South China Sea disputes back to the deadlock prior to the 2002 Declaration of Conduct.¹⁰⁷

In summary, ASEAN has undertaken several initiatives over the last four decades and importantly, ASEAN aims to build an ASEAN community with three pillars by 2020, an ASEAN Security Community being one of those pillars.¹⁰⁸ The future of the ARF as a key component of ASEAN's attempts at evolving the regional security framework of Southeast Asia and indeed the Asia-Pacific will ultimately depend on the ARF's ability to contribute to regional peace and security process. This contribution may well lay in the socialising impact of multilateralism on the balance of behaviour of the major

¹⁰⁵ Donald Emmerson, 'China's Frown Diplomacy in Southeast Asia', *East Asia Forum*, 8 October 2010, available at < <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/10/08/chinas-frown-diplomacy-in-southeast-asia/>> accessed on 20 June 2012.

¹⁰⁶ ASEAN Regional Forum: Failure on the South China Sea, Joint US-EU Statement on Asia found at < <http://www.siiionline.org/?q=programmes/insights/asean-regional-forum-failure-south-china-sea-joint-us-eu-statement-asia>>, accessed on 20 Jul 2012.

¹⁰⁷ ASEAN Regional Forum: Failure on the South China Sea, Joint US-EU Statement on Asia found at, < <http://www.siiionline.org/?q=programmes/insights/asean-regional-forum-failure-south-china-sea-joint-us-eu-statement-asia>>, accessed on 23 July, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 7.

powers of the Asia-Pacific.¹⁰⁹ The end state as suggested by Acharya being a balance of power as an *outcome* rather than as an *approach*.¹¹⁰ In progressing to a review of the impediments to ARF achieving more one has to question whether the ARF was constituted to do anything other than act as a confidence building measure. The inclusion of a considerable states to a multilateral arrangement that was predicated on ASEAN's consensus agreement principle and then expecting rapid action to be approved without impacting on sovereignty was a recipe for stasis. Given its structural constraint, a sceptical view of the ARF may well be moderated.

This section has reviewed the ARF's current approach as an institution focused on establishing a security framework. The ARF has been unable to progress the three stages of the 1995 Concept Paper beyond CBMs or make what some critics suggest is a definitive contribution to the resolution of security issues such as the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-1998 or the Disputes of the South China Sea. It is important to now review the impediments to this and discuss alternatives.

The Principle Problems Affecting the Process

Central Principles - Are They Fundamentally Flawed?¹¹¹

From the outset the ARF was not designed to become a 'security community' or for the forum to supplant the existing bilateral security arrangements of member states.¹¹² The US and China both firmly believed in their respective Hub and Spoke and concentric relationship models and were cautious of any multilateral arrangement that did not have them at its core.¹¹³ Many regional countries benefiting from these relations such as Japan, South Korea and many ASEAN members did not want to dilute the importance of their security ties with these outside powers. Consequently the ARF was initially

¹⁰⁹ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 214.

¹¹⁰ Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and The Problem Of regional Order*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 208.

¹¹¹ Shaun Narine, 'ASEAN in the Twenty First Century: A Sceptical Review', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol 22, No 3, September 2009, p. 107.

¹¹² Hiro Katsumata, Establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum: Constructing A Talk Shop Or A Norm Brewery?, *The Pacific Review*, Vol 19, No.2, p.194, 2006.

¹¹³ Koro Bessho, 'An Asia-Pacific community?', *The Adelphi Papers*, 39:325, (62-74), pp. 70-71, Routledge, New York, 1999.

established as a second tier organisation that would supplement the region's bilateral links and act as the conduit for members to communicate with each other on developments in security relationships.

Is the Asia-Pacific as a whole loath to attempt PD or other methods of establishing collaborative security arrangements? Explanations of why the Forum has failed to progress the development of PD initiatives have ranged from intuitional size, design (structure, convention and norms), and the divergent perspectives and behaviours of participants – therefore is the very reason why some countries became members of ASEAN and the ARF in the first place the very reason for lack of the substantial progress in the PD arena.¹¹⁴ Shaun Narine suggests that the central principles around which ASEAN constructed the ARF are fundamentally flawed and insufficient to enable the ARF to address conflict resolution.¹¹⁵ The real Achilles heal being three fold: ASEAN centrality, the structure of Asia-Pacific regionalism¹¹⁶ and the ARF's lack of an enforcement mechanism or ability to impose sanctions.¹¹⁷ Additionally, there is great institution-deficit in the ARF. Not only does the ARF have no Secretariat of its own to lend support to year-long activities, even ASEAN does not have a unit/bureau to oversee ARF matters. Coordination within ASEAN rotates annually among the current ASEAN Chair who becomes the ARF Chair, and the ASEAN Secretariat plays no role. Many ARF members such as Thailand and Singapore have reinforced the point that it is difficult to see how the ARF could undertake preventative diplomacy in relation to traditional or non-traditional threats or contribute to any form of conflict resolution without effective regional institutions to carry out the task.¹¹⁸

In 2004 Michael Tivayanond wrote that:

...a look into the many ongoing situations of violent conflict in Southeast Asia brings us to question the effectiveness of prevailing conflict

¹¹⁴ Ralf Emmers and See San Tan, *The ASEAN Regional Forum and Preventative Diplomacy: Built to Fail?*, *Asian Security*, Vol 7, No 1, 2011, p.46.

¹¹⁵ Shaun Narine, 'ASEAN in the Twenty First Century: A Sceptical Review', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol 22, No 3, September 2009, p. 107.

¹¹⁶ See Seng Tan, 'Is Asia-Pacific Regionalism Outgrowing ASEAN', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol 156. No. 1, February – March 2011, p.59, available at < [http:// dx. Doi.org/10.1080/03071847/559982](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071847/559982). >, accessed on 26 April 2012.

¹¹⁷ Rodolfo. C. Severino, *The ASEAN Regional Forum*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 113.

¹¹⁸ Rodolfo. C. Severino, *The ASEAN Regional Forum*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 113.

*prevention mechanisms in the region, and more specifically, how preventive diplomacy – a specific function for thwarting the emergence or escalation of violent conflict, has flourished in the policy circles of Southeast Asia. However, ASEAN – the main regional intergovernmental organisation possessing a regional conflict prevention mandate in the region - has been struggling to define its own conceptual and practical understanding of preventive diplomacy. The point is that ASEAN is a collection of states that are still trying to develop and strengthen their own degree of intra-mural political and security co-operation. Diverging security perceptions and strategic assessments in many ways prevent the ASEAN states from taking on a more institutionalised approach to maintaining regional peace and security as a cohesive unit...*¹¹⁹

The security architecture in the region consists of a web of arrangements: bilateral agreements on security cooperation; military alliances; two sub-regional processes, ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum; the Five Power Defence Arrangement; and the ARF itself. Of these, it can be correctly noted that bilateral arrangements are the ones where substantive security issues are addressed most. The sub-regional processes are next in significance and the ARF as a pan-regional construct so far the least utilized to manage security problems in the region.¹²⁰ This begs the question of whether the ARF is ineffective or whether the region really needs multilateral security mechanisms along the lines of Europe. One of the criticisms of the ARF is that it hasn't achieved the expectations many had for it when it began in 1994. But it's fair to say that some of these expectations were based on the assumption that the ARF would reflect security institutionalism in Europe, which is more developed and more mature. One simple question is: does Asia really need what Europe has in this area or is there a durable architecture for peace and stability for Southeast Asia upon which to build this community.

The emphasis in the ASEAN Charter on the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, and on the principle of non-interference in member states'

¹¹⁹ Michael Tivayanond, *Working Paper No 3*, 2004, Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, p. 17.

¹²⁰ Available at: <<http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/jawharpaper.htm>> accessed on 20 Jul 2012

internal affairs, differentiates ASEAN from the European Union (EU). There are several reasons given for why the Asia-Pacific region has rejected the Europeans institutional models of the EU, these include: the different security environment nation building of many Asian states yet to be complete; geostrategic patterns in the region being far more complex than the European bipolar security system of the cold war; through to the region being more heterogeneous, diverse and difficult to organise than that of Europe.¹²¹ Given such difference and with European institutions focusing predominately on military security it would appear that European models had limited offerings for ASEAN or the Asia Pacific. Nevertheless it is worth considering what lessons can be taken from Europe as a means of enhancing security.

Lessons Learned from Europe. This paper has previously touched on ASEAN and ARF assumption as they relate to security challenges. These include: that resolution to issues would not impose sovereignty constraint on member states; that interstate, rather than intra-state relations would pose the threat to stability; and that the likelihood of violence and conflict could be reduced through strengthening member states. The European experience suggests that the first two assumptions should be reconsidered. Intra-state violence is a significant challenge to international peace and stability. The geo - strategic, economic and political nature of the 21st Century has generated a level of interdependence that facilitates these security threats transcending national border for example the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan. Managing the security implications of failed or failing states may also pose a challenge for ASEAN and the ARF in the future. The 1997-98 financial crisis and the associated socio-political implications this produced in terms of unrest and enhanced secessionist movements in Indonesia for example impacted up regional integration.

While ASEAN is about confidence building and reducing tension, the EU for example seeks to achieve real integration. The EU has demonstrated a successful process of community building at the regional level and that the use of international institutions are effective and do affect state behaviour over time. This was brought about by an adherence to commonly held norms and institutional procedures. In doing so this has created a sense of a collective identity that has addressed the traditional security

¹²¹ Available at: <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/jawharpaper.htm>, accessed on 20 Jul 2012

dilemma among members at a rate much greater than CBMs, joint military exercises and cooperative working groups.

The emphasis that ASEAN places on the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, and on the principle of non-interference in member states' internal affairs, differentiates ASEAN from the European Union, for example, where the pooling of sovereignty has increasingly characterised regional cooperation. The proof, however, of European institutions' effectiveness such as the EU is demonstrated by the absence of conflict across EU member states since the end of the Cold War and the management of the economic crises that have continued to plague Europe.

Therefore if ASEAN assumptions outlined in this section were proven to be wrong, does Asia need to aim for European style institutions to promote stability and security, or do the region's unique dynamics respond better to informal mechanisms like ARF? Is the short history of the ARF to some extent a history of rejecting European experience?¹²²

The intent of this section was not to debate the merits of the EU over ASEAN and the ARF. If we conclude that an EU alternative is not appropriate for the region then a review of an alternative role for the ARF in ASEAN's pursuit of a Regional Security Framework is warranted.

While the above assessment of the ARF may seem to be pessimistic, there are certain successes that are to be applauded. The ARF has brought to the fore various issues that are relevant to the security concerns of members across the region. This is what differentiates it from ASEAN, where the question of security does not play a pivotal role, since its political agenda is cloaked in a broader economic grouping.

It is a fact that these are seen to be modest achievements, but they are none-the-less factors that should be highlighted. These achievements must be viewed within the context that the ARF actually brings together a very diverse group of states which have had at different times tensions arising from conflicts and threat perceptions. It is in the

¹²² Nikolas Busse and Hanns W. Maull, *Enhancing Security in the Asia-Pacific: European Lessons for the ASEAN Regional Forum*, available at <<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/ipg/ipg-1999-3/artbusse-maull.pdf>>, accessed on 26 July 2012.

process of facilitating the development of an ASEAN Community. The very fact that these states can now come together on a common platform for the resolution and discussion of security issues in itself is an achievement. Finally it should be acknowledged that the ARF has managed to broaden the scope of the security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region—it remains the only grouping where all the major powers have been represented on a common stage and have the benefit of interacting in security related issues.¹²³

The Future Role of the ARF In Terms Of ASEANs Regional Security Challenges

The ARF was built around a number of assumptions, these included what the future challenges to regional security would be in the context of interstate relations – these are now dated; and a new dimension of non-traditional security threats confront the region. Secondly, that ASEAN centrality would remain at the forefront of Asia and subsequently Asia-Pacific security architecture: this has begun to be questioned by the more liberal members of the ARF – Canada, US, Australia and Japan. Finally, that the ability to diffuse conflict among members could be addressed by removing mistrust and misunderstanding and be achieved without constraining sovereignty.¹²⁴ The failure to resolve issues such as the South China Sea have demonstrated this not the case. The change in geostrategic politics across the region has rendered some of the assumptions null and void; however they do raise the issue of repositioning of the ARFs role to better support ASEANs intent into the next decade.

The fall-out over attempts to discuss, much less resolve the issues related to the South China Sea disputes not only delayed the ARF in developing a work plan to progress from CBMs to the PD as outlined in the 1995 Concept Paper, it also demonstrated how constrained the ARF is in addressing conflict resolution. However, this paper has also argued the merits of the ARF as an institution. Therefore, given the constraints imposed on the ARF by nature of its ASEAN parentage should the ARF address issues

¹²³ Shankari Sundararaman, 'The ASEAN Regional Forum: Reassessing Multilateral Security in the Asia-Pacific' ISDA, available at, <http://www.idsa-india.org/an-jul8-11.html>, accessed on 2 July 2012.

¹²⁴ Nikolas Busse and Hanns W. Maull, 'Enhancing Security in the Asia Pacific, European Lessons for the ASEAN Regional Forum', *Security in the Asia Pacific*, p. 228, available at <<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/ipg/ipg-1999-3/artbusse-maull.pdf>>, accessed on 26 July 2012.

that are less likely to antagonise the member nations and if so, to the institutional framework that ASEAN seeks to create?¹²⁵

Southeast Asia in recent years has witnessed the complexity of intertwining trends of both cooperation and competition. Meanwhile, traditional and non-traditional security challenges balanced with the aspiration for peaceful coexistence, stability and development has led to the formation of several multilateral security cooperation mechanisms of a multi-layered nature.¹²⁶ These mechanism and fora have been providing important ground for multilateral security cooperation in not only ASEAN and Southeast Asia but also the broader Asia – Pacific region. The ARF is a component of a ASEAN’s Hybrid security framework that is this multilayered series of institutions that are supplemented by bilateral alliances and multinational cooperative programs - a complex architecture. The ARF has a role to play in this framework, and that is to maintain and strengthen the existing order. There is no doubt that the employment of an ASEAN style consensus based approach while maintaining the principal of non interference in members’ internal affairs has impeded the ARF progress beyond CBMs. The ARF has nevertheless been the conduit for engagement and dialogue for the members that constitute Southeast Asia’s security framework. Therefore to capitalise on this, consideration should be given to the ARF focusing on non-traditional security threat arena.

Enhancing Regional Security - New and Multiple Modes of Security Cooperation.

In the Asia-Pacific, the security architecture is still evolving and the region is faced with increasing threats, ranging from terrorism, transnational crimes, piracy, human trafficking, and cyber crime to natural disasters and epidemics with various scales and extents of impact.

The ARF has already demonstrated the potential for success in this area as illustrated by the progress that has been made in the area of Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR). In 2010 and 2011, the ARF has moved on from dialogue to the actual conduct of HADR and maritime security exercises involving the militaries of the participating

¹²⁵ Michael Kingsford, Can the ASEAN Regional Forum Have a Role in Maintaining Regional Security, Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Shedden Papers, 2011, p. 9.

¹²⁶ General Phung Quang Thanh, Minister Of National Defence, S.R. Viet Nam, *Speech to The 9th Shangri-La Dialogue*, ‘Renewing the regional security architecture’, 7 June 2010.

countries. The benefits of this activity such as this being at both the operational level which strengthen interoperability, and at the political level, building trust and confidence.¹²⁷

The ARF must now continue to shift its focus from confidence-building towards undertaking more concrete initiatives in areas such as transnational crime, HADR human trafficking, and terrorism and health threats.¹²⁸ These are the non-traditional security issues that are beyond the capacity of any one country to address.¹²⁹

Implications for the Future of Security Multilateralism for Australia

In relation to security, Australia's strategic choice aims to balance its bilateral defence alliance with the United States which is fundamental to national security and its engagement through the ARF in the multilateral security politics that are vital to regional stability.¹³⁰ Australia and Japan have at differing times called for a stronger and effective regional institution to address traditional and non-traditional security threats confronting the region. This paper will not address the approach of the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in proposing the concept in 2009, or the critique of the concept by many Asian states that viewed the proposal as neglecting ASEAN's traditional role as the driver for establishing regional cooperation. However, a review of Prime Minister Rudd's proposal for the formation of a broad Asia-Pacific Community (APC) in order to address what he assessed as the Asia-Pacific regions fairly brittle set of security arrangements (which has subsequently lost momentum post his dismissal) suggests that it may have served as a catalyst for ASEAN to make progress on regional architecture. This was demonstrated by the ASEAN Leaders

¹²⁷ Wayne Mapp, Minister of Defence, New Zealand *Speech at The 9th Annual IISS Global Strategic Review, Plenary Session 4, 11 September 2011, Rise Of A Militarised Asia – Global Implications*, The Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, Saturday 05 June 2010.

¹²⁸ Wayne Mapp, Minister of Defence, New Zealand *Speech at The 9th Annual IISS Global Strategic Review, Plenary Session 4, 11 September 2011, Rise Of A Militarised Asia – Global Implications*, The Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, Saturday 05 June 2010.

¹²⁹ Michael Kingsford, *Can the ASEAN Regional Forum Have a Role in Maintaining Regional Security*, Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Shedden Papers, 2011, p. 9.

¹³⁰ Rikki Kersten, *Evolving Australian Approaches to Security Architectures in the Asia-Pacific*, Tokyo Foundation Asian Security Project, Apr 2011, p. 1, found at < <http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/articles/2011/evolving-australian-approaches-to-security>>, accessed on 29 May 2012.

meeting in Hanoi in 2010 extending an invitation to the United States and Russia to become more formally integrated within regional arrangements. This illustrates ASEANs desire to remain pivotal in Southeast Asian and indeed the Asia-Pacific's security architecture. In summary, the institutions that makeup these frameworks are critical to ASEANs multilateral security framework.

Australia will continue to acknowledge the centrality of ASEAN, contribute to the strengthening of multi-lateral forums such as the ARF at the margins, but it will maintain access to the 'hard power' of the US and selective projection of smart power through maintaining diplomatic and economic relations across the region. The alternative institutions to achieve this being the East Asian Summit and the existing arrangements of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue between the US , Japan and Australia. Australia will seek to sustain the economically prosperous and peaceful bilateral ties with China but will have to remain cognisant of being seen as too close with the US and Japan on security agendas in Northeast Asia. This balancing of engagement with both China and the US can be achieved through institutions such as the ARF.¹³¹

Conclusion

The end of the Cold War renewed attention on regionalism and a reconsideration of the role of regional security organisations in promoting international peace and security. Since 1992, Southeast Asia has experienced significant geo-strategic changes and the rise of China and the revitalisation of US interest in the region has demanded attention toward balance of power arrangements across the region. Southeast Asians view ASEAN as central to enabling broad cooperation across the region and ensuring balance of power arrangements.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), established in 1994, represents an effort by ASEAN to create a structure for multilateral security dialogue among the foreign-policy establishments of association members and their dialogue partners, both Asian (notably

¹³¹ Evolving Australian Approaches to Security Architecture in the Pacific, available at <://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/articles/2011>, accessed on 29 May 2012, p.2-3 and Asia Pacific Regional Security Architecture, available at: <http://www.gevans.org/speeches/speech422.html>.

China, India, Japan and the two Koreas) and non-Asian (including Australia, the European Union, New Zealand, Russia and the US). While the ARF sponsors annual meetings for its members' foreign ministers, and a variety of formal and informal meetings for senior officials on diverse security topics of regional relevance, there are mixed views on whether the institution has lived up to the expectations that many in the region originally held for it.

Realist and constructivist scholars on ASEAN and the ARF offer very distinct and somewhat indeterminate interpretations and conclusions in relation to the ARF's influence on regional governance and its potential to support the development of a regional security community. The emphasis that ASEAN places on the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, and on the principle of non-interference in member states' internal affairs, differentiates ASEAN from the European Union, for example, where the pooling of sovereignty has increasingly characterised regional cooperation and addressed the security dilemma conundrum that still exists in Southeast Asia. Moreover, relations between some ASEAN members are sporadically tense, and have sometimes even threatened to deteriorate into armed conflict as seen on the border between Thailand and Cambodia in 2008–9 and the Association has proved unable to play an active part in resolving either interstate or intra-state conflicts in its region such as the South China Sea. ASEAN and all of its associated institutions operate on a voluntary basis, with no verification, enforcement or sanctions mechanisms. ASEAN has displayed particular weakness in dealing with the challenge generated by the political situation in Myanmar, where the military junta remained largely impervious to persistent international dismay over and criticism of its human-rights record. For these reasons, critics from within and outside of Southeast Asia have questioned ASEAN's effectiveness as a regional organisation, particularly in the political and security sphere.

A review of the EU supported the notion that the assumptions upon which ASEAN and the ARF were formed may not be flawed and inconsistent to the needs of this region given the changes to the geo-strategic environment in the last decade. Additionally, the potential for inter-state and intra-state conflict is evident. While the EU model of multilateralism may not be appropriate to the culture and stage of development in nation building that exists across Asia it did identify that consideration must be given to

a more rules based approach to ensure multilateral security institutions to remain effective.

Nevertheless this paper has identified the strengths of the ARF. The ARF is a component of ASEAN's Hybrid security framework and its multilayered series of institutions that are supplemented by bilateral alliances and multinational cooperative programs - a complex architecture. The ARF has a role to play in this framework. The ARF may not have been directly involved in activities that led to issue resolution for example the South China Sea disputes and the Asian financial crisis. It has however; provided a useful vehicle for the maintenance of dialogue and the balance of power arrangements that have ensured these issues have not escalated to real conflict. It is contended that the true role of the ARF is to maintain and strengthen the existing order and sense of ASEAN community.

There is no doubt that the employment of an ASEAN style consensus based approach while maintaining the principal of non-interference in members' internal affairs has impeded the ARF progress beyond CBMs to PD and conflict resolution. The ARF has, however, been the conduit for engagement and dialogue for the members that constitute Southeast Asia's security framework. The ARF has been the vehicle that has enmeshed the great powers with the region and facilitated balance of power arrangements between China, the US, India and Japan that have ensured stability for ASEAN member states and the Asia-Pacific.

ASEAN will remain the pivot to Southeast Asia's security framework. To ensure a role in ASEAN's pursuit of a security framework into the decade, consideration should be given to the ARF refocusing on the area in which it has demonstrated success and indeed considerable potential – the non-traditional security threat arena. This would rebuild confidence in the ARF's relevance to regional security while continuing to tackle the progression from Confidence Building Measures to Preventative Diplomacy.

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