Southeast Asia in Search of Security Community: Can ASEAN Go Beyond Crisis, Consequentiality and Conceptual Convenience?

See Seng Tan

Fancy an ASEAN Community by 2015? First articulated in the Bali Concord II of 2003, the envisaged community comprises three 'pillars', economic, political-security and socio-cultural. By most accounts, ASEAN is expected to miss its 2015 deadline. By far the most progressive of the pillars, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), predicated upon the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), has nonetheless faced numerous difficulties in its implementation, not least the obdurate existence of non-tariff and other regulatory barriers.[1] The Cambodian-Thai border standoff in 2011 – the first significant 'hot' conflict to occur between two ASEAN members, according to some observers – has not helped things either. All this has led Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN, to publicly admit that the 2015 timeframe is unlikely to be met.[2]

This paper addresses the challenges and prospects ASEAN faces as it works towards becoming a regional community. Crucially, the challenge facing ASEAN is not simply one of community-building, but *what sort of community* does its member countries intend for Southeast Asia. There is no question ASEAN, as an intergovernmental organisation, is already a community, namely, a *diplomatic* community. By all accounts, ASEAN in its more than four decades of existence has evolved from a grouping of mostly nascent postcolonial societies, whose recent history was one of mutual distrust and conflict, to a relatively robust diplomatic community.[3] The leap from diplomatic to *security* community (hereafter 'SC'), however, is likely to prove a whole lot more challenging. Interestingly enough, a fair number of notable watchers of the region, writing in the heady period of ASEAN's glory days in the 1990s but prior to the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, either openly described, or at the very least allowed tacit recognition, of ASEAN as a SC[4] – although it was obvious not every one of them stuck to the exacting standards set by Karl W. Deutsch and other SC theorists in their assessments of ASEAN. The scholarly consensus on ASEAN as a SC broke down when it became clear that member states could or would do nothing in collective response to the crisis, while appealing to ASEAN's limited mandate to rationalise their inaction. The 'to each his own' mentality among the ASEAN states led some critics to dismiss the organisation as an 'empty shell' and an 'imitation community'.[5]

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[1] Maria Monica Wihardja, 'Second-Generation Reform in Asia', *East Asia Forum*, August 18, 2011. Available: http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/08/18/second-generation-reforms-the-key-to-deeper-regional-cooperation/ (accessed May 2, 2012)

[2] Yang Razali Kassim, 'ASEAN Community: Losing Grip over Vision 2015?' *RSIS Commentaries* 87/2011, June 2, 2011. Available: http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS0872011.pdf (accessed May 2, 2012)

[3] Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia* (London: Routledge, 1989)

[4] The list includes Amitav Acharya, Soedjati Djiwandono, Richard Mansbach, Noordin Sopiee, Sheldon Simon, Donald Weatherbee, and – this might surprise some people – David Martin Jones, who has since become one of ASEAN's harshest critics. As discussed in Amitav Acharya, 'Do Norms and Identity Matter? Community and Power in Southeast Asia's Regional Order', in Joseph Chinyong Liow and Ralf Emmers, eds., *Order and Security in Southeast Asia: Essays in Memory of Michael Leifer* (London: Routledge), p. 85.

[5] David Martin Jones and Michael L.R. Smith, 'ASEAN's Imitation Community," *Orbis*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2002), pp. 93-109

That said, the financial crisis also sparked a rethink among ASEAN leaders regarding their region's future, including the need to strengthen and consolidate ASEAN to manage growing competition for foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade from Asia's two behemoths, China and India.[6] In a key sense, the ASEAN Community vision, especially its economic pillar, represents a concerted response to those perceived challenges.[7] But it also furnished an opportunity to retool ASEAN to better respond to a growing list of nonconventional security challenges. In a much-cited 2003 paper Rizal Sukma prepared for the Indonesian foreign ministry, Sukma proposed that ASEAN should aim to become a SC in twenty years or so.[8] He argued for a relaxation of ASEAN's central norms of non-interference and unanimity, and the adoption of an 'ASEAN minus x' formulation, currently operative for economic decisions, for security decisions as well. His paper also proposed the creation of new regional bodies under the ASEAN umbrella: a peacekeeping centre, a defence ministerial, a maritime surveillance centre, and a counterterrorism centre. His paper was purportedly motivated by concerns over Malaysia-Singapore tensions then brewing over the issue of Singapore's purchase of water from Malaysia, the perceived need to dilute ASEAN's non-interference principle, which complicated if not hindered cooperation on domestic matters with transnational or regional implications, and the need for a security pillar to complement the economic pillar proposed by Singapore.[9] A diluted version of Sukma's proposal would subsequently serve as the basis for the ASEAN Security Community (ASC) idea in 2003 (subsequently renamed the ASEAN Political-Security Community [APSC] in 2007). The following table lists some of the institutional developments integral to this pillar:

TABLE 1: ASEAN: DECLARATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL MILESTONES

DATE	DEVELOPMENT
Dec '03	**ASEAN Vision 2020 announced**
Oct '03	**Declaration of Bali Concord II.** *Envisages formation of ASEAN Community with ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN Security Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community 'pillars' by 2020*
Nov '04	**Vientiane Action Program 2004-2010.** *Identifies key challenges facing the formation of the ASC, and proposed roadmap comprising strategies for 1) political development and institutions, 2) shaping and sharing of norms, 3) conflict prevention, 4) conflict resolution, and 5) post-conflict peace-building.*
May '06	**ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) formed.** *A key first step toward establishment of ASC*
Jan '07	**Deadline for ASEAN Community brought forward to 2015**
Nov '07	**ASEAN Charter signed.** *Confers legal personality on ASEAN.*
	ASC pillar renamed ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC)
Dec '08	**ASEAN Charter ratified**
Oct '09	**ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) formed**
May '10	**ADMM + 8 formed.** *Dialogue partners to assist ASEAN countries build capacity in meeting non-traditional security challenges, e.g. HADR, maritime security, counterterrorism, military medicine*
Nov '11	**Proposal to establish an ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) at 19th Summit in Jakarta.** *For managing conflicts among member states, and whose terms of reference are to be finalised at the 20th summit in Cambodia in July 2012*

[6] Richard E. Baldwin, 'The East Asian Noodle Bowl Syndrome', in Daisuke Kiratsuka and Fukunari Kimura, eds., *East Asia's Economic Integration: Progress and Benefit* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 45–81

[7] Yang Razali Kassim, 'ASEAN Community: Losing Grip over Vision 2015?' *The Nation*, June 6, 2011

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

[9] Sponsorship of the socio-cultural pillar was taken up by the Philippines.

Yet it is also clear what Sukma meant by the ASC is not quite the same as what scholars generally mean by a SC, even though the two overlap quite a fair bit. Given that Western Europe and/or the European Union is long held as the paragon of a mature SC,[10] it is perhaps safe to say, in conceptual terms, that the comprehensively or holistically defined ASEAN Community, so conceived, is closer to the SC notion than simply the ASC alone.

Against that backdrop, I suggest no substantive transformation from diplomatic to security community for ASEAN – or, if you like, no maturation of ASEAN beyond a nascent security community for those who insist ASEAN is already an embryonic SC – would likely be possible without the organisation's ability to transcend (or transgress) at least three noteworthy 'constraints', so-called. The first involves a longstanding perception, not without basis, of ASEAN as a crisis-driven institution. Indeed, the origins of the ASEAN Community proposal emerged indirectly out of financial crisis and, more immediately, as an ad hoc response to the felt challenge posed by anticipated economic competition from primarily the Chinese and secondarily the Indians. Arguably, until and unless ASEAN is able to go beyond a principally reactive posture – reacting to crisis and challenge, that is – the likelihood is a gnawing inability or unwillingness to develop beyond purely strategic or pragmatic reasons for community-building. This brings us to a second plausible constraint, namely, what neo-institutional and constructivist theorists refer to as a logic of 'expected consequences', i.e., community formation and investment are matters of instrumental choice purely on behalf of self-interest.[11] The relatively low level of investment in ASEAN by its own members,[12] who more often than not treat their organisation as a kind of indemnity policy of last resort, implies a greater propensity towards strategic or pragmatic calculation than normative emulation and internalisation in their treatment of community-building. Granted, it would be foolish to assume strategy plays no part in even the most mature SCs.[13] But without a strong sense of togetherness ('we-feeling'), mutual trust and intramural cooperativeness that go beyond pure instrumentalism, on one hand, and reasonably extensive intra-ASEAN economic integration on the other – meaning, a high level of cross-national social and economic transactions as conceived by Deutsch et al – no mature SC is likely to emerge.[14] The third constraint consists in the undesirable prospect that ASEAN members may simply treat SC as an expedient concept and low-cost measure with which they instrumentally and shallowly adorn their institution for the anticipated legitimisation it allegedly provides – what socialisation theorists refer to as 'mimicking'.[15] I offer these three constraints (there

[10] Ole Waever, 'Insecurity, Security, and Asecurity in the West European Non-War Community', in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, eds., *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 69-117

[11] Kjell Goldman, 'Appropriateness and Consequences: The Logic of Neo-Institutionalism', *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, Vol. 18 (2005), pp. 35–52

[12] This is supported by a survey of Asian, including Southeast Asian, security and economic elites (practitioners and intellectuals) conducted by the Washington-based Center for International and Strategic Studies (CSIS). Survey respondents were asked how significant regional organisations are to their national and regional security. Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents prized national security strategies and international bodies over and above regional organisations. See, Bates Gill, Michael Green, Kiyoto Tsuji, and William Watts, *Strategic Views on Asian Regionalism: Survey* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2009).

[13] Samuel J. Barkin, 'Realist Constructivism', *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2003), pp. 325-342

[14] See chapter 5, 'Political transitions, changing values and visions for the future' in Christopher B. Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values and Institutionalisation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012)

[15] See chapter 2, 'Mimicking' in Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007)

might be others) in this present context less as hypotheses to be tested than as ideas for broad consideration. The paper will now address the relevance of the SC literature to Southeast Asia and the myriad challenges facing ASEAN in its evolution from diplomatic community to a full-fledged security community.

Security Community Literature:
Relevance to Southeast Asia

According to Deutsch et al, SCs are either 'amalgamated' – integrated under one common government – or 'pluralistic' – comprising multiple sovereign nation-states. History has few examples of amalgamated SCs; the United States is an oft-cited case. Pluralistic SCs are clearly more intriguing than amalgamated SCs given the greater challenge of several nation-states finding sufficient common cause to collectively establish a long peace with one another. For Deutsch, pluralistic SCs are characterised by four traits: member states share expectations of peaceful change by ruling out the use of force in their dispute settlements with each other; members rely on formal and/or informal mechanisms and practices to reduce, prevent, manage and resolve conflict with each other; intramural relations among members are void of competitive military build-up and security-dilemma enhancing dynamics; and members enjoy a high degree of political and economic integration among themselves as a necessary precondition of mutual peace.[16] Because of the ostensible disavowal of force as an accepted and acceptable means of conflict resolution, security community has been regarded by some as a distinctively non-realist concept.[17]

Subsequent scholarship on SCs has sought to develop further these initial reflections by Deutsch. The most ambitious of these has to be the edited volume by Adler and Barnett.[18] They and their collaborators envisaged a three-stage pathway for the formation of SCs. The first stage of development is a 'nascent' SC, where third-party links and mechanisms to monitor and facilitate closer relations are established. The second stage is an 'ascendant' SC, where increasing links that reflect a tighter military coordination, decreased fear that others represent a threat, a growing belief in a collective identity, and rising expectations of peaceful change are developed. The third and final stage is a 'mature' SC, which is characterized by a high degree of trust, the emergence of a collective identity, and the development of dependable expectations of peaceful change. Mature SCs can further be distinguished into two types. 'Loosely-coupled' mature SCs characterized by the high use of multilateral decision-making institutions, unfortified borders, common definitions of threat, a shared discourse in norms, and increased coordination in military policy while retaining an exclusivist orientation. On their part, 'tightly-coupled' mature SCs reflect high military integration, cooperative security policies, a collective security approach against external threats, policy coordination against internal threats, the free movement of populations, and the internationalization of authority, decision-making, law and public policy.

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[16] Karl W. Deutsch et al, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957)
[17] Arendt Lijphart, 'Karl W. Deutsch and the New Paradigm in International Relations', in Richard L. Merritt and Bruce M. Russett, eds., *From National Development to Global Community: Essays in Honour of Karl W. Deutsch* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981). pp. 233-251
[18] Adler and Barnett, *Security Communities*

How does ASEAN measure up against the aforesaid ideas? According to Don Emmerson, pluralistic SCs can further be distinguished as 'thin' or 'descriptive', where members share both a sense of community and the expectation of security, or 'thick' or 'explanatory', where community has actually been shown to cause security.[19] Emmerson's assessment places ASEAN squarely in the thin/descriptive category. The work of Amitav Acharya is the most developed in this regard. For Acharya, Southeast Asia has been characterised by developments that bode well for the formation of SC, namely, the existence of regional aspirations for SC among the leaders of ASEAN, the near-absence of war between or among ASEAN countries, a relatively high degree of economic integration and political integration at the elite level, and the emergence of a sophisticated discourse of regional community.[20]

On the other hand, Acharya has identified a number of constraints. First, the relatively low level of inter-ASEAN trade (as opposed to ASEAN trade with non-ASEAN economies) implies ASEAN fails to satisfy Deutsch's assumption of complex inter-societal transactions as a condition of SC. Second, the persistence of bilateral tensions, high levels of defence spending, and longstanding and emerging territorial disputes – recent examples include the Cambodian-Thai border standoff over the Preah Vihear temple area in 2011 and the on-off Indonesian-Malaysian dispute over Ambalat – are salient reminders that Southeast Asia still has a long way to go towards becoming a SC. That said, Acharya insists the mere existence of intramural conflicts should not disqualify ASEAN from being considered as a SC since the distinguishing feature of SCs are their ability to manage conflicts among their members peacefully rather than the absence of conflict per se. Third, ASEAN's continued emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference principles – now enshrined in the ASEAN Charter – and the existence of divergent threat perceptions underscore the absence of any pooling/sharing of sovereignty and competencies, as well as the lack of a shared threat or aversion among the ten member states, that are likely necessary in order to sustain a robust SC. Fourth, although Southeast Asia has had a fairly long multilateral security-building dialogue process, it is by no means a durable conflict resolution mechanism because of its relatively underdeveloped nature. Fifth and finally, the two-tiered ASEAN that emerged from the enlargement of ASEAN membership in the 1990s has likely worsened prospects for a SC. For these reasons, Acharya concludes ASEAN is arguably a 'nascent' SC whose evolution does not fit neatly with Adler's and Barnett's expectations, however.[21]

Not everyone agrees with these assessments, as noted earlier. For the most part, they dispute Acharya's insistence that intramural tensions and conflicts among the Southeast Asian states are an insufficient basis to dismiss ASEAN as a SC, even an embryonic one.[22] Indeed, they argue SC advocates downplay the problems among ASEAN members. They therefore see claims that ASEAN constitutes a SC as tenuous if not dubious.[23]

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[19] Donald K. Emmerson, 'Security, Community, and Democracy in Southeast Asia: Analyzing ASEAN', *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2005), pp. 165-185

[20] Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (London: Routledge, 2001)

[21] Amitav Acharya, 'Collective Identity and Conflict Management in Southeast Asia', in Adler and Barnett, *Security Communities*, pp. 198-227

[22] Nicholas Khoo, 'Deconstructing the ASEAN Security Community: A. Review Essay', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2004), pp. 35-46

[23] Jones and Smith, 'ASEAN's Imitation Community'

Becoming a Security Community:
Existing and Emerging Challenges Facing ASEAN

There are a number of challenges that could make or break ASEAN's formation as a SC. The first is the ongoing power transition in Asia, which is likely to complicate the process. Critically, it is not only the astounding rise in Chinese power that is at issue here, but the concomitant albeit uneven rise of India, Russia, South Korea, and other regional powers in more or less the same timeframe, and occurring within a shared geopolitical space. Nor should Japanese power, despite its woes, be discounted from this potentially volatile mix. Further, the Obama administration's Asia 'pivot' has already caused some anxious moments for Southeast Asians vis-a-vis the South China Sea. Should the big and regional powers form a concert of powers (say, in the manner urged by the former Australian premier Kevin Rudd in his Asia Pacific Community proposal), ASEAN stands to be sidelined. Ultimately, ASEAN's 'centrality' would be in question unless it continues to obtain a 'buy-in' from the great powers and other regional stakeholders to an ASEAN-anchored regional architecture and institutions.

Second, ASEAN countries are still dealing with intramural tensions and border disputes, as the Cambodian-Thai conflict recently showed. Importantly, some bilateral disputes over islands have been resolved through third-party adjudication by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), such as the dispute over Sipadan and Ligitan islands between Indonesia and Malaysia, which the ICJ ruled in Malaysia's favour, and that over Pedra Branca (or Pulau Batu Puteh) between Malaysia and Singapore, which the ICJ ruled in the Singapore's favour. Granted, this readiness to jointly seek legal recourse, while commendable in terms of its potential for de-securitising territorial disputes, is hitherto confined mostly to three so-called 'core' states of ASEAN, although the ICJ has also ruled in the Preah Vihear case that both sides are the withdraw their troops from a newly defined provisional demilitarised zone around the temple area and to allow ASEAN-appointed observers to enter the zone. However, since that ICJ decision in 2011, the Thai military has so far refused entry to the Indonesian monitors, claiming their presence on Thai soil would constitute an affront to Thailand's sovereignty.[24] As an International Crisis Group analyst has noted, 'until observers are there, it remains on the record that Thailand is undermining the UN Security Council, ignoring ASEAN, and defying an order of the International Court of Justice, none of which are the mark of international good citizenship'.[25] ASEAN-based dispute mechanisms (e.g. High Council, Troika) remain untapped by member states, however. That said, the roles of the ASEAN chair and secretary-general has been utilised to reasonably good effect in recent years, such as Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa's handling of the Cambodian-Thai dispute, or Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan's diplomacy in securing Myanmar's consent to a post-Nargis humanitarian solution. Other territorial disputes still persist, the most prominent being the South China Sea disputes, as incidents in 2011 between China and Vietnam and the Philippines, and most recently the confrontation between China and the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal (or what the Chinese refer to as Huangyan Island). On the other hand, the Vietnamese, unlike their Filipino counterparts, have evidently

[24] Sheldon Simon, 'US-Southeast Asian Relations: Dismay at Thai-Cambodia Skirmishes', Comparative Connections, May 2011, http://csis.org/files/publication/1101qus_seasia.pdf
[25] Jim Della-Giacoma, 'Temple Conflict Isn't Over; Observers Are Still Needed', *The Nation*, February 23, 2012.

arrived at an agreement with the Chinese to peaceably discuss their dispute bilaterally.[26] At any rate, all this has put into doubt, at least for the time being, the agreement arrived at between ASEAN and China at the ARF ministers' meeting in July 2011 in Bali to establish guidelines for implementing the Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). Although most if not all of these incidents constitute sabre-rattling, their frequency implies that the prospect for the use of force cannot be ruled out. If so, it is safe to say war has yet to become 'unthinkable' – a cardinal feature of SCs – in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, as Leifer once noted, efforts to manage interstate tensions within ASEAN, underpinned by an established habit of cooperation, have given rise to an embryonic sense of SC among ASEAN leaders.

Third, ethno-nationalist and ethno-religious conflicts and domestic political crises continue to colour parts of the Southeast Asian landscape. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the New People's Army (NPA) remain active in the Philippines, while Islamist militant groups continue to operate in Indonesia and in southern Thailand.[27] If anything, the Preah Vihear area dispute showed how domestic conflict in Thailand between the 'red shirts' and the 'yellow shirts' can have spill-over effects that worsen bilateral tensions between Cambodia and Thailand. Fourth, domestic political transitions in Southeast Asia, mostly uneven and nonlinear, have redefined participatory nationalism and participatory regionalism through the incorporation of non-elites into the political process.[28] In that regard, there is arguably a distinct and widening gap between the founding member nations of AEAN ('old ASEAN') and the CLMV countries ('new ASEAN'). On one hand, 'old ASEAN' is prepared to countenance a flexible and evolving approach to longstanding institutional norms, such as maintaining a declaratory commitment to non-interference while pragmatically contravening it where necessary.[29] On the other, 'new ASEAN' is resolute that the norm should be upheld at all costs.[30] How should we view this in the light of the assumption held by some that democratic peace is a prerequisite for a thriving SC?[31] For sure, not all share this perspective; they argue illiberal regimes can participate meaningfully in SCs too, as the case of ASEAN has, in their view, shown.[32] That said, given Southeast Asia appears to be undergoing an at best patchy liberalisation of sorts if not democratisation, the failure to consolidate could prove destabilising in the short to medium term,[33] as arguably

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[26] David Brown, 'China, Vietnam drift in South China Sea', *Asia Times Online*, January 12, 2012, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/NA21Ae02.html

[27] Michael Vatikiotis, 'Resolving Internal Conflicts in Southeast Asia: Domestic Challenges and Regional Perspectives', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (April 2006), pp. 27-47

[28] Amitav Acharya, 'Democratisation and the Prospects for Participatory Regionalism in Southeast Asia', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 375-390

[29] Mely Caballero-Anthony, *Regional Transition in Southeast Asia: Beyond the ASEAN Way* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2005); Lee Jones, 'ASEAN's Unchanged Melody? The Theory and Practice of 'Non-interference' in Southeast Asia', *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (2010), pp. 479-502

[30] The way in which the ASEAN Charter was eventually diluted to satisfy the demands of the CLMV states suggests a divide between how the 'old' and 'new' ASEAN interprets the ASEAN Way. Rabea Volkmann, 'Why Does ASEAN Need a Charter? Pushing Actors and Their National Interests', *ASIEN* No. 109 (2008), pp. 78-87

[31] Michael C. Williams, 'The Discipline of the Democratic Peace: Kant, Liberalism and the Social Construction of Security Communities', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (2001), pp. 525-553.

[32] Kimo ivimäki, 'The Long Peace of ASEAN', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2001), pp. 5-25

[33] Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, 'Democratization and the Danger of War', *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995), pp. 5-38

happened in post-Suharto Indonesia.[34] (That Indonesia can today claim to have successfully consolidated in this regard, even if its own democratic regime arguably had to rely on regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) to 'lock in' or secure itself from being potentially undermined by illiberal forces.[35]) For Emmerson, ASEAN's shared a sense and expectation of community could end up being frayed by recent democratisations that might undermine the regional consensus necessary for maintaining a SC.

Fifth, Southeast Asia continues to be buffeted by transnational non-traditional security threats ranging from climate change, environmental degradation, natural disasters, pandemics (SARS, H1N1, etc), cross-border criminal activities and piracy, to terrorism. From 2000 to 2011, Indonesia alone experienced a total of 27 earthquakes scoring 7.0 or more on the Richter scale. Because of their trans-boundary nature, multinational cum multilateral solutions are needed. In this regard, ASEAN, through the ARF and the ADMM/ADMM-Plus processes, is seeking to enhance national and regional capacities to respond better in disaster relief, maritime security, counterterrorism, and such. Increasing 'mil-to-mil' collaboration and interoperability among ASEAN members has aided in informal confidence-building and trust creation among their defence establishments, while paving the way towards embryonic (albeit narrow) exercises in preventive diplomacy.[36]

Sixth and finally, despite repeated mollifications about the ostensible absence of an arms race in Southeast Asia, there is no denying a near-steady rise in defence spending – with temporary halts during the financial crisis of 1997-98 and its immediate aftermath – since the end of Cold War to the present.[37] Militarisation in Southeast Asia has generally been tied to prestige-oriented acquisitions, force modernisation as ASEAN militaries' remits evolve toward conventional defence and deterrence (without dropping counterinsurgency), and economic prosperity.

Conclusion

The ASEAN region continues to reflect bilateral tensions, a level of competitive militarisation between some states, occasional shows of force (and, in the Preah Vihear case, the use of force) in disputes, minimal reliance on ASEAN dispute mechanisms (but growing use of the ASEAN chair and the secretary-general's good offices), and the general lack in inter-societal transactions. Unlike Western Europe, guns in Southeast Asia are pointed at one another rather than outward. These attributes do not a SC make, although Acharya has argued that the existence of a nascent SC in Southeast Asia is best predicated on ASEAN's ability to manage conflict rather than the absence of conflict. Others note the lack of the 'we feeling' among ASEAN societies as a clear indication that no SC is possible without socio-cultural

[34] Geoff Forrester, ed., *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?* (Singapore: ISEAS/KITLV/Crawford/SMP, 2000)

[35] Andrew Moravcsik, 'The Origins of the Human Rights Regimes: Democratic Delegation in Postwar Europe', *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (2000), pp. 217-252

[36] See Seng Tan, 'Providers Not Protectors: Institutionalizing Responsible Sovereignty in Southeast Asia', *Asian Security*, Vol. 7, No. 1, November 2011, pp. 201–217

[37] 'Military Spending in South-East Asia: Shopping Spree: Countries are buying lots of weapons, but does it count as an arms race?' *The Economist*, March 24, 2012, http://www.economist.com/node/21551056

integration.[38] Granted, as Table 1 above has shown, some important institutional developments integral to the formation of a SC has taken place. Others note, however, that these changes have largely been superficial, a mere mimicking of other regional institutions, rendering ASEAN an 'imitation community' at best:

> ASEAN members have started to adopt EU-style institutions, in particular, the EU's Committee of Permanent Representatives and economic integration processes. This adoption process can be conceived as both lesson-drawing and normative emulation from the EU. This has not led to a comprehensive and systematic copying of EU institutions by ASEAN. Rather, member states have acted selectively in line with their 'cognitive priors' about state sovereignty. We observe institutional change only, but not a change in behavioural practices.[39]

To be sure, there is nothing to prevent ASEAN leaders from arbitrarily declaring to all and sundry in 2015 that the ASEAN Community is fully operational. But that would nothing to convince the Association's detractors – and, crucially, ASEAN's dialogue partners who have invested in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and ASEAN's wider complex of regional institutions – that 'ASEAN centrality' is something worth supporting. But whether ASEAN can successfully go beyond the three 'constraints' described at the top of the paper remains uncertain. To be sure, SCs do emerge out from crisis; indeed, they could be forged from crisis. But if they stay only as instrumental and pragmatic reactions to crisis without taking the necessary systematic steps beyond crisis and other ad hoc considerations to continue building, it is unlikely the community forged would be a strong one.

[38] Narayan Ganesan argues ASEAN has succeeded as a diplomatic and cultural community. See, Narayanan Ganesan, 'ASEAN: A Community Stalled?' http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/RegionalFinal%20chapters/Chapter8Ganesan.pdf

[39] Anja Jetchke and Philomena Murray, 'Diffusing Regional Integration: The EU and Southeast Asia', *West European Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2012), pp. 174-191, p. 174