
POWER, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

A Security Community for Asia?

John Garofano

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has been the subject of polite disagreement since its conception in 1993 and its first meeting in July 1994. Many believe that “if the ARF had not existed, it would probably have to be invented” to deal with the momentous changes since the end of the Cold War,¹ while others are more critical of the organization, calling it “a talk shop without any teeth.”²

The question of whether the ARF has been effective is an important one. A vast amount of resources, time, and effort goes into dozens of annual meetings and discussions that take place even as rapid societal and economic changes are affecting security in fundamental ways. More to the point, the

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1. Khoo How San, “Introduction” in *The Future of the ARF*, ed. Khoo How San (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 1999), p. 3.

2. “China Against Plan for the ARF to Resolve Conflicts,” Japan Economic Newswire, May 20, 1995, cited in Goh Teck Seng, *ASEAN and the Post-Cold War Regional Order: Beyond ZOPFAN to the ARF*, Working Paper, no. 48 (Canberra: Australian Defence Studies Centre, October 1997), p. 20. Other recent works critical of the ARF include Jeannie Henderson, *Reassessing ASEAN*, Adelphi Paper, no. 328 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, May 1999); and Juergen Haacke, “The ASEANization of Regional Order in East Asia: A Failed Endeavor?” *Asian Perspective* 22:3 (1998), pp. 7–47. For a critical view of every aspect of ASEAN, see David Martin Jones and Michael L. R. Smith, “ASEAN’s Imitation Community,” *Orbis* 46:1 (Winter 2002), pp. 93–109.

organization appears to be at a crossroads as important as any since its founding. New challenges include the spread of weapons of mass destruction, illegal migration, drugs, AIDS, economic ravaging, and internal regime challenges. These occur alongside hopeful signs of peace on the Korean Peninsula that may nevertheless alter dramatically the wider balances of power and alliance. The observer of security in the region would therefore like to know how effective is the ARF and whether it should remain in its current configuration. Yet, policy makers have many possible motives for not assessing carefully the effectiveness of their policies, while academics and analysts are seldom inclined to define the limits or failings of their approach, preferring instead to push the bounds of a single perspective.

In this regard, it is useful to apply to the ARF three social science perspectives on the role and effectiveness of international institutions. Constructivists are optimistic that the ARF contributes to progress toward a "security community." They believe that strong feelings of trust and community can be generated over time, thereby allowing states to avoid conflicts of interest or settle them without resorting to violence. Neoliberal institutionalists, on the other hand, hold that the ARF might sufficiently facilitate the exchange of information and views so that the security dilemma can be ameliorated. Finally, structural realists contend that like most institutions the ARF is largely irrelevant to the region's main security issues, the future of which is determined by power and states' overriding concerns for their own security. The power and shortcomings of these three approaches are discussed in the first section of this article. Next, I describe the kind of collaborative, multinational, interdisciplinary research effort that is necessary if firm conclusions are to be drawn about the ARF's effectiveness. In lieu of this effort and to promote debate, in the final section I draw conclusions based on member states' revealed behavior regarding a series of concrete tasks that confront the organization.

Approaches to Asian Security

Despite its modest declaratory aims, the ARF's goals and procedures resemble those of an institution that aims to create a security community. Political scientist Karl Deutsch and associates coined the latter term in the late 1950s to describe a system of relations in which states become integrated to the point that feelings of community and trust allow them to deal with conflicts of interest without resorting to violence.³ Scholars have again embraced the notion as a solution to the security dilemma, while influential U.S. policy makers even use it as a guide to the deployment of diplomatic and military

3. Karl Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 5.

resources. Thus, Admiral Dennis Blair, commander-in-chief of U.S. Pacific Forces from 1999 to 2002, claims that security communities are “the way ahead for Asia.” He posits this as an alternative to a multipolar, 19th century-type balance of power in the region. Citing Deutsch, who worked on European security, Blair claims that “the principles can be applied to Asia.”⁴ Admiral Thomas Fargo, the U.S. Pacific Fleet’s commander-in-chief, similarly states that a goal of the presence of U.S. naval forces is to “facilitate development of security communities,” adding that naval forces are often “the enabling vehicle to building better relationships among nations.”⁵

Supporters of the ARF and proponents of the security community concept share a belief that increased interactions in the social, economic, and political realms will lead to heightened senses of trust and community, with positive payoffs in the security realm. Deutsch and associates argued in the 1950s that the dense network of transactions among states involved in a process of integration—such as that which Europe experienced after the Second World War—leads to a sense of community characterized by mutual sympathy and loyalties; a sense of “we feeling,” trust, and mutual consideration; successful predictions of others’ behavior; and in general a dynamic process of mutual attention, communication, perception of needs, and responsiveness in the process of decision making.⁶ Later, neo-functionalists refined the argument with claims of a “logic of spillover,” whereby efforts to achieve agreement in one area would lead to a working together and eventual agreement in another, and sovereignty would be pooled over time.⁷ The same processes that cement domestic society, at the heart of which is communication and interaction, might thus improve international society.

Recently, a number of analysts have taken this approach to a new level, and their work, too, seems to mirror and inform the views of official supporters of the ARF. Constructivist scholars assert that identity can determine the nature of regional security. Identity is a set of “relatively stable, role-spe-

4. Admiral Dennis C. Blair, “Security Communities the Way Ahead for Asia,” *International Herald Tribune*, April 21, 2000, p. 6; and *Asia-Pacific Defense Forum*, Spring 2000, at <<http://www.pacom.mil/forum/spring00supp6.html>>.

5. “Pacific Fleet Commander Fargo on Role of U.S. Forces in Asia,” speech to the International Asia Society, Hong Kong, released by the U.S. Department of State, Office of International Information Programs, May 17, 2000, summarized in the Nautilus Institute’s NAPSNet Daily Report, May 17, 2000, <<http://www.nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0005/MAY17.html#item7>>.

6. Deutsch et al, *Political Community*, p. 36.

7. Ernst Haas, “International Integration: The European and the Universal Process,” *International Organization* 15:3 (Summer 1961), pp. 366–92; and Philippe Schmitter, “Three Neo-functional Hypotheses about International Integration,” *International Organization*, 23:1 (Winter 1969), pp. 161–66.

cific understandings and expectations about self,"⁸ while society is "about the self conception of communities and of individuals identifying themselves as members of a community."⁹ Political and economic transactions can thus be more than the generators of good feelings or spillovers; they are "also potentially the cornerstone for trust and a sense of community."¹⁰ States and the systems within which they operate interact and mutually constitute one another. States learn by internalizing the ideas and values of the system "as mechanically as states [interact] in the Waltzian system."¹¹ If a number of states change their understanding of their role in their community, a "cooperative structure can develop to replace [the Realist] one of self-help."¹²

At the opposite extreme is the realist approach to institutions like the ARF. Realists argue that institutions are epiphenomenal to the underlying distribution of power in the system. If the distribution of power changes, the system may change accordingly, leading to different kinds and functions of institutions, but institutions in and of themselves cannot substantially affect the system. Furthermore, in this view institutions are set up to serve the interests of the powerful, who adhere to institutional rules and norms only when it suits them to do so. Thus, the ideas and norms that weak states may generate and share will not change the nature of the system or states' primary concerns with relative gains. The latter inclines states toward worst-case thinking when taking steps to defend itself, which contributes to persistence of the security dilemma.¹³

Between the two extremes of the security community and realist approaches lies that of neoliberal institutionalism, which has gained some prominence in the last decade. This approach highlights the contributions to amicable relations made by the informational and enforcement functions of institutions. Agreeing with the realist premise of a self-help world, neoliberals believe that institutions can lower the transaction costs associated with many opaque international dealings and help with the enforcement of rules and norms. Thus, information about states' military capabilities, for example, may promote stability and compatible military doctrines. Neoliberals

8. Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46:2 (Spring 1992), p. 398.

9. Ole Weaver et al., *Identity: Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe* (London: Pinter, 1993), p. 24.

10. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, *Security Communities in Theoretical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 416.

11. Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity, and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 123.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

13. See John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of Institutions," *International Security* 19:3 (Winter 1994/1995), pp. 5–49. See also David Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

contend that institutions ameliorate states' concerns with relative gains.¹⁴ If states realize they are in a Prisoner's Dilemma, they can overcome it through shared information. Under such conditions, a regime might evolve in which principles, norms, and actor expectations converge in the realm of security issues.

These three distinct approaches provide the basis for three measures of the effectiveness of the ARF, but their shortcomings suggest the need for extensive refinement first. To begin with, constructivists fail to describe the mechanism by which identities may change; and the same may be said of many backers of the ARF. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, for example, combine Deutsch's views of social communication with Habermas's theory of communicative action to claim that "during their interaction political actors bargain not only over the issues but also over the concepts and norms that constitute their social reality."¹⁵ International organizations and institutions contribute to trust-building through meetings and monitoring capabilities. These shape state practices "by establishing, articulating, and transmitting norms that define what constitutes acceptable and legitimate state behavior." Further, they "encourage states and societies to imagine themselves as part of a region."¹⁶ Michael Pillsbury apparently has such processes in mind when he suggests increasing the number of ARF annual sessions to twice yearly, which would mean "the level of interaction and mutual understanding would increase."¹⁷

Alex Wendt argues that four decades of cooperation transformed Western European states into a collective European identity. "Through participation in new forms of social knowledge, in others words, the European states of 1990 might no longer be the states of 1950."¹⁸ Adler and Barnett write of three tiers or stages: precipitating conditions; process variables including transactions, organizations, and social learning; and mutual trust and collective identity.¹⁹ Yet, there is little causal argument about how to move from one tier to the next or how precisely cooperation transformed states. Adler

14. Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *International Security* 20:1 (Summer 1995), pp. 39–51. See also Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power and Interdependence*, 3rd ed. (New York: Longman, 2000).

15. Michael Barnett and Emanuel Adler, "Studying Security Communities in Theory, Comparison, and History," in *Security Communities*, eds. Michael Barnett and Emanuel Adler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 417.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 418.

17. Ma Yanbing of Beijing's China Institute of Contemporary International Relations as cited in Michael Pillsbury, "The Future of the ARF: An American Perspective," in *The Future of the ARF*, p. 149.

18. Wendt, "Anarchy," p. 418.

19. Adler and Barnett, "Security Communities in Theoretical Perspective," in *Security Communities*, pp. 16–17.

argues that through “seminar diplomacy” and other factors the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) promoted norms and practices that helped bring the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion through the creation of dependable expectations of peaceful change and mutual accountability. The OSCE reassured the Soviet Union that it had a place in Europe, suggesting that “organizations also can shape the identities of their members” rather than merely furthering states’ given interests.²⁰ This claim is not borne out by research on the end of the Cold War, however. Brooks and Wohlforth address arguments based on the sharing and entrepreneurial use of ideas and find that such arguments pale next to the importance of changes in the material capabilities available to the Soviet Union.²¹ Finally, it also is not clear how long it takes to achieve a security community. This is of some importance for policy makers. Wendt believes it could take many decades. For Adler and Barnett the process occurs slowly over an unspecified period of time, “from small and modest steps,” but one knows no more than this.²²

Realism, on the other hand, has not convincingly dispensed with the relevance of absolute gains. This perspective may also underestimate the well-documented role of intentions, beliefs, perceptions, and domestic politics in the behavior of major powers, all of which may be influenced or shaped by institutionalized social interaction. Realism allows little room for policy makers’ calculations of tradeoffs across the economic, political, and security realms. More importantly, it seems clear that some institutions do constrain even powerful actors to a degree greater than expected by realist analyses. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) got force deployments to prevent the U.S. from coming to a condominium over possible nuclear war in Europe. The two-track decision in 1979—the deployment of the Pershing IIs—was designed to prevent a decoupling in which the U.S. and Soviet Union may have made Europe a wasteland while avoiding damage to their homelands. In another area, parties to the World Trade Organization recognize that the institution will fall apart if they defect and so work hard to avoid that, against their short-term interests. Institutions seem to matter in some circumstances.

Finally, neoliberal institutionalism has failed to specify the conditions under which institutions matter in significantly ameliorating the security dilemma through lowering the transaction costs of sharing information and enforcing compliance with agreements. The essential question remains as to

20. Barnett and Adler, “Studying Security Communities,” p. 420. See also Emanuel Adler, “Seeds of Peaceful Change: The OSCE’s Security Community-building Model,” in *Security Communities*, pp. 119–60.

21. Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, “Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War,” *International Security* 25:3 (Winter 2000/2001), pp. 5–53.

22. Adler and Barnett, “Studying Security Communities,” pp. 414–15.

whether institutions work only when powerful actors want them to work and in the direction that they determine.

Measuring ARF Effectiveness: Proposals for Research

To understand the conditions under which one or another perspective is most useful and know the limits of each perspective, it is necessary to conduct process-tracing studies of Asian security relations in order to examine the kind of indicators and substantive issues central to each. The perspectives must be drawn out, however, to include specific hypotheses about the concrete steps by which states move toward cooperation. Further, it is necessary to devise indicators for knowing whether the hypotheses are correct and the steps are occurring as predicted. In this section, I suggest the rudiments of a research agenda that will allow stronger conclusions regarding the possible impact on Asian security of increasing trust and a sense of community, shared information, and long-standing concerns for relative gains.

Understanding Security Communities and Identity Changes in Asia

Informed supporters of the ARF such as Amitav Acharya posit the existence of an ASEAN/ARF culture that is presumed to have various impacts on security policies.²³ The proposed approach is intended instead to test the very existence of identity-based factors in order to weight their possible impact against others. In particular, the security-community, identity-oriented approach suggests that change should be detected in the following groups of variables and issue-areas:

Group 1 Underlying Processes and Motivating Factors

- Density of transactions
- Extent of transactions

Group 2 Consciousness

- Evidence of "we-feeling"
- Evidence of increased trust
- Evidence of shared images

Group 3 Impact on Significant Groups

- Evidence of these issues revealing themselves in key policy making groups or in public
- Evidence of changes in self-conception, conceptions of others, and conceptions of future relations with others

23. Amitav Acharya, "Culture, Security, Multilateralism: The 'ASEAN Way' and Regional Order," in *Culture and Security: Multilateralism, Arms Control, and Security Building*, ed. Keith B. Krause (London: Frank Cass, 1999), pp. 55–84.

Group 4 Outcomes

Evidence of convergent interests

Evidence of spillover when agreement is not reached in one area

Overall decrease in tensions

The density and extent of transactions refer to the nature and qualities of political, social, economic, and security intercourse over the last decade or two. In what sense are there increasing levels of interactions across ARF member states, and which groupings and dyads are experiencing the greatest changes? These could be broken down into traditional measures of economic interdependence but include as well cultural and other connections. Frank Costigliola's pathbreaking work on U.S.-European relations before NATO might provide one guide.²⁴ The security community approach suggests that transactions would be measurably greater and more dense than, say, 30 or 40 years ago.

Communal feelings and feelings of growing trust could be measured in several ways. Public speeches by national leaders may convey a growing sense of belonging to the ARF. Speeches and presentations by the sectors most affected by the (presumably) increased transactions should also be examined. Business leaders could be expected to feel part of a growing web of interaction. Trust can be gauged according to public statements, private discussions, and a significant amount of reading between the lines of public disputes and agreements. A nascent body of social science literature may offer some useful guidelines on the utility of this concept.²⁵ One would expect that these feelings are growing from a given time frame to the next. Once a handle can be gotten on this factor, it may be possible to suggest when outward expressions of hostility, for example, are unimportant and when they are evidence of a real step backward. Evidence of shared images may be found in speeches and official documents or in popular culture. Sporting events and other "us vs. them" venues may indicate a growing sense of community. Literature would be a natural source. It may then be expected that these images subsequently would spread more widely through ARF members and more deeply within them.

The third set of variables remains largely unexplored or avoided by enthusiasts of the security community and ARF approach: whose views must change? Realists and institutionalists presume that states remain the appropriate unit of analysis and that there are obvious loci of power within all states. On the other hand, identity theorists do not specify who or what

24. Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919-1933* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984).

25. See, e.g., Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); and Diego Gambetta, *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

should experience social learning. As Charles Tilly points out, the task for these theorists or for those who wish to measure ARF effectiveness is to “[specify] in whose minds the relevant consciousness resides; [describe] how that consciousness aggregates, diffuses or otherwise becomes a collective property; and [trace] how collectively-experienced consciousness creates its effects on interactions among states.”²⁶ Presumably, one would be able to locate the key players in security policy within each state. It would be necessary next to have measures of changes in their consciousness regarding security—including self-conceptions (expected rewards and treatment by others), conceptions of friends and potential or actual enemies (aggressive/threatening vs. passive/peaceable), and expectations of the nature of future relations (peaceful vs. conflictual vs. mixed). One would begin by hypothesizing that these perceptions should be moving away from the conflictual or aggressive end of the spectrum.

Next, it would be necessary to find evidence that the changes in consciousness caused a change in policy—or attitudes relevant to policy—in a manner that improved regional security. This would require one of two things. First, there might be convincing evidence that national policies were initially conflictual and then were altered as a result of changes in consciousness or self-conception. Or, states could merely desire to improve already-harmonious relations. The goal of either kind of argument would be to find instances in which changes in self-conceptions or in the views of other states caused changes in policy and improvement in communal security. Some correlation may be expected between changes in the self-conceptions just described and movement on the policy front. Hypothesizing further, movement may be more rapid on easier cases (e.g., confidence-building measures [CBMs]) than on hard ones (e.g., the Spratlys). Examples from Europe might include Britain’s change in its long-term opposition to a single currency, or France’s possible change in its long-term opposition to a strong, U.S.-led NATO. Another may be found in the argument that Gorbachev’s ideas of a “common house of Europe” led to altered policies.

There should, finally, be a palpable decrease in overall tension. This most vague of variables is difficult to measure. However, public statements on the topic, backed by appropriate action (such as non-purchase of problematic weapons), should be in evidence.

Institutions in Asia

Thus, the identity-based arguments suggest the need for a cross-national, inter-disciplinary, long-term research agenda based on a refined understanding

26. Charles Tilly, “A Framework for the Study of Security Communities,” in *Security Communities*, p. 400.

of the perspective's assumptions. Neoliberal institutionalism suggests a somewhat less ambitious course of study, but one that could also benefit from joint research and a more precise understanding of the basic theoretical argument:

Group 1 Motivating Perceptual Factors

Evidence, and shared views, that conflicts of interest can be ameliorated through shared information

Evidence of a concern among leaders for the shadow of the future

Group 2 Outcomes

Evidence that new information alters prior perceptions, policies, or behavior in the security realm

Evidence that regime-type arrangements effectively lower the costs of acquiring critical information

Evidence of regime-constraining effects on traditional behaviors and interests

Neoliberals would expect elites to be aware of the need for future interactions and adjust their behavior accordingly. This may be impossible to measure if such expectations are internalized, but one indication may be a degree of flexibility after initial rigidity. This shadow of the future could be expected to weigh increasingly heavy on policy makers as the ARF or other, less formal institutions grow stronger and more credible. Where there is real or potential conflict, there should be evidence that greater openness or shared information would ameliorate the situation promptly. This is a difficult area, because it dwells in the realm of counterfactual history, but it must be tackled. Simply the existence of an information gap cannot be assumed to be the cause of tensions. One may hypothesize that policy makers are increasingly sensitized to gaps in critical information and that they learn from this, as U.S. and Soviet leaders may have learned in the last two decades of the Cold War.²⁷

More readily available should be evidence that newly shared information has altered perceptions or behavior on important security issues. Kissinger's sharing of information regarding the Sino-Indian border three decades ago is an example of new information having an immediate and powerful impact; it remains to be seen whether information plays the same vital role in non-vital situations. It might be found that leaders are interested in new ideas for monitoring the Spratlys, for example, or making defense capabilities more transparent. In any case, evidence should be expected to show that the existence of the ARF makes it easier to acquire needed information about the intentions and plans of other members. At a minimum, policy makers should be as

27. For a good summary of research on this topic, see George W. Breslauer, "What Have We Learned about Learning?" in *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy*, eds. George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991), pp. 825-56.

inquisitive as are political scientists regarding both the need for particular kinds of information and the benign uses to which that information is put.

Finally, one should find evidence that information and institutions constrain security policies, moving them away from worst-case assumptions and purely short-term, self-interested behavior. Alternatively, it should be possible to construct meaningful hypothetical stories arguing that Asian states might be amenable to institutional benefits in the near future. Such hypotheticals would be based on arguments about the interaction between regime types, ideologies, and mindsets on the one hand and the way in which institutions are created on the other.

Power in Asia

Realists have minimal hopes for transforming emerging security dilemmas in Asia. They expect that by virtue of their material power relative to the rest of the region the U.S. and the People's Republic of China (PRC) will attempt to shape regional dynamics according to the dictates of their perceived national interests. Each nation will remain extremely sensitive to relative gains and will err on the side of caution in procuring military capabilities. Deterrence and balance of power thinking would take precedence among the major powers in the region. Smaller powers such as the core ASEAN countries might balance or they might not, but ultimately they would band together in ways that best protect them against emerging threats.

Group 1 Process

Leaders are concerned with relative gains.

Leaders do worst-case scenario development and procure accordingly.

Group 2 Outcomes

Policies aim at maximizing power and traditional conceptions of security.

Cooperative acts are narrowly self-interested.

Institutions are created or used by most powerful actors for their own perceived interests.

Preliminary Analysis

A large-scale collaborative research project using survey and process-tracing methods is required to draw definitive conclusions regarding changes in identity, the constraining power of institutions, or the operation of traditional balance of power thinking. In lieu of such an effort and to further debate, this section posits some preliminary findings based on the revealed behavior of ARF member states. Given the nature of the data, these conclusions do not indicate robust movement toward a security community. Nevertheless, the comments that follow are meant to further discussion on how analysts might

learn whether there is progress toward true community, powerful institutions, or merely power politics.

Persistence and Evolution

For some, simply the continued existence of the ARF is evidence that there is a sense of common purpose and community. They argue that a significant conceptual shift has occurred among most regional powers, who now give equal attention to bilateral and multilateral issues.²⁸ Others claim that the ARF has provided the groundwork for a new stage of more dense interactions and cooperation.²⁹ It brings together all the major powers in a region where the most significant power shift in recent history will occur.³⁰ Alan Dupont goes further in claiming that the ARF has helped in the development of a nascent security community, the emergence of which has psychologically been critical in helping to eradicate the residual divisions of the Cold War, especially in Southeast Asia. The nascent sense of community has also served to make the states of East Asia's two principal sub-regions more aware of each other's strategic preoccupations and become more conversant with the dynamics and realities of their different security environments. The opportunity for member states to share their security concerns and air their grievances on a regular basis has contributed to a marked decline in tensions between regional states.³¹

The ARF has indeed extended ASEAN diplomatic leverage to the wider region and—though the evidence is not overwhelming—it may have helped manage the demise of the Soviet Union, the rise of China, and the draw-down of U.S. military forces. At the very least, it has made some politically and militarily weak states feel more comfortable with these larger processes. States have sat together to discuss regional security. By most indications, the comfort level has increased for many issues. Discussions are more frequently frank, even in their disagreement. More difficult issues are broached, including search and rescue, peacekeeping, disaster relief, and the further development of CBMs. In 1997 at the ARF Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), it was decided to include defense officials in discussions on CBMs, with the intention of moving toward Preventive Diplomacy (PD). That critical transition has not yet occurred.

On the other hand, there is also substantial evidence that much of the ARF's progress in these areas has been due to a clear recognition by elites of

28. Pillsbury, "The Future of the ARF," p. 141.

29. Julius Caesar Parrenas, "Step by Step, Asians Are Finally Getting Together," *International Herald Tribune*, May 2, 2000, p. 8; and PacNet Newsletter #27, July 7, 2000, at <<http://www.csis.org/pacfor/pac0027.html>>.

30. Ambassador S. R. Nathan, "Opening Address," in *The Future of the ARF*, p. 9.

31. Alan Dupont, "An Australian Perspective," in *The Future of the ARF*, pp. 31–48.

the dynamics of power politics. "Indeed, it was not until the communist domination of Indochina from 1975 with Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia falling in a domino-like fashion that ASEAN was invigorated with a new institutional purpose," writes Goh Tek Seng.³² The original motivations for a regional security forum, too, can be described as "realist" in orientation. In the late 1980s, China had become increasingly assertive in the Spratly Islands. Manila called for maintenance of the status quo, Malaysia called for diplomatic resolution to the conflicts, and Indonesia convened an informal workshop in 1992. Yet, tension continued to rise because of military build-ups and the Chinese maritime law of February 1992, which reiterated Chinese sovereignty over the South China Sea (SCS) and asserting China's right to expel intruders by force. At the same time, Manila was concerned with the U.S. pullout and its own military weakness. Manila preferred an international conference dealing directly with the issue, but the feeling of most was that Chinese and other opposition would mean failure for such a meeting. Thus, informal workshops and the 25th (Manila) ASEAN Ministerial Meetings (AMM) in July 1992 addressed the Spratlys obliquely. A heavily worked-over Declaration on the South China Sea called for restraint and joint exploration and adherence to the principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and explicitly set aside the issue of sovereignty.³³

The 1971 declaration of a "Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality" (ZOPFAN), too, was prompted by power politics. Its central component being a Southeast Asia nuclear weapons-free zone (SEANWFZ), ZOPFAN stated ASEAN members' commitment to peaceful relations and building a regional institution free from outside interference. Since then the declaration has become ASEAN's "leitmotiv of security," "representing the indigenous blueprint of a fledgling sub-regional organization to seek regional solutions to the region's security problems."³⁴ The primary motivation, however, was to insulate ASEAN from great power maneuverings following the victory of communism in Indochina, the imminent military withdrawal of the U.S. pursuant to the Nixon Doctrine, the resurgence of the PRC after improved relations with the U.S. and its taking a seat at the U.N., and concerns that Indonesia would begin to exert itself in this dramatically altered strategic environment. ZOPFAN was a hard-won political compromise based on traditional security concerns.³⁵

32. Goh, "ASEAN," p. 6.

33. Lee Lai To, "ASEAN and the South China Sea Conflicts," *Pacific Review* 8:3 (1995), pp. 538-40.

34. Goh, "ASEAN," p. 4. For the "leitmotiv" source, see Bilveer Singh, *ZOPFAN and the New Security Order in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 1992), p. 11.

35. Goh, "ASEAN," p. 4.

Building a Stronger Institution

There is a noticeable lack of progress in steps toward the internal strengthening of the ARF. There has not developed a more complete range of peace-management or peace-enforcement steps. Nor have enforcement mechanisms been seriously discussed. Jusuf Wanandi writes that while the absence of strong institutions may have been sufficient for the first 30 years of ASEAN's existence, contemporary problems require something more. This may include a "Brussels-type bureaucracy," a stronger secretariat, and more participation from representatives from the defense establishment.³⁶ At a minimum, the disproportionate influence of the foreign ministries in ARF meetings should be addressed; defense officials should be present at the inter-sessional activities and the SOM's.³⁷

Adherence to Procedural Norms

In an insightful analysis, Nischalke examines the extent to which member states have adhered to the "ASEAN Way" on a number of security issues. Founded on compromise and debate, Nischalke asks whether ASEAN members adhere to the norms only when it suits their purposes and finds a mixed record. Thailand departed from group norms over a solution to the Vietnam-Cambodia problem, creating lasting resentment, yet for much of the period there was substantial unity and rallying behind an ASEAN position. The latter is also true with respect to the expansion of the size of ASEAN, which may have been facilitated by vocal U.S. opposition to the idea. Regarding the U.S. presence in the region, Singapore, the Philippines and other states have acted rather unilaterally.³⁸

*Intermediate Steps or Diversions?
CBMs, Arms, and Transparency*

Implemented CBMs relate to a host of important issues, including security dialogues, exchanges between national defense colleges, disaster relief, voluntary exchanges of information on military exercises, and the circulation of papers to the Intersessional Group on CBMs. Partially implemented CBMs relate to bilateral exchanges of security perceptions, increased high-level defense exchanges, military exchanges, and training; annual defense policy statements, the publication of white papers, and exchanges of related views;

36. Jusuf Wanandi, "ASEAN's Future" (paper presented at the Eighth Southeast Asia Forum, ISIS, Kuala Lumpur, March 1998), p. 25.

37. Dupont, "An Australian Perspective," p. 39.

38. Tobias Ingo Nischalke, "Insights from ASEAN'S Foreign Policy Cooperation: The ASEAN Way, a Real Spirit or a Phantom?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 22:1 (April 2000), p. 91.

participation in the U.N. Conventional Arms Register (UNCAR); and the signing and ratification of global nonproliferation and disarmament regimes.

Yet, the ability to focus on region-wide CBMs may detract from their more powerful application to specific problems.³⁹ The Asian financial crisis presented a major opportunity for rationalizing the purchase of conventional weapons, but leaders have preferred to focus instead on region-wide transparency and CBMs. Indeed, many policy makers and advisers bristle when presented with the suggestion that regional arms purchases could benefit from some long-term planning or regional agreement.⁴⁰ Because there are several different reasons for weapons acquisition, including government prestige, concern with long-term Chinese capabilities, and professionalizing militaries, it is unlikely that transparency alone will get to the heart of the problem. CBMs and weapons purchases coexisted quite well together during the economic boom of the 1980s and 1990s, and since then CBMs do not appear to have any greater impact. In the opinion of arms producers, sellers, and consumers alike, arms purchases will soon return to pre-crisis levels.

If member states were motivated primarily by a desire to use information to achieve security, one would expect to find interest in identifying and limiting the acquisition of destabilizing weapons systems. J. N. Mak and Bates Gill have attempted to do just this on an academic level but have received no strong interest from policy makers.⁴¹ Another option would be to secure at least tacit or informal agreements on arms limitations. Although this would avoid making uncomfortable public pledges, demonstrating weakness, intrusive verification, or arousing the ire of domestic militaries, there has been no interest.

There remains relatively little transparency in key areas such as arms purchases and defense plans. The situation has improved, however. From an initial three or four states willing to participate in the U.N. Register of Conventional Arms, the number is now up to 16. With the help of key individuals in Australia and elsewhere, a common form of defense white paper may be spreading. Thus far, states are more interested in concealing weaknesses than in promoting trust; it will probably be some time before these reflect true intentions. Military collaboration is minimal but progressing to include intelligence exchanges on border insurgencies, exchange programs, joint maritime and anti-piracy patrols, and a range of exercises. Former Indonesian vice-

39. This draws on John Garofano, "Flexibility or Irrelevance: Ways Forward for the ARF," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 21:1 (April 1999), pp. 74-94.

40. Author interviews of senior government officials, advisers, and analysts in Canberra, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Bangkok, September 1999.

41. Bates Gill and J. N. Mak, *Arms, Transparency and Security in South-East Asia*, SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) Research Report, no. 13 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

president General Try Sutrisno described these as an “ASEAN defence spider web.”⁴²

Progress toward Stage III, Preventive Diplomacy

There is little agreement on what exactly comprises preventive diplomacy, although instances cited may include the decisions to take territorial disputes before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the four-party Korean peace talks. At Singapore in 1998, the following definition was derived from U.N. terminology: “the use of diplomacy to prevent differences from becoming disputes, disputes from becoming conflicts, and conflicts from becoming wars.”⁴³ It was also agreed at this same meeting that PD be explored only in a Track II Level.

The TAC, in Chapter IV, Articles 13 to 17, provides for the rudiments of PD in calling for referral of disputes to the High Council where good offices, mediation, inquiry, or conciliation are needed. The SEANWFZ calls for referral to the ICJ of disputes not settled within a month’s time. But PD will be much harder to implement than were CBMs, as it may entail interference in internal affairs. There has been little progress due primarily to China’s opposition. Some members proposed at the 1997 annual ARF session that it was time to move to this phase, but a consensus did not arise.

While these measures were introduced in order to build confidence and trust,⁴⁴ this presumption should be examined more closely. If valid, one should find evidence in the outcomes noted under Group 4 above of the expected identity-oriented changes. One would also expect eventually to see altered, more trust-laden official public and private discussions as well as decreased spending on threatening weapons. The contrary view is that CBMs provide only the illusion of progress. In the view of Kanti Bajpai, for example, CBMs have prevented the more peaceful development of Indo-Pakistani relations. Acharya notes that member states prefer trust-enhancing measures to “constraining” measures,⁴⁵ which, one could argue, are precisely what is needed and are more effective. The CBM experience demonstrates a wariness among members to leap even as far as neoliberal institutionalism.

Hard Issues: The Spratly Islands

National interests are resilient to subtle identity changes when it comes to the Spratly Islands disputes. At the end of the Cold War, China signaled a new

42. See Goh, “ASEAN,” p. 6.

43. “Executive Summary,” prepared by Khoo How San, *The Future of the ARF*, p. 13.

44. For a strong argument, see Lt. Col. Andrew V. Balmaks, *The Utility of Non-official Security Dialogue in the Asia-Pacific in the Post-Cold War Era*, Working Paper, no. 52 (Canberra: Australian Defence Studies Centre, February 1999).

45. Acharya, “Culture, Security, Multilateralism,” pp. 74–76.

interest in multilateral dialogues but continued to assert its claim to complete sovereignty over the area encompassing the islands. Pressure from leaders such as President Ramos of the Philippines was tempered by a concern that China might renew its supplies to the Khmer Rouge just when progress was being made in Cambodia. China consolidated and expanded control of some reefs, passed in February 1992 its Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone, and has signed contracts to prospect for oil and gas.⁴⁶ Foreign Minister Qian Qichen made clear that the PRC position was to develop the zone jointly while setting aside conflicting claims, and that "China had no intention to either fill the vacuum in the region or to exploit the changing situation for its own interests."⁴⁷ Yet, the sovereignty issue would not be addressed directly. The ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea restated the principles of the 1976 TAC urging self-restraint, non-use of force, and joint cooperation. China reiterated its strong preference for private diplomacy. Even after entry into the formal discussions on security held by the Post Ministerial Conference (PMC), which were broadened in 1992 and 1993 to include China, Russia, Vietnam, and Laos, it became clear that China did not wish to allow extensive formal discussion on the Spratlys. This attitude carried over into other areas of security, as China laid claim to its consistent position that the ARF should concentrate on CBMs. At the first ARF summit, the Thai and Malaysian foreign ministers pressed for more concrete measures but with little success.⁴⁸

An optimistic interpretation would hold that the ARF process seems to vindicate the position that shared views would eventually have an impact. ASEAN acted in greater unison after China's occupation of Mischief Reef in March 1995, making a joint statement and taking a collective stand at the first SOM between ASEAN and China in 1995. Since then ASEAN members have made it clear that the South China Sea could not be excluded completely from the agenda and members unilaterally raise the issue at meetings. Positive movement continued as a working group on CBMs was set up, meetings were planned on search and rescue operations, and Track II venues were formally welcomed. By the second half of the 1990s, China acknowledged that the sovereignty issue would not go away. Beijing announced in November 1995 its first arms control and disarmament White Paper and ratified the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in May 1996. It also drew up the baselines for its own and the Paracels' continental coast. The joint communique after the Jakarta meeting stressed freedom of navigation and aviation in the South China Sea and the importance of the Declaration and

46. Lee Lai To, *China and the South China Sea Dialogues* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), p. 23.

47. Quoted in Lee, *China and the South China Sea*, p. 24.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

UNCLOS in dealing with competing claims. It also broke new ground in proposing a regional code of conduct in the disputed sea.⁴⁹

On the other hand, proposals to present a strong collective position have been rejected by the larger collectivity. China also has opposed a proposal to set up a working group to examine sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, stating that it was ready only for bilateral agreements on common borders in Southeast Asia. Its general position remained that joint development should be stressed over conflicts. China used the term “Nansha” to describe the Spratlys, indicating ownership, while it gave varied indications of its willingness to entertain consultations on its baselines and on the Paracels. Some collective, non-ARF activity followed China’s placing of its Kan Tan III oil rig 64.5 nautical miles off the coast of Vietnam in March 1997, but the ARF did not provide an effective forum. The Chinese indicated that territorial claims are distinct from “the South China Sea” and that the ARF was not the place for such talk.⁵⁰

Thereafter, the Asian financial crisis and the problems in Cambodia preoccupied ASEAN. The South China Sea was mentioned in only one paragraph of the 1997 AMM, and at the Sino-ASEAN dialogue the former backed off and indicated satisfaction with the development of problems less serious than territorial and maritime disputes. At the December 1997 second informal summit, President Jiang Zemin solidified China’s position by emphasizing existing mechanisms of dialogue, the priority that cooperation in economic and other matters had over security, and the handling of disputes through friendly consultations. Jiang and other top Chinese officials stressed that the South China Sea was a historical problem and should not be allowed to hamper progress in other areas.⁵¹

The institution seems to allow member states to air grievances to China in a way and with a force that was impossible previously. Also, there has been an increasing willingness to submit some claims to the ICJ. But most states continue to act according to traditional concepts on self-interest and with justifiably traditional expectations about how other states will respond.

Conclusion: A Pacific Community?

Researchers have not done the kind of analysis necessary to demonstrate how much of a sense of community has developed or how much institutions matter for the ARF. As a result, arguments frequently resemble a “glass-half-empty, glass-half-full” debate. By bringing together policy makers, political scientists, scholars, and critics of popular culture and working on a common

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

50. Nischalke, “Insights,” pp. 99–100; and Lee, *China and the South China Sea*, pp. 42–48.

51. Lee, *China and the South China Sea*, pp. 49–52.

research agenda, it may be possible to move beyond such unsatisfying discourse.

In the absence of such work, the revealed behavior of ARF states sounds a cautionary note for those who wish to do more of the same. In addition to the issue areas examined above, evidence from the organization's role in serious bilateral disputes points to the inability or unwillingness to address serious problems including external support for insurgencies, major refugee flows, illegal immigration, and sharp disputes over the sovereignty of islands and riparian real estate.⁵² One should point out that there is little evidence of a sea-change in attitudes regarding the utility of force, as might be found in an emerging security community. Nor is there substantial evidence for creating or using institutional leverage to produce, share, and act upon information relevant to such serious matters. Institutional enforcement is a non-issue.

Some problems stand out as potentially insurmountable barriers on the road to a possible security community. The major security issues are in Northeast Asia, but the ARF is not central to current work on these problems. As a result, some have called for an alternative arrangement dealing specifically with the sub-region and led by the U.S.⁵³ While the ARF concentrates on confidence-building, disputes flourish and arms purchases likely will increase in the near future. Even if the ARF tackles the more difficult issues, the process may be too slow to address them before they erupt into conflict or, in the case of the Korean Peninsula, a lasting peace without the involvement of the ARF. The twin guiding principles of inclusive membership and ASEAN-led ARF may be contradictory.⁵⁴

The ever-expanding notion of what constitutes "security" is another problem, although this is by no means unique to the ARF. ARF working groups on PD have consistently expanded the concept of security to include environmental degradation, the risk of a nuclear accident, drug trafficking, piracy, illegal immigration, and other matters. Prioritization and, some would argue, an overall strategy for tackling this range of issues becomes nearly impossible. Also, the ARF has not stated the principles to which it shall adhere in the event of another transnational environmental disaster, a major refugee problem, an insurgency, or a conventional war. Dupont notes that the craft-

52. See Garofano, "Flexibility or Irrelevance," table 1, pp. 80–81; and N. Ganesan, *Bilateral Tensions in Post-Cold War ASEAN* (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 1999).

53. See Patrick M. Cronin and Emily T. Metzgar, *ASEAN and Regional Security*, Strategic Forum, no. 85 (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, October 1996). Several analysts at the Korean Institute for Defense Analysis favor a U.S.-sponsored, great power consortium to deal with Northeast Asia. Interviews, Seoul, September 1998.

54. See Seth Mydans, "Expansion of ASEAN Causes Growing Pains," *International Herald Tribune*, April 30–May 2, 1999, p. 3.

ing of such principles for the next phase is "critical."⁵⁵ An inclusive membership policy may further hinder the organization's ability to deal with the difficult issues.

Some argue that the security-building processes ought to be as multilateral as possible. "Moving from bilateral to regional processes . . . can mute cultural specificities and minimize the ability of actors to magnify differences that might exist among subsets of them."⁵⁶ But the ARF must keep pace with and remain relevant to emerging problems. If "anarchy is what states make of it," as Alexander Wendt has argued, it may also be true that "stability is what states make of it," so that revisionist states can easily upset a fragile sense of community or even a balance of power. Deepening, rather than broadening, the institution before that occurs should be a high priority. In the end, we must ask not whether a flawed concept is moving forward, but whether progress is being made toward dealing with the security of the region. Such stability as exists appears to be the result of traditional concerns for power and security, and leaders do not seem yet to have much faith in institutions or in moving toward a security community.

55. Dupont, "An Australian View," p. 43.

56. Keith Krause, "Conclusions: Security Culture and Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and the Disarmament Agenda," in *Culture and Security*.