

ASEAN AND SECURITY CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses upon assessing ASEAN performance in aspects such as peace and prosperity within member states and ASEAN'S approach to adopt such sustainable approach where peace could be upheld within inter and intra dynamics. Also, it attempts to evaluate, economic and trade progress that ASEAN has made since its inception in 1967. The research further analyses the mutual dynamics focusing on ASEAN approach on key factors such as security in the region and among member states, economic development, tranquility, and the relationship with other regional blocks.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of security first came into being after the 2nd World War initiating development through non-violent means the idea of security is derived through extent of communities' internal and external relations, interaction and socialization. Deutsch in 1970 mentioned that security was means for peaceful transnational problem solving. This concept was criticized specially during Middle East Oil Crisis in 1970s where by collective response was challenged in early 1970s. Similarly being euro-centric this was also debated in the context of Third World (Acharya, 2010:1001-13).

Barnett, (1988) explains that security means that actors share values norms and symbols that provide social identity and engage themselves through interactions that reflect their long term interests. This process ultimately defuses tension and enhances trust and mutual interests by the community. Scholars, such as Deutsch, emphasize upon community security in the context of collective perception, identification and basic transformation of societies growth. In 1980's there was debate between Neo-realists and Neo-liberals, for example, Waltz (1981) explained relatively Neo-parameters for explaining change as internal change. The

concept was soon the turned as Neo-realism, it focuses as upon self-interest with a regional effect in regulating behavior of states. According to this, change acquires as a consequences of shifts, often violent in the balance of distribution of power. Whereas, Neo-liberalism conceives that the change is acquired peacefully through institutions. The institution must facilitate in providing information reducing transaction costs assisting to settle conflicts and inter-intra disputes within community. These concepts have been debated by scholars such as Mearsheimer (1995), Barnett (1990), Wendt (1992). There debates are reviewed so many factors such as inter-states interests' institutional goals, balance of power and distribution of authority (Adler & Barnett, 1998:3).

Evolution and challenges in ASEAN are divided in three distinct periods when ASEAN emerged as an effective organization in the region. There were periods of interstate security issues that needed immediate response for making the organization a stable sustainable and effective one. This issue was tackled through Mideast economic cooperative with the member states.

HANDLING SECURITY OF THE REGION

Chief among them was a dialogue at diplomatic levels where mutual cooperation was given top priorities and methods of conflict resolution were tabled. In 1975 and 1979 ASEAN took measures to counter occupation of Cambodia by Vietnam. This demonstration acknowledges security concern within member states. This also opened a door to a dialogue between Brunei 1984, Vietnam on 1995, Laos and Myanmar on 1997, and finally, Cambodia on 1999, since then, ASEAN generally was divided into two groups, in relation to disparity in economy, military, security and political security.

The ASEAN response to financial crisis in 1997 was a major breakthrough in terms of keeping integrity and in securing response to an international financial crisis hit specially ASEAN member states following which there are numours events on which uncertainty were jointly handled. It included health crisis of infections disease, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

(SARS) and influenza A(H1N1), the threats of terrorism, and the come – back of financial crisis, are being tested.

In 1976 the declaration of ASEAN member states came into being as Concord and Treaty of Amity and cooperation (TAC). The declaration highlights continuity of relations and cooperation with non-ASEAN countries especially on the problems of security and threats related to international terrorism. ASEAN under no circumstances could be termed a security organization it can be regarded umbrella under which member states take up bilateral and multi-lateral issues pertaining to security. For example bilateral issues include maritime security agreements between two or more member countries.

Facing uncertainties in global and regional environments, and complex nature of challenges, ASEAN states adopted the Vientiane Action Program that included the ASEAN Security Plan of Action for establishing ASEAN Security Community (ASC) at the 10th ASEAN Summit held in 2004, hence, to achieve the ASC themes, ASEAN must analyze the existing security cooperation and other activities in relation to the regional security matters, and then formulate appropriate approaches and mechanisms that need to be implemented in relation to security cooperation among the member states.

Under 1976 Concord ASEAN succeeded in withdrawal of US from Indo-China and its facilitation in establishing government in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The invasion of Vietnam to a sovereign state i.e. Cambodia provided an immediate issue that demanded its resolution. ASEAN response was very prompt. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore extended quantifiable material support that included aid but no military equipment. The second prompt under security domain was the presents of Soviet forces joining hands in South China Sea and Ranh Bay in Vietnam.

In addition, the development of the global and regional security environments *vis-à-vis* the expansion of Chinese, Indian and Japanese navy led ASEAN policy-makers to rethink their options for security cooperation. This prompted calls for new

levels of security cooperation via multilateral military exercises among the ASEAN states. It also made ASEAN policy makers to rethink the needs to review ASEAN's political character and the needs for formal security cooperation among ASEAN states.

Although facing challenges on bilateral issues, intra-ASEAN bilateral defense and security ties have undergone a rapid expansion. Started with information exchanges on border insurgencies, it had developed into joint operations against insurgents on common borders, regular contacts and intelligence exchanges between high-level military and security officials. From the early years, most ASEAN states have developed some form of bilateral military ties with one another. Malaysia and the Philippines, even though locked in a dispute, the latter claims on Sabah, managed to resolve the issue and agreed upon bilateral military cooperation, especially naval patrols in Sabah and Southern Philippines sectors. Meanwhile, bilateral army exercises between Singapore and Malaysia, and Singapore and Indonesia were held for the first time in 1989. Indonesia also later offered their air force and army training facilities to Singapore. This bilateral military ties along with intensifying cooperation suggests the emergence of what the then Indonesian Armed Forces Commander, General Try Sutrisno, has aptly referred to as a Defense Spider Web in ASEAN.

INTER-BORDER SECURITY

Border security was placed first in 1949 between Malaya and Thailand. In addition there were various factors into border security issues that required cohesive action, for example, there were outstanding issues between Indonesia, Thailand, Philippine to check illegal activities on maritime front. There were also security concerns between Malaysia and Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The most successful bilateral border security cooperation is the 1976 Malaysia–Thailand Border Agreement, which was regarded as the most extensive institutionalization of joint military action between two ASEAN member states. This agreement agrees on the establishment of a combined task force headquarters and combined as well as unilateral operations. It includes a joint and

coordinated patrols and field actions against the Communist Terrorists (CT's) along the border Malaysia-Thailand. It also provides the rights for both military forces to pursuit the CTs into other's territory. This is the oldest bilateral security cooperation in ASEAN and had provided the basis for wider security understanding between the two countries.

Border security cooperation between Malaysia and Indonesia, meanwhile, has wider security implications. The 1972 border security agreement was the result of common concern on border insurgency especially against the remnants of North Kalimantan Communist Party (NKCP). As a follow up to the agreement, the two countries launched a combined operation, code-named Operasi Seri Aman, in 1974, which led to the surrender of 500 NKCP members, including their high-ranking leader, Bong KeeChok. The second combined operation, Operasi Kemudi, was conducted in 1982. In 1985, under a new agreement, the scope of cooperation was expanded to include the maritime border of Straits of Malacca and redefining the term *common enemy* to include smugglers, drug traffickers and counterfeiters.

It is mentioned that more than 40 years has passed and ASEAN is still surviving because of its role in moderating intra-regional conflicts and substantial part in decreasing the chances of wars. It has emerged as a frontline leader in steering peace and prosperity within member states. It has gained reorganization as an economics entity with credibility for settling conflicts and issues. However, there are intellectuals, scholars who even today criticize the role of ASEAN. Barnett (1998), Leifer (1989), criticize passive role of 1990s after ASEAN economic burst. The other criticism has been its participation in dealing with non-member / external power such as ZOPFAN. Or else participation in human right issues along with transnational problem such as forest fires or air population.

EMERGING SECURITY COMMUNITIES

Deutsch (1957 and 1961) provides definition of security communities. According to him, security community provides that the member of community will not fight each other but settle the

disputes in some other ways. Their communities could either be amalgamated, where members maintain their independence and sovereignty. In the case of pluralistic security, countries transnational region comprise of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectation of peaceful change.

Security communities are also marked by the absence of a competitive military build-up or arms race involving their members. Within a security community war among the prospective partners comes to be considered as illegitimate and serious preparations for it no longer command popular support. States within a security community usually abstain from acquiring weapons that are primarily offensive in nature. Neither are they likely to engage in contingency planning and war-oriented resource mobilization against other actors within the community.

Preparations for large-scale violence between any two territories in advance prevent any immediate outbreak of effective war which might occur between them. It will serve as the test for the existence or non-existence of a security community among the concerned groups concerned.

Deutsch (1961) also says distinguishes between security community and security regime. In a security regime, as Buzan points out, 'a group of states cooperate to manage their disputes and avoid war by seeking to mute the security dilemma both by their own actions and by their assumptions about the behavior of others'. This may seem similar to security communities; however, there are important differences. A security regime is usually defined as a situation in which the actor interests are neither wholly compatible nor wholly competitive. In fact, a security regime may develop within an opposing relationship in which the use of force is carefully restricted by the existence of a balance of power or mutual deterrence situation. In this context the examples of security regime could be common interest of the USA and the former Soviet Union with regard to nuclear weapons and non-proliferation measures.

A security community, on the other hand, must be based on a basic, unambiguous and long-term group of interests among the

actors regarding the avoidance of war. While international regimes do not always or necessarily work to ‘*constrain*’ the use of force and produce cooperation, in the case of security communities, constructing a security community in South East Asia and non-use of force is already assumed. Furthermore, security regimes do not necessarily imply that participants are interested in, or already bound by, functional linkages, cooperation, integration or interdependence, while this is an essential feature of security communities. Thus, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe during the Cold War constituted examples of security regimes, while the relationships between the USA and Canada, and among the members of the European Community (EC), are better described as having the attributes of a security community.

Adler and Barnett (1998) provided the origin and evaluation of security communities. According to them, there were three stages of security and community evaluation process: Content, Ascendant and Mature. Under content phase, group of members within community coordinate their relations in order to increase their security; they intend lower transaction cost for exchanges interaction with each other, those interactions are based upon trade of threats perception and trade related dynamics. Consent stage involves bilateral and multilateral exchanges it focused of extending and deepening the interactions. Ascendant involving tighter military co-ordinations, in mature stage emphasis placed upon institutionalization super nationalism.

Adler (1998) explains that all three stages could be operational only when countries commit to work in long run on mutual goals, and their ability for facilitating peace within community and communist for hurdling burdens and challenges. Acharya (2001) suggests that the evolution and socialization process within security communities could be affected by changing of and cooperation in the international system. These changes could undermine the ways in which a security community manages intra-mural relationships and deals with external pressures. For example, changing norms concerning freedom and policy of non-interference specially in the internal matters at the global level, have affected the way many regional organizations such as

ASEAN have conducted intramural relations as well as relations with extra regional powers in the past. Security communities, existing or aspiring, which fail to adapt to these changing external conditions could find themselves in crisis.

NEGOTIATING NORMS

The Bangkok Declaration, 1967: The wording of the preamble of ASEAN's founding Bangkok Declaration of 1967 reflected the contested nature of norm-setting in ASEAN, especially norms of regional autonomy and no military pacts. The most controversial paragraphs of the Bangkok Declaration were the last two (4 and 5) of the preamble:

- Considering that the countries of South East Asia share a primary responsibility for strengthening the economic and social stability of the region and ensuring their peaceful and progressive national development, and that they are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of their peoples,
- Affirming that all foreign bases are temporary and remain only with the expressed concurrence of the countries concerned and are not intended to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence and freedom of States in the area or prejudice the orderly processes of their national development.

The Declaration stipulates to share responsibility not only for the economic and social stability of the region, but also for ensuring the stability and maintaining the security of the region from external interference. This latter phrase was borrowed from two MAPHILINDO documents signed by Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia (the Manila Accord of 31 July 1963 signed by their Foreign Ministers, and the Manila Declaration of 3 August 1963 signed by their leaders). These documents used the expression share a primary responsibility for the maintenance of the stability and security of the area from subversion in any form and manifestation. The Indonesian proposed wording for Bangkok

was only slightly different: ensuring the stability and maintaining the security in place of stability and security and external interference in the place of subversion.

The original version of the second paragraph, concerning foreign bases, was also contained in the same February 1967 draft. It derived from paragraph 11 of another MAPHILINDO declaration (of 5 August 1963 by the leaders), which read:

The three Heads of Government further agreed that foreign bases-temporary in nature-should not be allowed to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence of any of the three countries. In accordance with the principle enunciated in the Bandung Declaration, the three countries will abstain from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers.

In the final signed version of the Bangkok Declaration, as a compromise, the shared responsibility paragraph was split. As a British dispatch interpreted, shared responsibility was limited to economic and social stability, hence, stability and security from external interference, would be construed as the responsibility of each of the individual signatories. The paragraph on foreign military bases was altered from should not be allowed to be used in the MAPHILINDO document to are not intended to be used. The Philippines argued that the change would make the temporary nature of foreign bases appear not as a statement of principle, but a statement of fact. It was no more than simple truth that the US bases in the Philippines and the British bases in Singapore were temporary and depended on the consent of the host country and of course there was no question of their being used for the purpose of subversion.

More importantly, the reference to the Bandung Declaration (1955) on the abstention from arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers was entirely dropped. And the two paragraphs were brought from the beginning to the end of the preamble, thereby lessening their importance somewhat. Yet, by placing the foreign military bases

issue in the Declaration, Indonesia did manage to meet its domestic concerns and maintain some normative continuity with the MAPHILINDO and Bandung.

ASEAN'S APPROACH FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In 1978 Cambodia was occupied by Vietnamese forces. This posed grave security challenge to ASEAN; this also was a litmus test for intra-ASEAN relations. There were differences among members how to deal with challenge and reach to a win-win situation. It may be mentioned that neither Vietnam nor Cambodia were member of the then ASEAN community, however, still posing effects on future integrity and survival of the ASEAN. In order to resolve the issue, ASEAN adopted consistent policy using key norms in a following framework:

- To deny legitimacy to Vietnamese installed Phnom Penh government;
- To secure the unconditional withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia;
- To prevent Vietnamese encroachment into Thailand;
- To ensure a peaceful, neutral and democratic Cambodia; and
- To ensure ASEAN's leadership in the peace process so that the eventual settlement would protect ASEAN's security interests and would not be completely dictated by outside powers.

While norms influenced ASEAN's objectives, they did not produce a consensus over the means to achieve them. ASEAN's decade-long involvement in Cambodian peacemaking was to be marked by a tension between two approaches. One was diplomacy of accommodation that sought to address the conflict within an essentially regional framework in which the role of external powers would be kept to a minimum. This approach was favored by Indonesia and Malaysia and was fully consistent with ASEAN's norm of regional solutions for regional problems, with minimal intervention by outside powers. The other was a strategy of confrontation, the objective of which was to seek Vietnam's isolation from the international community and raise the

diplomatic and military costs of its occupation of Cambodia. The latter strategy, identified with Thailand and Singapore, involved organizing a resistance coalition front against Vietnam, as well as occasional proposals for intra-ASEAN military cooperation, thereby drawing ASEAN closer to a violation of its norm against military pacts. It also meant seeking close and direct backing from the major external powers, thereby compromising the norm of regional autonomy. Moreover, as these two approaches were often in conflict, they threatened ASEAN's norm of consultations and consensus through the Cambodia conflict.

ASEAN REACTION

Acharya (2001) mentioned that if ASEAN's policy by itself is aimed at finding a final solution to the Kampuchean conflict, then ASEAN has failed or is bound to fail. It is unlikely that separately and on their own any of the countries of the region can possibly solve the problem. The desire that regional problems should be solved regionally without external interference with continue to be what it is essentially a slogan, at best an aspiration, at least as far as the Kampuchean problem only be reached if the major powers also play their roles.

ISSUE OF SPRATLY ISLANDS

The Spratly Islands group, consisting of over 230 islets, reefs, shoals and sand banks, is located in the southern part of the South China Sea covering a vast area of about 250,000 square kilometers. Their significance is magnified by the presence of natural resources in the area as well as their strategic location straddling some of the world's most important sea lanes.

The Spratlys dispute was widely viewed by ASEAN governments as the major flashpoint of conflict in post-Cold War Southeast Asia. It also posed a serious test of ASEAN's unity and of its norms concerning the peaceful settlement of disputes. It was Indonesia, and not ASEAN as a group, which took the lead in developing an informal and non-official approach to the conflict in the form of a series of workshops aimed at assessing the consequences of dispute in South China Sea. Jakarta, with support,

has sought to project its South China Sea initiative as an example of ASEAN's role in regional conflict management. China, Taiwan and Vietnam were not invited to the first Workshop, which focused on developing a common ASEAN position on the issue. Indonesia and others soon realized that it might never be possible to unite the views of ASEAN in light of conflicting claims between some of its members.

ASEAN's role was acknowledged in assisting to develop a code of conduct for states of the South China Sea region, with a view to reducing the risk of military conflict among them. Proposals for Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), such as non-expansion of military presences in the disputed areas, and exchanges of visits by military commanders there, were discussed, but have proven elusive with China opposing any discussion of military issues in this forum. Ideas about joint development of resources ran into obstacles including Beijing's objection to any negotiations involving Taiwan, the unlikely prospect that any of the claimants which already had a military presence on the islands would agree to a withdrawal, and problems in deciding the principles for fair allocation of rights and profit.

ASEAN's collective concern with the conflict was initially expressed in a formal declaration stressing the need for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. The Manila Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers in July 1992 produced the ASEAN collective concern with the conflict was initially expressed in a formal declaration stressing the need for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. The Manila Meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in July 1992 produced the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea. The Declaration stressed the necessity to resolve all sovereignty and jurisdictional issues pertaining to the South China Sea by peaceful means, without resort to force, and urged all parties concerned to exercise restraint. But ASEAN has remained unsure of just how seriously Beijing takes the declaration, with its officials pointing to the frequent mismatch between China's declaratory policy and its actual conduct. For example, at the ARF meeting in Brunei in 1995, China's Foreign Minister surprised his audience by accepting UN conventions (including that on the Law of the Sea)

as a basis for resolving the South China Sea conflict. This was a departure from the traditional Chinese policy of claiming the islands on the basis of historic rights. At the same meeting, however, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman repeated China's claim to indisputable sovereignty over the islands and their adjacent waters, and rejected a role for the ARF in discussions on the issue.

For some time, China had shown restraint in dealing with the claims made by Manila and Kuala Lumpur. During Philippine President Corazon Aquino's visit to Beijing in April 1988, China reportedly pledged not to attack Filipino troops stationed in the Spratly. Visiting Singapore in 1990, Chinese Premier Li Peng stated China's willingness to shelve the sovereignty issue and cooperate with Southeast Asian countries to develop resources jointly. However, Beijing continued to pursue its territorial claims with the adoption in February 1992 of a territorial sea law which claimed the entire Spratly and provided for the use of force in its support. This initiative was followed by the award of a three-year exploration contract to an American company in the South China Sea in an area just 160 km from the Vietnam coast. Further, China's occupation of the Mischief Reef lying within waters claimed by the Philippines; marked the first encroachment by China into an area claimed by an ASEAN member. Similarly, the first violent incident between China and an ASEAN country occurred in March 1995 when a Chinese fishing boat was fired upon by Malaysian naval vessels in waters claimed by Kuala Lumpur. Such skirmishes have continued around the Mischief Reef area involving the Philippine Navy and Chinese fishing boats.

Both Malaysia and the Philippines established a military presence in the Spratly. President Ramos of the Philippines warned that the dispute provoked *a* mini-arms race of sorts in the Asia Pacific region. In the case of Malaysia, for example, the place of the Spratly in national defense planning was raised from secondary to very much top priority following Sino-Vietnamese naval clashes in March 1988.

Nonetheless, ASEAN could claim some success in dealing with China on the Spratly issue. A strong objection by China

prevented it from placing the issue formally on the agenda of the ARF. But ASEAN was able to secure an agreement from Beijing to conduct Sino-ASEAN multilateral consultations on security issues, including the South China Sea conflict. This to mark a reversal of Beijing's earlier stance, further, ASEAN could review to China's agreement to seek a solution to the dispute within the framework of the UN Law of the Sea Convention, and assurances concerning freedom of navigation in waters claimed by it. ASEAN's efforts brought the dispute into the international limelight suggesting a diplomatic cost for Beijing should it use force.

Attempts to negotiate codes of conduct were painfully slow. An agreement between the Vietnam and China was made in 1993. As per this agreement both countries were committed not use military means while resolving territorial conflicts between two countries. Another bilateral agreement between China and the Philippines in August 1995 provided for cooperation in safety of navigation, marine research, rescue operations and environmental protection, and for a negotiated settlement of the dispute. Such agreements did not improve matters between Manila and Beijing, however, further under-scorning the need for multilateral approaches. In August 1997, ASEAN agreed to consider a Chinese draft proposal for a framework for political and economic cooperation, which included norms of conduct for their relations and guidelines for the peaceful settlement of disputes. [This draft did not refer to negotiations over sovereignty, however]. A draft code of conduct circulated by Manila at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in July 1999 was deemed to have been too legalistic; it took the form of a formal treaty, while other members preferred it to take the form of guidelines (more consistent with the ASEAN Way).

At this point, the risk of possible disunity within ASEAN in dealing with China seemed strong. China has continued to push for bilateral negotiations with the claimants and appears to have made headway with respect to Malaysia. Intra-ASEAN tensions over the Spratly, rare in the past, had escalated over Manila's discovery in April and June 1999 of Malaysia's construction of structures on

two reefs claimed by the Philippines. At the ARF meeting in Singapore in July 1999, Malaysia appeared to move closer to China's position of seeking bilateral solution to the dispute. Manila felt betrayed by Malaysia and frustrated by the lack of support from fellow ASEAN members in dealing with repeated Chinese encroachments. But, negotiations between China and ASEAN continued, leading in November 2002 to the signing of a 'declaration' on a code of conduct in the South China Sea at the ASEAN summit in Cambodia.

The agreement refers both China and Vietnam to pursue the policy of restraint and avoid accelerating conflicts into military means for resolution it also highlight a policy frame work on uninherited area as that fall under the jurisdiction of both countries. To sum up, China's restraint in the Spratly is a tactical move at a time when Beijing is preoccupied with the Taiwan issue. It is mentioned that once the Taiwan dispute is over, the South China Sea will be next on the agenda. This is to engage China on fronts. According to a senior PLA official interviewed by the author; three factors influenced China's efforts to reduce tensions in the South China Sea:

- 1) a desire to maintain good relations with ASEAN;
- 2) a need to focus on other priorities of the government, such as Taiwan issue; and
- 3) a desire to prevent intervention by third parties (read the USA) taking advantage of the conflict.

The PLA was unhappy with the decision by the top political leadership to make concessions on the conflict that freezes Chinese territorial expansion. The current Chinese position is that it will not be the first to use force in the South China Sea, and would react only if provoked. The Chinese military does not foresee the likelihood of a major conflict over the Spratly, although small-scales skirmishes are not ruled out.

CONCLUSION

Having discussed the concept of security, its linkages with peace and prosperity in relations of ASEAN countries, the security

communities are critically analyzed. It was explained in a situation when aggression is shown to some other nations as a threat to their sovereignty. The aggression is considered as an illegitimate action against which community stands. In these circumstances, ASEAN's approach in resolving conflict such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and China are depicted as meaningful. The 1993 Declaration of mutual cooperation between Vietnam, China was discussed at length. The Declaration identifies the problems between Vietnam and China. It also suggest ways to resolve those conflict that no military means/strategies should be applied while resolving the disputes between two countries.

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