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Understanding Security in Regionalism Framework: ASEAN Maritime Security in Perspective

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The International Relations of Southeast Asia have been transformed drastically over the last few decades. The transformation can be attributed to the development of regionalism in the region, following the onset of ASEAN in 1967. Twenty-five years of political cooperation in ASEAN paved the formation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area in 1992. The upcoming ASEAN trade bloc has ushered the integration of the region in various other sectors – with regional security turning out to be the major beneficiary. Considering the fact that Southeast Asia is essentially a maritime region and the maritime space and strategic sea-lanes straddling the region determine the continued existence of these nations, it is pertinent to examine the impact of the regionalisation process on maritime security. The paper aims to highlight the contribution of regionalism towards a secured and stable Southeast Asia. It will examine the maritime cooperation in the region under the ASEAN umbrella.

In International Relations, the study of "regionalism" has drawn considerable attention since the early 1950s. The scholarly pursuit of the subject did take a back

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seat in the 1970s, but returned dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s. The concept of a region conjures a closed spatial entity, yet is not restricted to geography alone. During the 1980s, the growth in the development of regions indicated the rising importance of supra-national entities fomenting the growth of a new echelon in the inter-states collaboration in the international system.

Notably, the augmentation of regional integration does not suggest the diminishing importance of nations. In fact, the regional integration is presently fashionable because it serves the national interests more vividly. The integration of the nations having geographical proximity is primarily driven by economic and strategic considerations that eventually mature into deeper political commitments of which the European Union is the best example. The most enlightening success story in the developing world has been the ASEAN trial of small and medium sized Southeast Asian countries, without the involvement of a hegemonic power. This is unprecedented in the history of modern international politics.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the phenomenon of economic regions was securing roots, particularly in Europe. This had repercussions in other parts of the world including Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific. The process of integration of the states into a "region" brought a fresh leap in dealing with issues of economics, security and interactions among people as communities at the supra-national level. Therefore, the integration was simply not restricted to states but went ahead to embrace the societies of the states as well. With this background, the paper argues that Southeast Asia in the last few decades have turned into a "region" suggesting the inter-states boundaries becoming less relevant under the ASEAN aegis. This development is invigorating the national efforts towards regional efforts in dealing with the challenges at sea.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), founded in 1967, has been the unfailing instrument in facilitating Southeast Asia's stride towards regionalism. In this context, the paper will examine the current security scenario of the region and estimate ASEAN's success, while addressing the security challenges particularly in the maritime domain. Given the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation's (SAARC) completion of 25 years of existence in 2010, the study on ASEAN and its success in addressing the security challenges in the region is particularly relevant, considering the current security labyrinth which South Asia inhabits.

Theoretical Understanding of Regionalism

Defining regionalism is as exploratory as asking "what is security?" Björn Hettne observes: "regions come to life as we talk and think about them".[1] Similar to a nation, a region is an "imagined community". Regions appear to be constituted by "function" and "construction", a mixture, in varying proportions, partly depending on type and purpose.[2] It may not be conceived as a composition of group of nations or states. Neither should a region imply freedom from differences. It may be marked by conflict, or by a mixture of agreement and disagreement, or "the interdependence of rivalry", in Barry Buzan's words, as well as "the interdependence of shared interests".[3] A "region" may also exist, or be thought to exist, among states, or among parts of states seen, though more or less independent, as having common features or common interests, including but going beyond geographical juxtaposition: the Danube and the Mekong, for example.[4]

Regionalism in Paul Evans' view is "a conscious awareness of shared commonalities and the will to create institutions and processes to act upon those commonalities".[5] For Söderbaum, "regionalism" is a set of ideas, identities, and ideologies related to a regional project.[6] "There are no 'natural' regions, but these are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed – intentionally or non-intentionally – in the process of global transformation, by collective human action and identity formation."[7] In addition, "regionalism" implies a sentiment that exists or, perhaps more often, a programme or policy designed to build on or, if need be, to create or promote such a sentiment.[8] Hveem adds, "regionalization – as increased emphasis on organizing cross-border transactions within a region – may be intended not as an end, but as a means to an end. The end may be the global market and the region may serve as a stepping-stone to it, as an adjustment to and preparation for globalization".[9] More lucidly, Emmerson explains regionalism as a process. It is the intentional bringing together of physically more or less proximate states, societies or economies, in various ways and to varying degrees, for ostensibly common purposes and activities – forming or nourishing a shared identity, improving conditions and solving problems, or projecting influence beyond the region whose nature is thereby purposely created or shaped.[10] Finally, Stephen Bates notes, a region can mean a process of inter-state behavior, based upon institutionalized cooperation, which may result in the idea or practice of "region".[11]

ASEAN: The Instrument of Regionalisation

The term "Southeast Asia" first came into existence when Lord Louis Mountbatten commanded the region during World War II. The region was then fractured European colonies. In 1967, ASEAN was formed by the five independent Southeast Asian nations, namely Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and the Philippines. The regional set up was aimed at breaking down the post-colonial barriers in which the Southeast Asians were caught in the 1950s and early 1960s. The economic and security concerns pulled the newly independent Southeast Asian countries for increased level of unity and cooperation within ASEAN.

It was in November 1959 when Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Malayan premier, called for the Southeast Asian countries to come together. On 8 February 1958, at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur, he stated that Southeast Asian countries were "too inclined to dance to the tune of bigger nations". They should, he added:

> *"not concern themselves unduly with the world and Afro-Asian politics when they had problems of their own nearer at hand and that an effort should be made to build up their respective unity and understanding. If they did not do this, they would have to look outside the area for protection and the full meaning of independence would be lost".*[12]

He initially wanted to create an anti-communist front, but later realising the unfeasibility of the plan (considering the non-aligned nature of some of the members), gave up on the idea.

Underpinning ASEAN, the Thai leader Thanat Khoman said in December 1975 that the Southeast Asian nations were "comparatively weak and small", and of little significance in world affairs . . . (Their) colonial compartmentalization has estranged them . . . a new sense of regional solidarity and partnership would have to be forged. Then their individual weakness and impotence will gradually be replaced by a combined strength and their voice will be heard and their weight noted on the international forum.[13] Therefore, the founding members of ASEAN took the first step towards regionalism pledging economic and cultural cooperation, with an unspoken political association.

The most certain expression in the then five members of ASEAN was the feeling of frustration in the economic sphere, that the underdeveloped countries are at the mercy of outside forces and arrangements made without their own full participation – arrangements, for instance, to fix freight rates or set the prices for raw materials. The "psychological aspect" was also a contributory factor during the formative days of the association. There was a desperate anxiousness to be rid of the feelings of inferiority which they felt *vis-a-vis* the great industrial nations of the West. Interestingly, Southeast Asia's collective descent to authoritarian rule had paradoxical effects on regional order. It introduced an element of political convergence to what had been a strikingly diverse membership in terms of ethnicity, religion, language, colonial legacy and post-colonial polity.[14] As a result, the authoritarian regimes in the region promoted the traditional pattern of elite socialization within ASEAN.[15]

ASEAN Fostering Regionalism

For more than four decades, ASEAN has formed the basis for building regional community in the Southeast Asian states. It embodies fundamental norms, values, and practices that have, over time, socialised the ASEAN states into adopting a shared regional identity.[16] On the other hand, there are divergent voices which claim that the ASEAN is an instrument in the hands of the association's members in order to serve the narrow self-interests of the member-states.[17] Despite the said argument, the ASEAN members have over the years developed a shared identity, though it varies among the members. This is because the ASEAN identity is consistently competing with different identities of the individual members, since most of the ASEAN states remain deeply engaged in the process of state building and are trying to create stable national identities out of many disparate domestic factions.[18] Accordingly, ASEAN's fundamental norms are directed toward protecting and enhancing the sovereignty of its member states. Then is it possible to argue for thriving regionalism in Southeast Asia considering the highest position the sovereignty holds in the ASEAN's hierarchy of norms?

Despite the sovereignty issue binding the ASEAN members, the increasing cross-regional trade is integrating the ASEAN members into a single economic-geography. The salience of economics is underpinning the gradual erosion of sacrosanct sovereignty lines, thereby making the international boundary lines within ASEAN progressively permeable. Therefore, the economic prosperity underlines the strong

motivation for the ASEAN members to move towards regionalism. The trend of percentage share of export of the intra-ASEAN bloc during the period from 1990 to 2009 indicates fluctuation in intra-ASEAN export share considering the proliferation of regional trade agreements with countries outside ASEAN. There is a clear indication of rising intra-ASEAN trade share that has stayed at around 25 per cent in last two decades, as shown in the diagram below.

Take the example of Singapore. ASEAN-6's (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) is currently Singapore's largest trading partner with 30 per cent of its goods traded with the ASEAN countries. This figure has increased by approximately 8 per cent from 1990 to 2002.[19] As the ASEAN economies dependence on imports of machinery and materials for production from industrial countries outside ASEAN reduces, there will be commensurate increase in intra-ASEAN imports.

The ASEAN members' commitment to regionalism is based on the rationale that the association as a whole might shape regional events by way of influencing the normative environment.[20] Kivimdki suggests three subjective links that have held together the pacific union of ASEAN. These are (1) common subjective perception of shared interests, (2) common values as a source of common identity, and (3) confidence in common norms and procedures of conflict resolution. Among these, the ''ASEAN Way'' remains the principal approach to regionalism for its members and also the primary cause of its viability.[21]
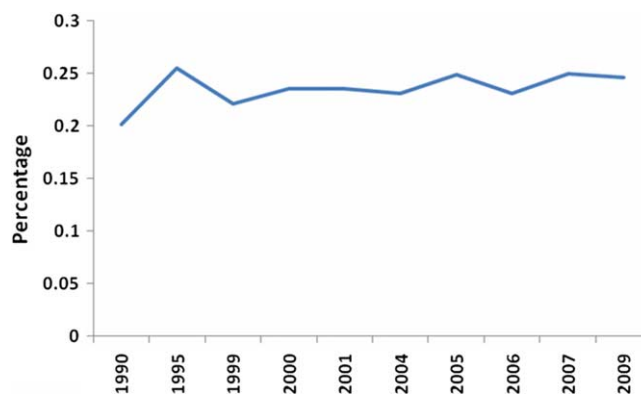

Fig. 1. Intra-bloc export of ASEAN countries (%) (source: International Trade Statistics (1990–2009)).

Most significantly, the support of the ASEAN elite, primarily from the political class, helped regionalism to grow in the region. For ASEAN elites, regionalism has acquired an emotional or psychological dimension comparable to that associated with nationalism and which appeared to exercise considerable appeal in ASEAN's formation.[22] Notably, the political leaders developed a personal rapport which became fundamental in building shared regional identity. The individual leaders such as Suharto, Mahathir Mohammed, Lee Kuan Yew, Tunku Abdul Rahman and others played exemplary role in providing leadership to their nation's policy which unequivocally embraced ASEAN regionalism.

Security Practice in ASEAN

Since its inception, the central political preoccupation for ASEAN has been to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in the region. On the whole, managing the regional security environment is the yardstick by which ASEAN's efficacy is evaluated in the international community. The significant point to note is that ASEAN countries have not fought a war among themselves as ASEAN members, although there are continuing bilateral and multilateral disputes besetting Southeast Asian countries, for example, the Malaysia-Thailand dispute over the land border in the Bukit Jeli (Jeli Hill) at the headwaters of the Golok River; the second instance is that of the continental shelf boundary in the Gulf of Thailand; the Thai-Myanmar and Thai-Cambodia border conflict; the Singapore-Malaysia dispute over multiple number of issues such as waters, and Singapore's land-reclamation works in a narrow strip of sea that separates the two neighbours; and most notably the South China Sea dispute involving six disputing parties of which four are ASEAN members. Nevertheless, the ASEAN solidarity has created an environment of trust and friendship in the region, thereby keeping the disputes under control.

During the initial years, ASEAN perceived a formidable challenge from the area of external intervention in the region. Narine explains that ASEAN responded to the threat in three mutually reinforcing ways: first, the ASEAN states sought to reduce the appeal of internal communist insurgencies by promoting domestic socio-economic development, thus meeting these objectives through the notions of "national" and "regional resilience". Second, ASEAN attempted to surmount the regional military influence of external actors. For example, the Bangkok Declaration,

the founding document of ASEAN signed in 1967 labeled the foreign military bases in the region as "temporary" and promoted "security from external interference" as an objective. Third, ASEAN tried to play down the intra-ASEAN competition and steadily improved relations between members.[23] The progress in the intra-ASEAN ties was possible primarily because ASEAN members developed shared values such as non-interference in each other's internal affairs, a framework of regional solutions to regional problems and standard operatives like informal approach to meetings, decision making taken after *musyawarah* (consultation) and *mufakat* (consensus).[24]

Paradoxically, during the Cold War period ASEAN did not prioritise on the security front. Notably, ASEAN members had no common views on their threat perceptions and espoused diverse politico-security alliances. Within ASEAN-5, countries like Indonesia and Malaysia were involved in Non-aligned Movement (NAM) while Thailand and Philippines were aligned with the US-led SEATO. In order to escape the political and security differences in the formative years, the founding ASEAN members focused on the common ground of economic and cultural cooperation. However, the Vietnam War and subsequently the Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchia in the late 1970s pushed ASEAN from its passivity. The following regional instability unquestionably encouraged ASEAN to joined hands on security matters and built a united stand at the international fora. However, the demise of the Cold War and the successive conclusion of Vietnam-Cambodia conflict changed the security environment of the Asia Pacific considerably. In addition, the post-Cold War era posited the new reality of non-traditional security challenges, bringing in the non-state actors at the forefront of security debate. This resulted in constructing a common ASEAN approach while dealing with the new security challenges of the region. The singular ASEAN stand consolidated regionalism and led to the commencement of post-Cold war security architecture, which in turn encouraged ASEAN members to view their destinies as a common destiny.

ASEAN had been advocating peace and stability in the region, regardless of the nonexistence of a formally declared vision on security issues. However, there are several other formal agreements and treaties between member states that embedded ASEAN to this goal. These include, the ASEAN Concord, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC, 1976), the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration (ZOPFAN, 1971), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ, 1995), the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea

(1992), the Rules and Procedures of the High Council on the TAC (2001), and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2002).

Complementing these formal attires is a slow deliberative pace adopted during the decision-making process at the ASEAN meets. The members adhere to self-restraint, non-threatening behavior practising the norms of consultation, compromise and concessions. These formal or informal manners of dealing with security frameworks are completely missing in SAARC; therefore there arose a need for imbibing such formats within South Asia.[25]

Conversely, notwithstanding the above claim that "ASEAN did not prioritise on the security", there is evidence to suggest that "security" was not completely missed out in the foundational years of ASEAN deliberations. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia signed in 1976 is one of the first ASEAN-stamped documents and that clearly emphasises "the settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner and renunciation of the threat or use of force".[26] These principles were fundamental in building confidence and resolving intra-states disputes in Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, ASEAN took 26 years to come up with a formal set up of ARF in 1993 which exclusively dealt with security matters.

ASEAN Regional Forum: Security Earns Focus

The New World Order in the 1990s compelled ASEAN members to adjust to a new Asian strategic landscape, where the need arouse to look at security and strategic issues more substantially. The rise of Asian powers at the global stage and the subsequent withdrawal of the traditional security guarantor, the US, from the region, created a strategic uncertainty for the future. The consequence was the formation of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) for addressing the void in the security agenda at the regional dialogue process. The aim was to create a forum for the discussion and resolution of regional disputes and to take up the primary responsibility of defusing the sources of intra-state tensions. This was important in view of the earlier failed experiences of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) and MALPHILINDO, owing to the intra-state rivalries and suspicions. Amitav Acharya argued that ARF promoted long-term habits of cooperation encouraging the group towards regional security.[27]

ARF did not subscribe to any defence collaboration since ASEAN was earlier hesitant to build a defence grouping similar to NATO. During the Cold War period,

given the popular sentiment against communism among the ASEAN members, a defence consortium was considered. In fact, during this period the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku, apparently proposed a defence treaty organisation comprising Malaya, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. He was anxious about the withdrawal of the US and UK forces from the region and the grim possibility of Malaya being left alone to fend off communist aggression. "In the circumstances he saw merit in all the Southeast Asian countries pooling their military resources and preparing bases for use by Western forces, which they hoped would come back again in the event of any war".[28] During this period, President Carlos Garcia of the Philippines also spoke of the need for "collective Asian defence against communist economic and political aggression". In a similar vein, in 1976, Indonesia reportedly pushed for a plan to create a "joint defence council" among the ASEAN states. However, such proposals were kept under wraps as any attempt to collective defence would raise suspicion in the Cold War background and the then new ASEAN members could ill afford such unwanted attention from the other side of the bloc. Therefore, conflict prevention remained the primary motive for ASEAN members during the volatile Cold War period.

The post-Cold War period transformed ASEAN from a conflict prevention body to a security regime. The expansion of ASEAN, embracing all the geographically situated Southeast Asian countries, opened the gate for building a regional security complex. With ARF a positive atmosphere was produced which opened the channels of communications on security issues. ARF is the largest and indeed the only security dialogue forum operating in the Asia-Pacific region. Although a contentious body, many experts claim ARF has evolved as the institutional manifestations of cooperative security. It is a multilateral discussion group focusing on dialogue and confidence-building measures which are the first step to cooperative security.[29]

In his 1996 Adelphi Paper on the ARF, Leifer remained pragmatic about the potential role of the Forum and argued that it should be viewed "as a modest contribution to a viable balance or distribution of power within the Asia-Pacific by other than traditional means".[30] On July 23, 2010 ASEAN conducted the 17th ARF meeting at Hanoi. In the Chairman's statement the members underscored the importance of the ARF as a central pillar in the evolving regional security architecture; yet there was a visible struggle on the part of ARF members to turn the Forum into an action-oriented organisation. The members also agreed on the

ultimate goal – to become a conflict-resolution body, which means graduating from the current stage of building CBMs to preventive-diplomacy.

In the past 16 years of its existence, the ARF has hosted meetings both at the Track I and II levels including, workshops, seminars and expert group meetings on various subjects, predominantly on CBMs. At the Track II level, ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) and Think-tank interactions through a group of leading strategic studies institutes from across the ASEAN region are being held. The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) held meets for providing policy recommendation to the decision making of the ARF. While specific to Southeast Asia, the Southeast Asian Programme in Ocean Law, Policy and Management (SEAPOL), a non-governmental network on scholars, government officials, private sector representatives and people with an interest in the region's maritime domain, have met on a regular basis since 1981. These following layers of interactions involve civil societies for inputs and spreads awareness of the Forum.

Notably, ARF is preparing for the next stage of evolution, which is drafted in "A Vision for ARF by 2020". The ARF Vision Statement does not however suggest anything fresh, except that a synergy between ARF and ASEAN Political-Security Community is voiced and a call for preventive diplomacy in priority areas is made which includes working towards mutually acceptable early warning mechanisms.

Despite the increasing cooperation in the security matters, there is a persistent feeling of mistrust, and ongoing bilateral disputes and contradictory strategic perspectives within the intra-ASEAN relations have not been eroded. This makes ARF – as a security framework – pertinent for the ASEAN members and its extra-regional members who are keen to be part of security interactions with ASEAN members. Emmers argues that most ASEAN states have been dependent on external guarantees to ensure their individual security. In particular, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines have relied on the US to operate as a conventional source of countervailing power in the region.[31] As a result, ARF provides an expedient podium for balance of power in the hands of ASEAN members. This also presents the extra-regional members the opportunity to be linked to ASEAN security.

ASEAN has been floating the idea of "security community" for some time. Acharya (1991) observed that ASEAN's concept of regional order centers on the creation of a Southeast Asian "security community", defined in the Deutschian sense as a group of states whose members share "dependable expectations of peaceful change" in their mutual relations and rule out the use of force as a means of problem solving.[32]

On Maritime Security

ASEAN countries' key security interactions are at sea; as a result there are lingering conflicts among the members in the maritime domain that have serious future potential destabilizing effect. For example, the Indonesia-Malaysia conflict at the Gosong Niger Zone, the Indonesia-Philippines differences at Miatan Islands, and the Malaysia-Vietnam-Philippines in the Spratly Islands. The maritime tensions will remain major security imperative for ASEAN in the near future. This is primarily because ASEAN is still in the state of maritime boundary-making today.

J.N. Mak makes an interesting observation that the ASEAN norms on "conflict-avoidance" and "non-use of force and threat" have been successful in preventing war on land but have not been effective at sea. For instance, Malaysia's forcible occupation of Swallow Reef (December 1979) and Investigator Shoal and Erica Reef (1999)[33] – a major military operation involving six frigates and modern combat aircrafts – was in complete disregard of the otherwise upheld ASEAN spirit. He argues that the ASEAN norms that operate in the security realm on land are different from the norms operating in the South China Sea.[34]

ASEAN has hitherto evaded entering into naval-military issues at sea. Rather, ASEAN maritime cooperation is primarily visible in functional soft security issues, primarily dealing with transnational maritime crimes and keeping good order at sea. At the bilateral and trilateral level, ASEAN members have had maritime cooperation; for example, the Malaysia-Indonesia Prevention of Incidents at Sea Agreement (*MALINDO INCSEA*) in January 2001. Whereas at the Gulf of Thailand cooperation came in building Joint Development of the overlapping claimed area which considers the overlapping claims with regard to the maritime delimitation between Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia. This made the Gulf a joint utilization regime. Nevertheless, regional maritime cooperation has been uncommon, although there are exceptional cases, such as the South China Sea dispute wherein ASEAN sent out a common voice and tool initiatives, for example, when Indonesia held a workshop series on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea (since 1990), and the Statement on Cooperation against Piracy and Other Threats to Maritime Security (2003).

Presently ASEAN recognises the importance of regional maritime cooperation, considering the trans-boundary nature of the maritime problems and the volatility it carries to disrupt the stability of the region. As a result, ASEAN has been forthcoming

on maritime security front. The Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (para 5, Sec A) states that "maritime cooperation between and among ASEAN member countries shall contribute to the evolution of ASEAN Security Community". The ARF meetings (1994–2009) also highlight the proliferation of maritime security activities. ARF has, up to 2009, conducted 13 meetings about Maritime Security. And as Table 1 shows, there has been not just proliferation of maritime activities under ARF but also New Delhi's greater than ever hosting of these activities. Nonetheless, these exercises have not reached substantial height, therefore are premature to be termed strategic in nature.

Nevertheless, the Defense Officials' interactions have increased significantly through the annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) which started in 2007 and is aimed at meeting the goals of ASEAN Security Community (ASC) Plan of Action. ADMM have expanded the scope of interaction by constructing another layer of deliberation under the ADMM+ which will facilitate defence dialogue with eight additional member countries including Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, China, India, Russia and the US. Notably, maritime security received utmost priority in the first ADMM+ meeting held in Hanoi on 12 October 2010. This gathering of Defence Ministry officials of the ASEAN members and the other members of extended ASEAN grouping will add momentum to the maritime interaction in the Indo-Pacific waters.

Limitations of ASEAN on Security Affairs

Although there is evidence to support the growth of regionalism and its efficient handling of security issues in Southeast Asia, there are facts to the contrary as well. The recent revelation of Myanmar's nuclear ambition and its nexus with North Korea is a setback to the region. This suggests that the region's commitment to SEANWFZ has been undermined by Myanmar's pursuit of independent domestic policy in gross disregard of regional sentiments. For any regional body, one of its prime motives is reducing tensions and de-escalating conflicts but on the Myanmar issue ASEAN has not fared well. Similarly, ASEAN responses to the recent Thai-Cambodia spat and issues of human rights and environment have also added to the dispute. Kripa Sridharan observes that "within ASEAN, the record of managing conflicts is mixed. It has been effective to a great extent in stabilizing the region, but much less effective in dealing with domestic conflicts that have regional ramifications".[35] The failure is

Table 1. ARF Maritime Activities (1994–2009).

Subject	Venue	Date
Meeting of Specialist Officials on Maritime Issues	Honolulu	5 November 1998
Workshop on Anti-Piracy	Mumbai	18–20 October 2000
ARF Workshop on Maritime Security Challenges	Mumbai	27 February–1 March 2003
ARF Seminar on Regional Maritime Security	Kuala Lumpur	22–24 September 2004
ARF CBM: Regional Cooperation in Maritime Security	Singapore	2–4 March 2005
Workshop on Training for the Cooperative Maritime Security	Kochi, India	26–28 October 2005
ARF Workshop on Capacity Building of Maritime Security	Tokyo	19–20 December 2005
ARF Maritime Security Shore Exercise Planning Conference	Singapore	7–8 December 2006
ARF Maritime Security Shore Exercise	Singapore	22–23 January 2007
ARF Roundtable Discussion on Stocktaking of Maritime Security Issues	Bali	24–25 August 2007
ARF Training Programme on Maritime Security	Chennai	24–29 March 2008
Second (Advanced) Maritime Security Training Programme for ARF Member States	India	17–22 November 2008
ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security	Surabaya	5–6 March 2009

Source: ASEAN, http://www.aseanregionalforum.org/PublicLibrary/ARFActivities/ListofARFTrackIIActivities/tabid/95/Default.aspx (accessed August 24, 2010).

attributed to the hypersensitivity over sovereignty and the non-interference clause sacrosanct in the "ASEAN Way" principles.

In addition, regionalism in Southeast Asia is observed to have accelerated with the hype of the external threats to the ASEAN members. During the early 1960s when some of the Southeast Asian countries were confronting the communist threat, regionalism provided the common shelter for jointly resisting the communist insurgency. Similarly, can we argue that in the current geopolitical scenario, ASEAN is building the "external threat" over China's "creeping aggression" in order to speed up the current momentum on regionalism? Otherwise, how far is it possible to comprehend the growing ASEAN-China economic and political linkages on the one

hand, while the opposing ASEAN diplomatic endeavour in 2010 Summit wherein ASEAN ganged up with the US over sea spats against the northern giant?

Notwithstanding the emphasis on informal dialogue between the 26 members of ARF, the informal and frank interactions at times lead to rising tensions. This was particularly evident in the 2010 ARF meet when tensions loomed large between China and the US over the speech delivered by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, in which she expressed concern over the South China Sea dispute and offered mediation in the resolution process.

Conclusion

To what extent regionalism has seeped into the Southeast Asian region is matter of debate, but there is no denying the fact that the Southeast Asian landscape has been transformed with it. The sign of its maturing is particularly evident from the progress of ASEAN Vision 2020, adopted by the ASEAN leaders on the association's 30th anniversary, whereby they agreed on a shared vision of ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations. At the 9th ASEAN Summit in 2003, they resolved to form an ASEAN Community.[36] Subsequently, at the 12th ASEAN Summit in January 2007, the ASEAN members signed the Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015.

Has regionalism managed to enhance security in Southeast Asia? As the ASEAN experience has shown, regional cooperation on security failed to take off until destabilising issues such as the Sabah claim, Suharto led-*Kofrontasi* against Malaysia, and the Vietnam conflict came to a conclusion. And these issues were solved only when ASEAN members realised the common threat of these challenges. Therefore, it can be concluded that with the maturing of regionalism, individual members reached a new dimension in understanding "security" in terms of regional repercussions. The growth of regionalism therefore reformed ASEAN to gradually shift from national identity to regional identity, thereby pushing ASEAN members to look at the underlying regional problems and simultaneously identify regional solutions.

Notwithstanding this, the initial years of both SAARC and ASEAN indicate the period of "turbulent non-growth", a phase where participating actors are utterly confused about the goal and purpose of the organisation, so pursue many objectives simultaneously as they are unsure of the trade-offs among them, and demonstrate

ambiguity and lack of commitment in any negotiation.[37] However, at 25, the present age of SAARC, ASEAN has resolved its regional quandary with the Paris Peace Accord and looks to consolidate its position in the regional security architecture through ARF and Post Ministerial Conference with the dialogue partners. In comparison, SAARC is still in a limbo. Unfortunately, South Asia is yet to witness a common consciousness of South Asian identity as we see in the ASEAN identity evolving through shared norms of "ASEAN Way". Perhaps, the emergence of a common identity would surface the beginning of a common security in South Asia.

Notes

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