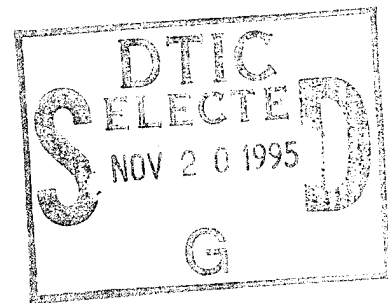


IDA PAPER P-3110

STONEMWORK OR SANDCASTLE?
ASIA'S REGIONAL SECURITY FORUM



James L. Lacy

July 1995

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PREFACE

This paper forms part of an IDA-initiated study of Asia-Pacific security issues at mid-decade. A companion paper in the study—*Cautious Peace: Strategy and Circumstance in Asia-Pacific Security* (P-3108, July 1995)—examines the conditions of security, alliance, and forward presence in which U.S. military forces may operate in the Asia-Pacific region in the second half of the decade. This paper focuses on multilateral security arrangements in the region—specifically, the development of a regional security forum under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It examines the origins and current (mid-1995) status of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the forum's prospects over the next several years, and what the combination suggests for U.S. planning and decision-making in the time ahead.

The analysis was conducted as part of IDA's Central Research Program with a view toward helping to illuminate and focus the discussion of Asia-Pacific security issues and developments. The study was not commissioned by the United States Government, and its publication by IDA in no way implies endorsement of the paper's contents by any agency or department of the U.S. Government. The viewpoints expressed are wholly those of the paper's author.

The paper was completed before ARF's second annual meeting in August 1995. An Afterword, covering the August meeting, has been added at the paper's end.

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SUMMARY

The establishment in 1993 of an Asia-Pacific regional security forum under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been widely regarded as a watershed in the politics of East Asian security. Before the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), security dealings in the Asia-Pacific had been almost entirely bilateral in character. ARF, whose membership stands at 19 in mid-1995, promises to change the ways in which "political and security issues of common interest and concern" are handled in the region's future. Although not involved in ARF's establishment, the United States is a participating member, and has broadly endorsed the forum's potential to ease suspicions, build confidence and, ultimately, avert conflicts. China and Japan also participate.

Two years in, however, the forum has yet to get much beyond dialogue about dialogue. Its purposes, directions, and prospects remain elusive. ARF is essentially structure-less, and what little substantive agenda it has is *ad hoc* and tentative. The emphasis is on generalized, non-confrontational "trust-building," not concrete problem-solving or a specific program of action. Key states such as India, North Korea and Taiwan do not participate, and it is still unclear whether the "A" in ARF will evolve, as many have hoped, from "ASEAN" to "Asian."

Participating countries are of a mixed mind about the forum. Some, including the United States, are impatient with the forum's sluggish pace and lack of discernible direction. China, on the other hand, worries that ARF could be the opening step in a U.S.-promoted policy to contain Chinese power and prerogatives over the longer haul. ASEAN members worry about the forum losing its ASEAN "identity" and breaking free of its ASEAN "parentage." Other participants seem genuinely perplexed about what ARF is supposed to do, when, and how.

The forum's proponents contend that its establishment—and China's participation—are accomplishments of the first order in themselves, and that, with time, ARF will become a serious forum, so long as it is not pushed to produce concrete results too quickly. They argue that Western participants are driven, inappropriately, by "institution-building impulses," whereas the forum will acquire a long term viability only if it keeps faith with a "consensus-building" approach.

Still, the globe is littered with regional organizations that speak to security concerns with no practical meaning or effect. Security dialogue can be an important step forward, but it also can be (and often has been in history) an excuse for inaction on issues of substance. Dialogue can build confidence, but not necessarily; the world has had its share of confidence-sapping negotiations and dialogues that confuse more than clarify security relationships. Asia (and ARF) would not be the first (or alone) in building sandcastles that fade with time and tide.

This paper is concerned with the forum's prospects and their implications for U.S. regional defense policy. Two broad sets of conclusions emerge from the analysis.

First, too much attention has been paid to ARF. It occupies center stage more by default than anything else. It would be better for all concerned to give ARF its limited due, but to otherwise get on with developing viable alternatives. Given its history, heterogeneous membership, and ASEAN's tight grip on its agenda, ARF's capacity to evolve into a comprehensive regional security mechanism, capable of averting destabilizing arms races and preventing and managing crises and disputes in the future, is doubtful. U.S. security policy and planning for the region will need to take this into account. Although ARF could serve the useful purpose of providing an annual "talking shop" in regional security, the United States and others in the region will need to look elsewhere in developing discrete and relevant long term security mechanisms and arrangements for the Asia-Pacific.

Second, if ARF is to endure and attain a regional relevance, it will need to build a modest but genuine foundation in problem-solving. Absent some such stonework soon, the forum will forfeit whatever legitimacy it might otherwise command in regional security. With some refocusing, ARF could be positioned to take on modest but useful multilateral activities, perhaps in two areas:

- Multilateral cooperation in transnational law enforcement and order maintenance, to include anti-piracy, drug and smuggling interdiction, surveillance and policing of fishing and maritime economic zones, search and rescue, and management of environmental mishaps and calamities.
- Dispute management through the sponsorship of technical research, arbitration, mediation, and negotiation in discrete areas for which some general agreement may be possible—such as transboundary fishing, exploitation of seabed resources, and multistate approaches to cross-boundary environmental problems—where international law has left jurisdiction and ownership issues clouded and conflicting, and where gaps exist to be filled.

These steps, to be sure, are more prosaic than annual discussions of the grand issues of the day, but they (and perhaps other endeavors of similar character) hold the distinctive promise of accomplishing something real in the near- to medium-term.

In order to serve these purposes, however, and also to acquire legitimacy as a “regional” umbrella and mechanism, ARF will need to establish a degree of institutionalization separate from ASEAN. If the ASEAN Regional Forum is to evolve into the Asian Regional Forum, an international secretariat independent of ASEAN will be an early essential step. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—the “second track” of ARF diplomacy—can play useful roles in contributing research, analysis, and motivation to the ARF process, but they will be no substitute for building an international (“regional”) foundation at the governmental level through an ARF structure.

Left to its own devices, ARF is unlikely to move in any of these directions any time soon. The United States and like-minded others will need to provide the impetus.

For the United States, then, the time ahead will call for a dual-track approach to ARF—working within the forum, on the one hand, to help focus it more modestly and specifically, and working outside the forum to construct viable, additional mechanisms for multilateral security arrangements. Neither will be easy. Without both, however, neither the region nor the United States is likely to move much beyond abstract notions of multilateralism in Asia-Pacific security affairs.

I. INTRODUCTION

The launching of a regional security forum under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1993, and the forum's inaugural meeting in Bangkok in 1994, have been widely heralded as watersheds in the handling of security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) provides a multilateral, quasi-regional forum for the consideration of security issues in the Asia-Pacific where none existed in the past. Some commentators see ARF as "the most significant institutional development in the security sphere in post-Cold War Asia,"¹ and the "opening of a new chapter of peace, stability and cooperation for Southeast Asia."²

Although the United States was not involved in the formulation or design of ARF, it endorsed the forum's establishment in 1993, and has spoken generously about the forum's potential in the time since then. "In the years to come," U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott told the ARF assemblage in Bangkok, "we believe this Regional Forum can play a historic role in conveying intentions, easing suspicions, building confidence, and, ultimately, averting conflicts."³ The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has expressed confidence that ARF "will develop over time into an effective region-wide forum for enhancing preventive diplomacy and developing confidence-building measures."⁴

Two years after its establishment, however, the forum's purposes, directions, and prospects remain elusive. Little of substance has been discussed in ARF, and nothing of substance has been decided. At Bangkok in 1994, the participants agreed on a list of areas "which might be the subjects of further study" to include "confidence and security building, nuclear non-proliferation, peacekeeping cooperation, including a regional peacekeeping centre, exchanges of non-classified military information, maritime security issues and preventive diplomacy."⁵ But the study list resulted from only generalized discussion,⁶ and is not viewed as either a framework or a blueprint for action.⁷

Procedurally, the forum is formless—there are, for example, no voting rules and no agreed mechanisms for making decisions. ARF has no institutional existence and apparatus beyond that provided by ASEAN, which provides its chairmanship and agenda. Although it is a "regional" forum whose participating countries are drawn from outside as well as inside ASEAN, it remains unclear whether ARF is intended by its ASEAN

sponsors to be genuinely “Asia-Pacific” in its approach to security issues, or is more narrowly conceived as a mechanism solely for the enhancement of security in Southeast Asia.⁸ Not all arguably relevant Asia-Pacific countries participate in ARF—North Korea, Taiwan, Burma, Mongolia, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan are not represented at present, nor are the South Pacific Island states.^{9†}

The forum nevertheless has assumed center stage at mid-decade. At present, it is the only security-oriented mechanism that draws broadly, if not completely, from the region. Other multilateralizing efforts have yet to acquire any comparable momentum. Hopes for a separate subregional security dialogue in Northeast Asia—involving the United States, Japan, China, Russia, and the two Koreas—have been stymied by North Korean hostility to the idea, and by issues concerning the additional participation of Canada and Mongolia. Discrete “trilateral” discussions—involving the United States, Russia, and Japan, and the United States, Japan, and South Korea—aimed at progress on long-standing issues and tensions between the non-U.S. parties, have been easier thus far in the conception than the doing. The South Pacific Forum—most of whose members are excluded from ARF and a forum that has been largely ignored by ARF—has managed to establish and dispatch the Asia-Pacific’s only regional multistate peacekeeping operation, but the size is small and the circumstances are idiosyncratic.

<i>ARF Participants</i>
Australia
Brunei
Cambodia (1995)
Canada
China
European Union
Indonesia
Japan
Laos
Malaysia
New Zealand
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Russia
Singapore
South Korea
Thailand
United States
Vietnam

Although the U.S. Government had little to do with its establishment, ARF’s prospects, potential, and directions are of interest to the United States for several reasons.

- *A stable, peaceful and secure Asia-Pacific is a key objective of U.S. strategic policy.* Regional instability is one of the principal dangers identified in U.S. military strategy, and promoting stability is one of the foremost objectives.¹⁰ To the extent that ARF contributes (or can be shaped to contribute) to this broad objective, so much the better.
- *The time when the United States might act as comprehensive guarantor of security throughout the region is past.* In the post-Cold War environment, Americans reasonably expect prosperous allies and friends to assume a greater share of the responsibility for maintaining peace, preventing and

† Cambodia joined at the August 1995 meeting in Brunei.

managing conflicts, and promoting security and stability. In potential at least, ARF embodies a means for countries in the region to assume more responsibility-sharing.

- *Developing viable long term security arrangements for the region is a key element in ensuring future U.S. access, engagement, and influence in Asia-Pacific security affairs.* Bilateral security ties can carry U.S. interests only so far. Multilateral security forums are not a substitute for close bilateral ties, but they can provide an important measure of complementarity, extended reach, and general enhancement.
- *Promoting China's peaceful integration in Asia-Pacific political and security dealings is among the United States' strategic priorities in the region.* To that end, in the words of U.S. national security strategy, "we are strongly promoting China's participation in regional security mechanisms to reassure its neighbors and assuage its own security concerns."¹¹

Up to now, there have been few critical assessments of the forum's progress and prospects. Most commentators applaud the fact that ARF exists at all. The absence of substantive progress is generally written off as the result of conscious decisions within the forum to proceed at a pace that is comfortable to all participants. Dialogue, a spirit of cooperativeness, and consensus-building should be the benchmarks, in the view of many who have looked at the forum, not decision-making, problem-solving and actual keeping of the peace. The expectation is that ARF will evolve eventually into a serious security forum—though when and by what route are seldom discussed specifically.

Yet, the globe is littered with regional organizations and forums that ostensibly speak to security concerns but with no practical meaning or effect—dialogue, consultation, and security cooperation are the mantra of them all. Security dialogue can be an important step forward, but it can also be (and often has been in history) an excuse for inaction on issues of substance. Dialogue can build confidence, but not necessarily. The world had had its share of confidence-sapping negotiations and dialogues that confuse more than clarify security relationships. Asia (and ARF) would not be the first (or alone) to build sandcastles that fade with time and tide.

This paper is concerned with the forum's prospects. It looks at ARF's origins, what the forum is about at present (mid-1995), where it may be plausibly headed over the next several years, and with what near and longer term implications for U.S. regional defense policy in the Asia-Pacific. The discussion also considers measures that might be taken to strengthen and focus the forum in the near term ahead.

II. LEADING UP

The debate about “multilateralizing” Asia-Pacific security dealings evolved in three stages—as a belated Cold War issue, as an initiative launched principally by Australia and Canada as the Cold War wound down, and as a preemptive move by ASEAN members to co-opt other proposals for a regional forum with one that would function under the institutional umbrella and watchful eye of ASEAN.

NON-LEGACY

There was not much to begin with. Nothing like the elaborate multinational alliances, organizations, and forums that took form in Europe after World War II—NATO, Warsaw Treaty Organization, Western European Union, (WEU), and later, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)—took root in Asian soil. One reason was the absence of a shared definition of threat. The Soviet Union’s reach was always truncated in the Asia-Pacific, and none of the Asian Leninist states, China included, threatened more than very immediate neighbors. But the Asia-Pacific also lacked the cultural and political unity to forge a durable multilateral security structure. There have been no all-Asia multilateral organizations or agreements spanning the region, and the few arrangements that have been specific to parts of the region have had a spotty and uneven record. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) never acquired the structure or status of NATO, and was disbanded in 1975.¹ Although ostensibly a security sub-grouping, ASEAN (until very recently) assiduously avoided military/security issues.

The South Pacific Forum (SPF)—comprising Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific island states—has been active in security affairs sporadically, but SPF has not aspired to be a security forum as such, and is widely regarded elsewhere in the region as marginal and peripheral. Apart from the modest “Five Power Defense Arrangement” (FPDA) in Southeast Asia linking Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Singapore, and the ANZUS pact (which, in fact, was always little more than a nominal cover for a bilateral U.S.-Australian security relationship), the alliances and security

arrangements of Cold War Asia were bilateral constructs on both the communist and the Western sides of the line.[†]

The Asia-Pacific region also is encumbered by threshold diplomatic obstacles that Europe managed to get past decades ago. In the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the Europeans, in principle, settled territorial and sovereignty disputes arising from or left over by World War II.² Asia has had no similar watershed in establishing region-wide diplomatic cross-recognition. (In 1995, several pairs of key actors—China-Taiwan, North-South Korea, the United States-North Korea—do not have diplomatic relations with one another.)³ Indeed, with conflicting claims to the southern Kurile Islands, Japan and the Soviet Union have yet to conclude a treaty ending World War II. Elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific, to a long list of long-disputed territorial claims, the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS-III) in 1982 added grounds for more disputes over sea areas and sea beds.⁴

In a similar vein, there is no Asian history of multilateral arms control and confidence-building akin to what took place in the later decades in Cold War Europe—no Asian equivalent of Europe's multistate conventional force reductions (CFE) agreement, and nothing remotely similar to the pan-European security dialogues and confidence-building measures (CBMs) of CSCE.[‡] Although states in East Asia have been signatories to a number of global conventions—the Nuclear Nonproliferation and the Outer Space treaties are examples—there have been very few agreements that deal directly with regional security issues. The 1988 Regional Air Safety Agreement between Japan, the United States and the Soviet Union following the Korean Airlines (KAL-007) shootdown, and the Sino-Soviet border agreements of 1990 and 1991, are perhaps the closest East Asia has come to regionally specific arms control-like arrangements.

The kinds of pan-nationalism that captured political imaginations elsewhere in the 1960s and 1970s did not take hold in Asia. Although several East Asian states enjoyed an identification with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Cold War—Indonesia was a founding member, and prided itself on a leadership role in NAM—transnational movements and organizations had limited appeal in Asia as a whole. Europeans spoke of a “common” European “home” (and later, a common security “identity”) and aspired,

[†] Farther afield, and beyond the scope here, is the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), a subregional consultative arrangement in South Asia which, in principle, could play a role in South Asian security issues, but which has not done so to serious effect thus far.

[‡] The terms “confidence-building measure” (CBM) and “confidence- and security-building measure” (CSBM), both coined in the Cold War European context, are used interchangeably in these pages.

however chimerically, to “common” foreign and security policies as the Cold War ended; Asians did not. No Asian counterpart to constructions like the Pan-African Congress or the League of Arab States took root. The closest the Asian states came to regionalist assertions in security affairs were periodic affirmations of the goodness of regional zones of peace and neutrality, which broadly meant asking the superpowers to take their Cold War (especially their naval forces and mobile nuclear weapons) elsewhere.

The United Nations was not a large factor in East Asian security thinking, diplomacy, and politics. Although UN agencies have been involved in Asia from the early UN years, UN roles historically have been limited.⁵ Whereas states in other regions found in the UN a congenial forum for expressing interests and airing complaints about the industrialized world, the Asians mostly stood apart.

To the extent that there was an “externalizing” influence in the region’s security affairs, it was provided by the Soviet Union, China, and the United States. Moscow and Beijing played the role of patron, often in competition with each other, in bilateral treaties of friendship, security, and cooperation with clients ranging from North Korea and Vietnam to India and Pakistan. The clients themselves had little to do with one another. On the “Western” side, the United States operated as the hub of a wheel of bilateral pacts—with Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and, for a time, Taiwan. America’s allies in the region worked closely with the United States in military and security matters (the treaties of alliance authorized, though they did not require, the stationing of U.S. forces on the ally’s territory). Seldom, however, did America’s allies deal closely with one another either.

BELATED COLD WAR ISSUE

Although Moscow preached the virtues of regional security dialogues, consultations, and confidence-building from the late 1950s onward, the Asia-Pacific did not rank high on the Soviet Union’s regional agenda. In 1969, General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev proposed an “all-Asia” security and cooperation forum to “consolidate peace in Asia and the Pacific,” but the proposition went nowhere (the Soviet aim at the time was chiefly to isolate China), and Moscow retreated. From Brezhnev to Chernenko, Europe and Third World Soviet-U.S. competition elsewhere were the priorities.

Though late in the game, the Soviet Union rediscovered the Asia-Pacific under Mikhail Gorbachev. In an energetic diplomatic offensive beginning in 1985, Moscow resurrected and pursued Brezhnev’s earlier prescription as part of Gorbachev’s broader campaign to better establish the Soviet Union in Asia-Pacific affairs. Gorbachev’s

regional diplomacy—which was, in fact, a grab bag of agendas—has been well documented elsewhere.⁶ Although the details need not concern us here, three recurrent themes warrant mention, because of their relevance to what came after.

- One was to eliminate “regional hotbeds of tension by means of political settlement.” In this, Moscow sought to capitalize on a large omission in the Asia-Pacific region’s post-World War II history—the absence of diplomatic cross-recognition of national borders reflected in Europe’s Helsinki Accord of 1975. Gorbachev never explicitly called for an Asian equivalent of the Helsinki Accord, but something similar to it was the implication.
- The second Soviet theme was to emphasize confidence-building measures in the military field. In part, this was a bilateral (Soviet-American) naval arms control agenda by another name—the confidence-building that Moscow had in mind was chiefly naval, and the only navy besides its own that mattered was the American Navy in the Pacific. But it was also a broader effort to recast the frames of reference of Asia-Pacific security away from its confrontational aspects, where the Soviet Union fared poorly politically, to an area in which Soviet diplomacy had better chances of success. Confidence-building played to a growing sentiment in parts of the Asia-Pacific to soften the manifestations of the Cold War. CBMs promised to do something about superpower nuclear weaponry in the vicinity (and thus alleviate local jitters about naval nuclear weapons in particular), and to broadly constrain movements and concentrations of superpower military forces.
- Third was a more polished version of Brezhnev’s earlier prescription—convocation of “an all-Asia conference for a multinational search for constructive solutions.” In Gorbachev’s formulation, the Soviet Union “will aspire to give more dynamism to its bilateral relations with all countries situated there [Asia-Pacific], without exception.” But “no state can have security without equal security for all,” and “with the growing interdependence of states, the differences in economic and social systems, ideologies and world outlooks must not be an obstacle to broader mutually advantageous cooperation between all the countries concerned.”⁷ In a well-publicized address in Vladivostok in 1986, Gorbachev invoked Europe’s CSCE as a possible model for the Asia-Pacific in structuring an all-Asia security dialogue.⁸

This, of course, would mean a prominent Soviet seat at the table. In potential, it also represented a challenge to the American network of bilateral military alliances in the region. Near the end, Moscow argued that such a forum need not compete with or undermine America’s bilateral security arrangements in the Asia-Pacific. There was little question, however, that the Soviet Union had such an aim in mind until close to the end.⁹

Although the United States was interested in what Gorbachev had to say about new approaches to security, confidence-building, and arms control in Europe and the Middle East, it found little to its liking in the Soviet Union's ideas for the Asia-Pacific. Measures that might constrain U.S. naval operations, even seemingly innocuous information exchanges, were non-discussible so far as the United States was concerned.¹⁰ Soviet-style CBMs in the Asia-Pacific were viewed skeptically in any case. Moscow's "so-called confidence building measures" in Asia would only "weaken strategic deterrence," U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz told a Stanford University group in 1987; they "won't close off opportunities for military aggression or reduce temptations for political intimidation."¹¹

New multilateral structures, in the U.S. view, were unneeded and inappropriate. For one thing, America's bilateral security arrangements in the Asia-Pacific were "confidence-builders" in their own right. "In our view," Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney told the Japanese, "Asia is primarily a maritime theater, lacking the overarching alliance structures of Europe. The United States is the region's balancing wheel. That is why we enjoy genuine and widespread support for U.S. air and naval presence in the Pacific."¹² All-Asia forums simply would not work. "[W]e remain doubtful about the utility of an all-Pacific security grouping," in the words of Richard Solomon of the State Department. "The sources of tension that remain in the region—indeed, the nature of the security challenges we anticipate in the years ahead—do not easily lend themselves to region-wide solutions."¹³

For the United States, there was the additional concern about naval limitations. In the U.S. view, new security and confidence-building arrangements in the Asia-Pacific region would open the door to naval arms control in the region. "[W]e don't want to allow the Soviets to get either the framework or the agenda for the security of Asia," U.S. Secretary of State James Baker wrote the Australian Foreign Minister in late 1990. "Advocacy of a 'common security approach' provides the wedge they need to achieve their long-held goal of naval arms control in the Pacific. Constraints on our navy would not, in my view, enhance regional security at all."¹⁴

"CSCA"

Although Moscow made no immediate headway, the notion of "regionalizing" the Asia-Pacific's security horizons resonated positively among a few interested states. If countries in the region were to have an effective say in their own and global security affairs, they were going to have to, in this view, conduct their military and security affairs

on a more coherent, multinational basis. The United States remained opposed, but in this second round, the debate began to move beyond the stylized formulations of the Cold War.

Europe's CSCE appeared to some to be an appropriate model. It was regionally inclusive, not a military alliance, strove for cooperation in the security dealings of its members, and was closely associated with arms control and confidence-building in the later Cold War years. Why not, then, a CSCA? Australia and Canada were the principal enthusiasts. In July 1990, echoing Gorbachev's earlier musings about a CSCE for Asia, Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans called for "new institutional processes that might be capable of evolving, in Asia as in Europe, as a framework for addressing and resolving security problems."

In Europe, wildly implausible as this would have seemed even just a year ago, the central institutional framework for pursuing common security has become the [CSCE] ... Why should there not be developed a similar institutional framework, a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia, for addressing the apparently intractable security issues, which exist in this region?¹⁵

Joe Clark, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, voiced similar views. "[We] might consider a Pacific adaption [sic] of the [CSCE]. One area for initial exploration may be the so-called 'confidence and security building measures,' which contributed so much to the transformation of Europe since the Helsinki Conference."¹⁶

But importing a European construct drew mostly negative reactions from the East Asians. "We have to be careful," Ali Alitas, Indonesia's Foreign Minister, warned at the time, "not to think that certain things that work in one region ought to be transplanted to another. We would be rather cautious in proceeding too fast to an overall security conference."¹⁷ There were widespread doubts that the Asia-Pacific was ready to "go regional" in military and security affairs. China, which viewed Gorbachev's Asia strategy to be simply an effort to push the United States out of the region and assume for itself the position of dominant power, characterized all such thinking as, at best, premature. "Progress should be made gradually from partial to whole, from bilateral to multilateral and from rudimentary forms to higher-level forms."¹⁸ According to Ambassador Yang Cheng Yu, efforts "should be made bilaterally at first, to be followed by efforts at smaller region, and then larger region in a multilateral context."¹⁹

"There has to be a basis of common interests strong enough to make the countries in the region perceive security problems as common concerns," Professor Shigekatsu

Kondo of Tokyo's National Institute for Defense Studies ventured, and the "Asia Pacific Region has not reached such a stage." Furthermore:

There exist a lot of differences in security environments between the Asia Pacific Region and Europe. CSCE was created out of efforts to ease tensions between two hostile camps in Europe, which was the main battlefield of the Cold War. Asian countries have not shared common threats due to differences in such factors as geographic location, degree of economic development, social integration, and historical background . . . [W]e cannot directly apply a European model to the different security environment of the Asia-Pacific region.²⁰

The United States no more liked the idea when it originated with allies than when Moscow was the sponsor. "It is preferable to adapt existing proven mechanisms to meet the challenges of changing circumstances before creating new ones," Solomon cautioned. "In evaluating the various suggestions for a new security mechanism for East Asia, we should recall the unsuccessful history of collective defense arrangements in the region since 1945. . . Asia has proven remarkably resistant to efforts to fashion all-encompassing security regimes."²¹

Within a year, Australia and Canada had largely backed off. According to Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke in May 1991:

We do not think it is appropriate or necessary at this stage to propose the establishment of new regional forums or institutions for discussing security issues. It is not yet possible to say whether such forums or institutions would have a useful role. In particular we must recognize that we cannot translate the emerging European security architecture into our own region. The mosaic of cultures, cleavages and conflicts in Asia is much too complex for that. Rather there is reason to hope that a regional consensus about the shape of a regional security system will eventually emerge through an increasing pattern of bilateral and multilateral informal discussions.²²

About the same time, Clark of Canada protested that he was not "advocating that we transplant mechanisms that have been successful elsewhere, notably in Europe, into the unique political and cultural context of the Asia Pacific Region."²³ Canada announced its "Initiative for a North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue" in April 1991. Ottawa stressed that the initiative envisioned "a process, not a forum or event," was not "an attempt to apply a copy of a European confidence building and security framework for Asia," and was not "a call for a multilateral negotiating session on land, air, or naval arms limitation in the North Pacific."²⁴

SUBREGIONALISM

In arguing against Asia-wide forums, Solomon of the U.S. State Department proposed that “it is most useful to view East Asia and the Pacific as three subregional security zones: Northeast Asia; Southeast Asia; and the South Pacific. Each sub-region has its own set of security issues and players largely independent of one another.”²⁵ One year later, in what seemed to come close to the emerging Australian government view, Desmond Ball of the Australian National University (ANU) and Commodore “Sam” Bateman of the Australian Navy, made essentially the same point: “[T]he Asia/Pacific region is really a collection of sub-regions, each with different geostrategic circumstances—Northeast Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Southwest Pacific—and security cooperation is best approached at this sub-regional level.”²⁶

Initiatives in this direction already were being offered, especially regarding Asia’s northeast. Non-governmental analysts proposed various approaches to regional confidence-building and safety-enhancement in Northeast Asia.²⁷ Governments also were active. In October 1989, Mongolia proposed the creation of a permanent consultative mechanism to include Mongolia, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, the two Koreas, the United States, and Canada to address, among other things, “military relations.” The same month, South Korea called for a “consultative conference” to deal with security issues, to include the United States, the USSR, Japan, China, and the two Koreas. In April 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev proposed yet another forum to address regional security issues—this one a five-nation venture consisting of the Soviet Union, the United States, China, Japan, and India. Canada’s North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue Initiative aimed to include China, the Soviet Union, the United States, Japan, the two Koreas, and Canada.²⁸

But apart from non-governmental dialogues, nothing came of the proposals for the northeast. Tokyo wanted satisfaction from the Soviet Union on the disputed southern Kurile Islands before it would consider anything else; Moscow was unable/unwilling to deliver. Seoul alternated between liking and abhorring the idea of regionalizing Korean peninsula security issues; Pyongyang was hostile. Beijing and Washington, for separate but fundamentally similar reasons, frowned on the underlying concept.

ASEAN

The center of multilateralizing activity in the early 1990s became, instead, South East Asia—specifically, ASEAN. This was logical, but it was also curious. It was logical because ASEAN already was a sub-regional security grouping of sorts. It was curious

because ASEAN had a deeply rooted aversion to discussing anything having to do with military and security affairs.

ASEAN had been something of a Cold War anomaly.²⁹ A sub-regional group set up in 1967 to create a more enduring settlement of the 1963-1966 boundary demarcation dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia, ASEAN was “the institutional product of regional conflict resolution”—its founding members “drawn together by a recognition of the self-defeating and wasteful nature of contention among neighbouring states of a corresponding conservative political disposition.”³⁰ But ASEAN did not act like its members had much in common in security matters. Though the association thought of itself as a “security community,” it rejected from the outset any formal alliance, and shied clear of any trappings of a military security organization.³¹ When ASEAN members dealt with one another on military matters, they did so outside ASEAN.³²

ASEAN coexisted somewhat awkwardly with the FPDA, which was established specifically to provide security guarantees to two ASEAN members (Singapore and Malaysia) against resurgent military threats by a third (Indonesia). Two of ASEAN’s members (Thailand and the Philippines) were tied to the United States in formal security pacts. At the same time, ASEAN had a NAM-like enthusiasm for striking a security posture independent of the superpower rivalry. This found early and abiding expression in a concept called “ZOPFAN”—a self-declared ASEAN-area “Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality.” Like the Indian Ocean “zone of peace” adopted by the NAM at Lusaka in 1970, ZOPFAN, inaugurated by ASEAN in November 1971, was in part a proposed nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ); in part, an invitation to the superpowers to take their Cold War elsewhere. Beyond this—which was all inconsequentially declaratory—it was hard to judge what specifically ZOPFAN was supposed to entail and accomplish. The ASEAN states were nowhere near agreement on key aspects. Singapore and Thailand stressed the need for continued external security links with the United States; Malaysia and Indonesia were far more pro-neutralist on the question.³³

Still, ZOPFAN was home-grown and preached a form of self-reliance in the face of big power military activity in the region—and this seems to account for much of its appeal. Not surprisingly, the NAM looked on with favor. At NAM’s Seventh Conference in New Delhi in 1983, non-aligned heads of state and government “noted with approval the efforts being made for the early establishment of a [ZOPFAN] in the [South East Asia] region, and called upon all states to give these efforts their fullest support.” Though ZOPFAN was an assertion, not a program, its ASEAN enthusiasts, Malaysia in particular, were confident about its eventual implementation.

Following a lull—the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia in 1978 took the wind from these sails³⁴—an ASEAN Working Group on ZOPFAN was reactivated in 1984, and, at the third ASEAN summit in 1987, was directed towards the early realization of ZOPFAN and a NWFZ. According to the Malaysian Ambassador to the United States in 1987: “The concept of ZOPFAN continues to remain the blueprint for the future, and obstacles that now stand in the way of its actualization have served to convince ASEAN of its validity.”³⁵ ZOPFAN, according to Ali Alatas of Indonesia in 1991, is an “evolutionary process” representing “the regional, multilateral framework within which it is hoped to promote national and regional resilience and to seek the disentanglement of the region from the contending strategic designs of the great powers.”³⁶

Apart from periodic affirmations of ZOPFAN, ASEAN had little to say about military and security issues involving its members. For awhile, it also stayed clear of the debate about all-Asia and subregional security forums. ASEAN as a group was not in favor of the Soviet, Australian, or Canadian forays into Asia-Pacific security, and never took seriously the Mongolian and Korean initiatives. Among other things, the variously proposed forums meant giving a voice to outsiders in Southeast Asia’s security business. One concern was that ASEAN would “lose its identity” in larger forums.³⁷ The larger worry was that a CSCE-type forum would introduce the contentious issue of human rights, a prominent theme in CSCE, along with pressures from Western countries on social, political and environmental issues. ASEAN was unanimous in wanting no part of any of this.

The same self-protective instinct, however, led to a shift in course in 1991. It was better to set the terms than to risk being run over by them. Prodded by Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, who argued that ASEAN needed to counter “out-of-region” security initiatives with its own proposals, ASEAN Foreign Ministers announced that they were now in favor of using ASEAN as a forum to discuss Asia-Pacific security issues, and were contemplating changes in the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) structure to allow participation by China, the Soviet Union/Russia, and possibly Burma (Myanmar) and the Indo-China states.

Although the United States was not notably keen on the idea—in Secretary of State James Baker’s words, “We have tried and true, tested security arrangements and we ought to be careful about changing those security arrangements or discarding them for something else unless we are absolutely certain that something else is better and will work”—Japan, which in the past endorsed the U.S. position, unexpectedly supported the

ASEAN proposal. According to Foreign Minister Nakayama in 1991, "It would be meaningful and timely to use the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference as a process of political discussions designed to improve the sense of security among us."³⁸ Thus encouraged, ASEAN went ahead. At the ASEAN summit in Manila in July 1992, security issues were directly included in the agenda for the first time. One year later, ASEAN established the ARF and immediately broadened ARF's membership. Though ASEAN-sponsored, ARF was intended to satisfy interests in "regionalizing" the security discussion.³⁹

ALTERNATIVES

Still, ASEAN was not the first choice of all who wanted to see such a forum. Some doubted whether Southeast Asia—historically the tail of a dog that gets wagged in the north in security matters—is a logical place to begin; others, whether an all-region (or nearly all-region) forum would be realistic in an area as vast and diverse as the Asia-Pacific. It was not at all clear that North East Asian states would feel comfortable using ARF as a forum, or that ARF could or would deal effectively with security issues outside the immediate ASEAN area.⁴⁰ ASEAN's own record in security cooperation is not spectacular. ASEAN members still pursue essentially one-on-one security dealings, and none as yet has acquired much of a habit of "transparency" in military affairs.⁴¹ Moreover, the major powers in the region are linked to ASEAN only tangentially as "partners." In this respect, ASEAN struck some as inherently small beans and peripheral.⁴²

To some, APEC (the forum for "Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation") seemed the stronger claimant as a security venue—"As the centerpiece of the region's emerging economic architecture, APEC packs a greater punch than ASEAN."⁴³ Begun in 1989 as an informal consultative mechanism for the discussion of growth, trade, and interdependence issues in the Asia-Pacific, APEC has developed into a formal institution involving all major economies in the region. The United States, China and Japan are full APEC members, not dialogue or consultation partners.⁴⁴ But no one with clout within APEC, including the United States, has seemed eager to prod the institution into Asia-Pacific security matters. APEC, in any case, has drawbacks of its own. Like ASEAN, it leaves important states out. APEC's 1993 decision to include Mexico and Chile among its members, while excluding Russia, India, Vietnam, and Burma, is problematic on this score.

Others argued for dealing with Northeast Asia, if not first, then separately. Northeast Asia is still the most vital and volatile security zone in the region. The interests of the region's major powers—China, Japan, Russia, and the United States—directly intersect there. U.S. military presence in the region is mostly military presence in Northeast Asia—especially so since the U.S. exited its bases in the Philippines in 1991/1992. Unlike the mostly formless shape of the rest of the region's security landscape, the Korean peninsula remains a place with fixed lines of confrontation, where small things could grow very big very quickly. In promoting a North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue, Canada in particular pressed the case for focusing on and organizing in terms of Northeast Asia. But China was cool to the proposition, and the United States, at the time, was ambivalent at best. Moreover, the Korean peninsula hardly could be ignored, but, in the event, Korea was an obstacle to as well as a logical reason for multilateralizing security discussions in Asia's northeast—Seoul was of a mixed mind; Pyongyang was opaque.

Notably, the UN went largely unmentioned as these developments took form. ASEAN members contributed infantry and other military and civilian personnel to the UN peacekeeping operation in Cambodia (UNTAC), and Japan made its first overseas military deployment since World War II as part of the UN effort. UNTAC's spadework in Cambodia could still come apart, but, up to now, nearly all assessments rate it a qualified success. Some believe UNTAC's success has come precisely because the operation "has been far less tainted by regional squabbling and jockeying for position than it likely would have been had it been organized by a regional organization."⁴⁵ Champions of a UN role in the region's security affairs, however, have been relatively few.⁴⁶

REGIONAL FORUM

With ARF's establishment in 1993, the debate essentially entered the third, and current, round. In a sense, ARF is CSCA by another name and route—although, with not all Asia-Pacific countries a part of it, it is less than "all-Asia" in composition.

Proposals for an even larger construct have made no headway. Kazakhstan sought in 1992/1993 to elicit interest in a CSCA that would encompass both East and Central Asia, but the proposition was greeted with little more than polite notice. Russia sought to give some substance to CSCE's (and its own) rhetoric about a cooperative security zone encompassing the Northern Hemisphere "from Vladivostok to Vancouver" ("V-to-V")—that is, expanding the already-expanded CSCE (which now includes all of the former

Soviet republics) to take in East Asia and the North Pacific as well—but no serious momentum developed behind this idea either.⁴⁷ Having taken notions of inclusiveness fairly far already in CSCE and ARF, neither the Europeans nor the Asians have shown much enthusiasm for bigger mega-forums.

SHIFTS IN U.S. POLICY

For most of the period covered above, there was nothing nuanced about the U.S. position. To the United States, multilateralism in Asian-Pacific security affairs was a bad idea, plainly and simply. In a framework emphasizing “Integration in Economics; Diversity in Defense,” U.S. policy distinguished between economic and trade dealings, where the United States favored greater collaboration along multilateral lines, and security affairs, where U.S. policy discouraged multilateralism and promoted instead the continuing viability of America’s bilateral arrangements.⁴⁸

In the U.S. view, the Asia-Pacific region was, and is, simply too vast geographically and diverse politically to allow for meaningful “regional” security discussions and dealings. The United States also viewed security multilateralism as direct competition with America’s network of bilateral security ties, and, in this sense saw the options essentially in either-or terms. Furthermore, with one seat among many at the table and a vote with equal weight and effect of that of the smallest participating country, a multilateral security forum would inadequately reflect (and would serve to marginalize) the U.S. security role.

Near the end of its term, however, the Bush administration softened U.S. opposition to a degree. In November 1991, Secretary of State James Baker announced that the United States would explore multilateral action with the Soviet Union, China, and Japan to deal with security problems of the Korean peninsula.⁴⁹ In a *Foreign Affairs* article that winter, Baker made a cautious bow toward the employment of multilateral mechanisms, not as “fully constituted international entities,” but to solve specific problems in the Asia-Pacific as they arise. “Asian security increasingly is driven from a flexible, ad hoc set of political and defense interactions,” Baker wrote. In such circumstances, the United States “should be attentive to the possibilities of ... multilateral action without locking ourselves into an overly structured approach. In the Asia-Pacific community, form should follow function.”⁵⁰

The Clinton administration took office with far less *a priori* skepticism about multilateralism, and signed on to ARF in 1993. While the existing network of U.S. bilateral security relationships was still to be the bedrock of U.S. regional defense policy,

the Clinton administration was committed to “fresh approaches and structures of cooperation,” and a “willingness to explore ... consultations and dialogue, which may lead eventually to new institutions.”⁵¹

Unlike its predecessors, the Clinton administration did not view bilateral alliances and multilateral forums as an either-or choice, or multilateralism as a threat to existing alliances. In President Clinton’s words, “Some in the United States have been reluctant to enter into regional security dialogues in Asia, but I see this as a way to supplement our alliances and forward military presence, not to supplant them.”⁵² (In DoD’s phrase, “United States interest in developing layers of multilateral ties in the region will not undermine the significance of core bilateral ties.”)⁵³

Within the region, that issue had largely disappeared by 1993 in any case. Although a few academics in the region spoke of “dealignment” as a necessary concomitant of multilateralizing regional security along cooperative lines,⁵⁴ this was little more than a debater’s point. Evans’ earlier prescription—“It is not a matter of cutting holes in any existing security net, but rather strengthening existing trends, weaving additional threads and extending the net’s coverage”⁵⁵—appeared to be widely accepted.

The Clinton administration also has not drawn the either-or distinctions between regional and subregional formats that its predecessors had. In the administration’s view, both avenues warrant support. The administration’s national security strategy envisions developing “multiple new arrangements to meet multiple threats and opportunities. These arrangements can function like overlapping plates of armor, individually providing protection and together covering the full body of our common security concerns.”⁵⁶ In this connection, DoD continues to see value in establishing a separate subregional dialogue for Northeast Asia, along with but apart from ARF:

Historically, Northeast Asia is the area where great power interests have clashed most sharply. Consequently, the United States believes that the unique long term security challenges in Northeast Asia argue strongly for the creation of a separate sub-regional security dialogue for Northeast Asia.⁵⁷

III. STARTING OFF

At Bangkok in 1994, the participants agreed that the forum had enabled countries within the region to have dialogue and consultations with each other on "political and security issues of common interest and concern." Participating countries saw ARF as a body capable of making "significant contributions to efforts towards confidence building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region."¹

Ali Alitas of Indonesia and several others raised ZOPFAN as a discussion item, proposing a widening of some of the concepts embodied in it, but the Bangkok participants agreed instead simply to "endorse the purposes and principles of ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, as a code of conduct governing relations between states and a unique diplomatic instrument for regional confidence building, preventive diplomacy, and political and security cooperation." The then-underway U.S.-North Korea negotiation on nuclear issues was noted and welcomed; ARF participants endorsed the early resumption of North-South dialogue on the Korean peninsula.²

In addition to the possible "further study" of confidence- and security-building, nuclear nonproliferation, peacekeeping cooperation, including a regional peacekeeping training centre, exchanges of non-classified military information, maritime security issues and preventive diplomacy, the Bangkok participants agreed to:

- Study the comprehensive concept of security, including its economic and social aspects, as it pertains to the Asia-Pacific region.
- Study other relevant internationally recognized norms and principles pertaining to international and security cooperation for their possible contribution to regional political and security cooperation.
- Promote the eventual participation of all ARF countries in the UN Conventional Arms Register.
- Convene, if necessary, informal meetings of officials to study all relevant papers and suggestions to move the ARF process forward.

All of this was formative and very general. The Bangkok meeting itself lasted a little more than three hours. Although participants, such as Australia's Evans, applauded the participants' willingness to talk about specific problems—"[E]verything that's of

difficulty or perceived difficulty in the region has been touched upon by one or another, and, very often, by many more than that, Ministers”³—nothing of substance was decided. Participants aired their concerns, but in a setting that was deliberately unstructured.

TREADING LIGHTLY

With its eclectic character, there is little sense of focus or direction in the Bangkok agenda. Although everything in it can be said to relate one way or another to regional security and stability, the linkages between subjects are difficult to see; the sum of the parts has a decidedly *ad hoc* flavor. In any case, all of this is tentative. The agreement at Bangkok was only to authorize further study. There was no commitment on any participant’s part to any general or specific course of action.

Some degree of haziness and tentativeness was to be expected. The forum had not been created to meet a specific security challenge or crisis, or called together with an agreed set of issues and purposes in mind. China was (and is) skeptical, and this has contributed to a cautious, go-slow attitude among the ASEAN countries. “The process has just started and we have to get the confidence of China,” according to one East Asian analyst. “If we push too hard, it’s not going to help.”⁴

The idea is to build a consensus over time. Consultation, confidence-building, and military cooperation are to serve as building blocks for enhancing security over the long run—providing for a widening of the security horizons of states in the region and their military forces, and a way of building relationships in the absence of immediate crises that could be useful in averting and/or managing crises that might arise in the future. “We in Asean don’t want to move too fast or too slow,” in the words of Malaysia’s Kamil. “We need to strike a balance, so that when we’re sitting around a table we feel comfortable with each other. . . Then we can move forward another step.”⁵

Still, the construct is gun-shy in basic conception. Issues that are in any way contentious are off-the-table. If there is a discernible, albeit *de facto*, consensus about the forum’s substantive agenda, it is concerned with what will *not* be addressed.

- Although in principle ARF will engage in “dialogue and consultation on *political and security issues* of common interest and concern,”⁶ political issues will not be discussed. Human rights, forms of governance, and political/social issues are out of bounds—at least in the foreseeable future. Unlike Europe’s CSCE, there will be no separate “baskets” to deal with non-security subjects.

- *Territorial disputes, including the South China Sea, are not likely to be addressed.* An Asia-Pacific version of Europe's 1975 Helsinki Conference—in which sovereignty and frontier disputes might be put to rest, once and for all across the breadth of the region—is beyond the pale. Specific disputes, nearly all of which are bilateral in character to begin with, are off the table for the foreseeable future.
- *Prophylactic measures that might regulate or constrain the acquisition of military systems and weaponry, or constrain defense spending, in the interest of forestalling or moderating a conventional arms race will not be considered.* However much states may be concerned about arms buildups by neighbors, they seem disinclined to open up discussions of measures that might put a crimp on their own freedom to build and modernize forces. At most, ARF will consider at future annual meetings imposing non-intrusive “transparencies” on acquisitions and force levels and capabilities.
- *Arms control (cutting the levels and capabilities of existing forces) and operational CBMs (aimed at regulating and/or constraining military exercises, deployments, and operations) are off-the-table.* The confidence-building that ARF will pursue will be informational and chiefly political in character. Military force structures, deployments and operations will be unaffected by ARF's consultations.
- *The forum will “study” nuclear nonproliferation in the time ahead.* Although in the end all Asia-Pacific states signed on to the permanent renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in May 1995, ARF had no role in this. At the same time, earlier (Cold War-era) interest in regional NWFZs, which in theory could supplement the global regime, is in little evidence within the ARF orbit, and is not among the subjects identified for later study.⁷

Although “preventive diplomacy” is a putative goal, there is as yet no agreement, and no evident discussion, about how ARF as ARF might go about this in the face of an actual dispute, armed conflict, or military aggression. In the ARF “concept paper” drafted by ASEAN in May 1995, the forum's program is to proceed in three stages, from “confidence building” to “preventive diplomacy” and eventually, to “the elaboration of approaches to the resolution of conflicts.” There has been no discussion of a timetable for moving through these stages. Pledged only to elaborating “approaches” to conflict resolution in the later stage, ARF may still be at a considerable distance short of actually managing security crises—in *The Economist's* phrase, “Actually resolving conflicts is, apparently, impossibly ambitious [for ARF].”⁸

TERRITORIAL ISSUES

Aversion to dealing directly with the merits or the negotiation of territorial issues in the region is not surprising. Even in the brief heydays of CSCA, territorial issues were considered so sensitive to the parties concerned that explicit disclaimers were regularly offered that regional security forums would stay clear of these matters.⁹ Multilateralizing the negotiation and settlement of territorial disputes has almost no appeal within the region. Much the same holds true for most of the region's specific territorial disputes. Nearly all of these are bilateral in character, and there is little discernible interest in "internationalizing" their discussion and settlement.

Territorial/Jurisdictional Disputes, Asia-Pacific Region

Korean Peninsula
China-Taiwan
China-Vietnam border
China-Russia (Amur River border)
China-India territorial
India-Pakistan (Kashmir, other)
Thailand-Burma border
Sipadan, Sebatik, Ligitan (Malaysia, Indonesia)
Senkaku Island (China, Japan)
Paracel Islands (China, Vietnam)
Southern Kuriles (Russia, Japan)
Limbang (Malaysia, Brunei)
Pulau Batu Putih (Singapore, Malaysia)
Sabah (Malaysia, Philippines)
Continental shelf (Vietnam, Indonesia)
Off-shore boundary demarcations (Vietnam, Malaysia)
Spratly Islands (China, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, Philippines)

The one possible (though still unlikely) exception has been the Spratly Islands dispute in the South China Sea—the region's only sovereignty/jurisdictional issue that is not strictly bilateral—where there has been less clear-cut unanimity on the merits of multilateral approaches. The Philippines has been interested in establishing an international conference to deal with conflicting sovereignty/jurisdictional claims to islands and sea areas in the South China Sea, and had proposed inclusion of the Spratly issue on ARF's agenda. But other ASEAN members have been less enthusiastic (three of the five disputants in the South China Sea are ASEAN countries), and China's unequivocal opposition to multilateralizing discussions of the competing claims effectively killed the idea in the run-up to ARF's formation in 1993, and kept the issue off the table in 1994.¹⁰

Although China's occupation of Mischief Reef (claimed also by the Philippines) in the Spratly chain in early 1995 seems to have galvanized the ASEAN members toward a multilateral discussion with China—the Mischief Reef takeover prompted ASEAN as a group to criticize China's actions in the South China Sea during a senior officials meeting in Hangzhou in April 1995—the odds remain long that any clear position on the Spratly will be on ARF's agenda any time soon.¹¹ At the 1994 Bangkok meeting, the Chinese

Ambassador declared explicitly that the disputed areas fall completely under Chinese sovereignty, and that the subject is wholly inappropriate for discussion in forums such as ARF.¹² In China's view, if there are to be discussions of claims in the South China Sea, "negotiations should be bilateral, rather than multilateral. Settlement of the disputes should be carried out one country after another and one area after another, rather than by 'package' settlement."¹³

That Beijing will soften its basic policy regarding South China Sea claims is not probable any time soon.¹⁴ Following the Hangzhou meeting in April, China assured ASEAN countries that it will abide by the terms of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS-III) in asserting maritime claims, and offered to discuss differences in the South China Sea with all seven ASEAN members. But China has not relaxed its insistence that its own claims are a matter of "indisputable sovereignty," and UNCLOS, in any case, is not a mechanism for resolving sovereignty issues (China also has not ratified UNCLOS-III).¹⁵ While seeming to open the door to some form of multilateral discussion, China is not likely to view ARF to be an acceptable venue—Beijing has insisted that outside powers (like the United States) should be in no way involved in South China Sea negotiations.

ARMS BUILDUPS AND PROLIFERATION

Although some hope that ARF might eventually play a role in constraining regional arms races, in this area, too, there is reluctance to move quickly or directly. There is little question that the region is on an unprecedented arms-acquisition spree. Between 1985 and 1992, defense spending in the region grew an inflation-adjusted 22 percent. At present, Asia-Pacific defense expenditures exceed those of the Middle East and almost match Europe's.¹⁶ But there is no consensus on what all this means. Most countries in the region attribute increased spending to force modernization, and reject suggestions that an arms race may be under way.¹⁷ Others see arms-racing as, if not a present fact, then at least a worrisome possibility in the time ahead. Australia's foreign minister has made the point that the climate itself is conducive: "[T]he sort of precautionary worst-case thinking which often characterises strategic planning [in the region] ... could in turn generate destabilising arms races."¹⁸

Yet, no one in the region appears interested in taking the initiative to prohibit or regulate the acquisition of particular conventional weapons or systems, or to agree with others to constrain defense expenditures. Instead, the emphasis within ARF will be on making acquisition plans and holdings more "transparent." The aim is not to restrict any

state's acquisitions of weapons or dispositions of forces, but rather to make information about these matters available to others. In theory, such transparencies serve a reassuring purpose. "Given differences in threat perceptions,... with some [countries] worried about the plans and intentions of their nearer neighbors, transparency is necessary to prevent misunderstandings and unanticipated and unfortunate reactions."¹⁹

One such transparency is participation in the UN Conventional Arms Registry, which requires participating states to report annually on numbers of weapons imported and exported in seven categories during the previous calendar year.²⁰ But most ARF members now submit reports to the UN registry anyway, so the Bangkok pledge to do so does not itself break new ground.²¹ Proposals that ARF move beyond the rudimentary requirements of the UN registry to an enlarged regional registry of its own (Malaysia made such a proposal in 1989 and again in May 1992, but has not pursued the matter since then) have been strongly opposed by China, and thus far have been largely ignored by regional governments.²² In similar vein, arguments that countries should regularly publish defense white papers in the interests of transparency have not been taken seriously in the past.

China continues to express suspicion of almost any process that might promote military transparency. China is not alone. If anything, the inclination in much of the region is to view openness about (and exchanges between countries of) military details with almost as much suspicion (about intentions) as secrecy about those details.²³ It is probably because of expected resistance that, in the lead-up to the ARF Bangkok meeting, the Australian government suggested, first, areas where information-sharing probably should *not* be considered. These include

intelligence sources and methods; surveillance targets; detailed performance characteristics of weapons platforms, their actual operational deployments and availability; detailed characteristics of weapons delivery systems (for example, tactical missiles) and their support measures (electronic, software); levels of military readiness and sustainability, including specific details of war stocks of ordnance; research and development in support of classified military capabilities, including the adaptation and modification of weapons for uniquely national requirements.²⁴

This removes a lot. Arguably, it still leaves enough. Australia has proposed for ARF consideration information exchanges on:

strategic policy, military doctrine, and national military arms; orders-of-battle and main characteristics of major platforms; acquisition plans for new weapons platforms; historical data on weapons acquisitions; and data

on military exercises (size and composition) and on major military deployments or movements; and “information relevant to the management of potential conflicts over resources exploitation.”²⁵

For its part, the United States would like to have ARF discuss such measures as “limited exchanges of defense data, the publication of defense white papers, and submission of information to the UN arms register.”²⁶ At Bangkok, however, the ARF participants agreed only to study exchanges of *non-classified* information. In a region where most things are classified, and countries like Singapore operate under fairly sweeping Official Secrets Acts, this might not leave much.

The Bangkok participants were less hesitant about studying nuclear non-proliferation issues. The crisis surrounding North Korea’s nuclear ambitions, which loomed large at the time of the Bangkok meeting, no doubt was a factor. Yet, the NPT was indefinitely extended in May 1995, thereby effectively removing that set of issues. The seemingly greater willingness to entertain nuclear non-proliferation stems, at least in part, from the fact that most East Asia and Pacific countries have no present plans or ambitions for acquiring nuclear (and also biological and chemical) weapon capabilities (Vietnam and Burma could be exceptions in the case of chemical weapons). The proposition does not “bite” in the ways that constraints on conventional arms could.

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING

Europe’s Cold War experience with structural and operational (CBM) forms of arms restraint is broadly dismissed at present as inapplicable. As Australia puts it, approaches developed in Europe “cannot be applied in an indiscriminate and open-ended manner to the Asia Pacific region.”²⁷

One reason, to be sure, is that the Asia-Pacific security environment, heavily maritime in character, differs considerably from that of Cold War Europe.²⁸ Another is that, even in the maritime arena, the region has yet to develop real problems for which classical, constraining-type CBMs might arguably be a solution—by-and-large, the region’s “brown-water” and “green-water” navies are not yet significant threats to one another.²⁹ But the same kinds of hesitations and skepticism about military transparencies are a factor here as well. “The problem,” Trevor Findlay of ANU suggested some years ago, “is not that Asian states are unable to negotiate CBMs, but rather that such measures are not considered useful tools of national security policy.”³⁰

Although “confidence-building” occupies a prominent place in the forum’s lexicon—in May 1995, the ASEAN members agreed to establish within ARF a “support

group” on CBMs—measures that might serve to actually constrain military forces and operations are not under serious consideration.³¹ As the Australians frame it, “Arms control approaches to confidence-building and greater openness and transparency ... raise many sensitive issues between ... states.” Instead, the emphasis will be on more easily achievable and “non-threatening” propositions. “[A]pproaches to security in the region should ... focus more on establishing the political preconditions for trust-building than relying heavily on technical military matters and intrusive inspections.”³²

ARF, accordingly, will concern itself with “political” CBMs—or, as phrased by the Australians, “trust-building measures” (TBMs) “to convey the idea of a less formal approach, built upon a base of personal political contacts and relationships.”³³ What this means precisely is unsure at present. TBMs would appear to embody fairly elementary, threshold diplomacy—meetings, consultations, dialogues. The idea is for a graduated approach to trust-building, beginning with more easily achievable and non-threatening TBMs. “It *might* then be possible at a later date to build on the establishment of greater dialogue and information-sharing and to consider the possibility of more formalised and more structured security relationships that deal with particular issues.”³⁴

PEACEKEEPING

Although the *Bangkok Statement* is cryptic on the point, references to peacekeeping evidently do not reflect interest in or agreement on establishing multinational peacekeeping forces from within the region to intervene in disputes and conflicts *within the region*. (Though one might note that this is precisely what the South Pacific Forum is doing in the South Pacific.)³⁵ Rather, the reference seems to be directed along two general lines. One is preventive diplomacy. That mechanisms like ARF could be useful in the diplomacy of averting and managing crises seems to be the point—in Australia’s Evans’ argument, “Regional organizations have a special role to play in preventive diplomacy. Being close to the conflicts in question and with obvious interests in their resolution, they are often (but not always) better placed to act than the UN.”³⁶

Training forces from the region for service as peacekeepers *outside the region*, under UN or some other institutional banner, is the second thrust of the Bangkok prescription for study. Military forces from Asia-Pacific countries already have served under UN peacekeeping pennants in distant operations like Somalia (Malaysian forces) and Bosnia (Pakistani forces). Thus, there arises the idea of regionally training these forces beforehand.

Where the forum will head in either of these areas is unsure. ARF is a long way from being able to play even the modest kinds of preventive diplomacy that CSCE has attempted in the Cold War's aftermath. The conception behind ARF is one of "consultation rather than confrontation, reassurance rather than deterrence, transparency rather than secrecy, prevention rather than correction, and interdependence rather than unilateralism."³⁷ This no doubt smoothes things considerably when everyone more-or-less behaves. But it does not address what is to be done when a member or members of such a common security community are miscreants. Faced with the unpleasant reality that one of its participating members might behave badly, CSCE has managed (only after prolonged debate) to move from a rule of unanimity as a condition for group action to the notion of "consensus-minus-one." so as to deal with an errant member. But CSCE—which at present is struggling over whether to move further to "consensus-minus-two"—has yet to try this out in practice. ARF has yet to entertain the question.

Peacekeeping in distant locations is a subject that takes us too far afield to consider here. Better training of peacekeepers is no doubt very useful. But the financing of peacekeeping operations, the equipping of forces, the command of operations, the logistical support required, and a host of other difficult questions also form part of an equation in which it is difficult to merely carve out one aspect for special attention. (Notably, the financing of an ARF-sponsored regional peacekeeping training center was not discussed at Bangkok.)

IV. FROM HERE

As this is written (July 1995), ARF's second annual meeting (in Brunei) is still a few weeks away. It is probable, however, that the main business will be limited chiefly to the adoption of ASEAN's May 1995 "concept paper" recommending an indefinitely extended three-stage process of trust-building. This will reaffirm the current "go-slow" approach. If ARF speaks to the South China Sea disputes, it will likely do so in terms of generalized appeals to resolve territorial issues in conformance with international laws and conventions. That substantive business will be on the Brunei agenda is doubtful.

ASEAN members are aware of the frustration of the United States, Japan, and some others with the current pace and lack of focus. But ARF's defenders dismiss the frustration as a predictable "tension between the institution-building impulses of the Anglo-Saxon participants and the consensus-building impulses of the Asian participants."¹ The "Asian way," in this prescription, operates on its own clock and timetable; ARF's slow and tangential approach comfortably reflects an "Asian" style. (That Japan shares the U.S. frustration is an awkward detail.) "There's a clear gap between the East and the West," according to Tan Sri Ahmad Kamil Jaafer, Secretary-General of Malaysia's Foreign Ministry, and "as long as we can't close the gap, we'll move very slowly."²

For the time being, at least, ARF will not take on any institutional form. It will operate only on the basis of unanimity, and will not vote on issues. It will have no operational roles or authorities. ASEAN will continue to set the terms, tone, and pace. Future meetings "will have no formal agenda and will approach sensitive security issues in an oblique and non-confrontational manner, much like the diplomatic style ASEAN itself has practiced for the past quarter century."³ For participants who find this to be unfocused and direction-less, the ASEAN answer is to counsel patience. ARF "is well on the way to becoming a serious forum," in the words of a senior ASEAN official, "but the first step must be confidence-building.... [T]he first step is to get everyone to agree to sit down under the rubric of political and security discussions."⁴

This may be necessary. It may be appropriate. Yet, there are reasons to be skeptical that ARF, left to its own devices, is "well on the way" to anything more than what it already is. To be fair, the forum is intended to build over time toward a consensus

on security matters; it does not begin with one. That, however, is one of the threshold problems. The pattern of forum participation is scarcely coherent, and does not lend itself easily to consensus on much at all. Where the momentum for forward movement will come from is unsure.

UN-COMMON SECURITY

ARF was established in the wake of a growing feeling within the Asia-Pacific, in the waning Cold War days and thereafter, that a patchwork of bilateral understandings, undertakings, and alliances is an inadequate foundation for dealing with the region's security concerns in the time ahead. In this perspective, consultation, cooperation, and coordination will be essential first steps in averting and managing crises in the region's future. If East Asians are to have an effective say in their own and global security affairs, they are going to have to, in this view, organize on a more coherent, multilateral basis. Given large asymmetries in the distribution of military power and potential in the region, multilateralism also promises some security in numbers.

Multilateralism, however, can be a matter of the few or the many, configured broadly or narrowly, dealing with some issues but not others, embracing all or only parts of the Asia-Pacific region. The interests and concerns may not be held in common across all or even most issues, but there generally needs to exist enough of a basis, other than simply geographical proximity of members, to hold things together, and provide some sense of purpose. In this light, ARF is a curious admixture.

A common threat, around which common security interests could be melded, is one such "glue." An aggressively hegemonic China could provide the "common threat" in the Asia-Pacific in the longer term, but there is a strong reluctance to allow concerns about Chinese expansionism to form the organizing principle for ARF. "In Asia," Singapore's Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, told a conference in Beijing in May 1995, "China's rising power and arms buildup has stirred anxiety. It is important to bring into the open this underlying sense of discomfort—and even insecurity—about the political and military ambitions of China."⁵ But ambiguities about China's aims and directions—in Goh's phrase, it's not pre-ordained that China's military power will turn into a threat"⁶—and a strong inclination to avoid anything that might persuade Beijing that ARF is in fact about tying-down Chinese power, are both real and widespread.

Other than questions about China's long-term intentions in the region, security issues, interests, and concerns do not carry well over long distances in the Asia-Pacific. Different configurations of power arise depending, for example, on whether the issue

concerns Northeast Asia or the South China Sea. None of the potential sources of interstate conflict in the region has much to do with any other; geography separates them; the disputes are local in character. In most cases, the impacts of a resort to armed force would be localized also—in the sense that few potential conflicts by their nature would entangle uninvolved neighbors who wished to stay clear, and nothing in the mix would ineluctably engulf all or most of the region. At present, there are no great powers in the Asia-Pacific interested in or positioned to exploit local conflicts for their own strategic betterment, and the end of the Cold War has taken a good deal of the strategic significance out of small wars.

Except in a generalized sense, what happens on the Korean peninsula will be of little direct concern to Indonesia, along the Thai-Cambodia border of no particular concern to Japan, between China and Russia of little direct interest to Singapore and New Zealand. Appeals to a common, region-wide security interest may finesse these realities, and may even transcend them to a degree, but they are not likely to alter them.⁷ A common language, tradition, and a shared history might provide another form of “glue”; shared political and social values, another still. Neither, however, is a factor linking the countries participating in ARF at this time.⁸

WHO LEADS, WHO FOLLOWS?

What is true about interests and linkages in general is also the case in more specific terms. ARF's challenge, in its own terms, is to build over time towards a broader and deeper consensus on security matters than it begins with. Yet, in looking at what consensus will build upon, and where the momentum for forward movement will come from, the picture is cloudy.

China is not likely to provide leadership and forward momentum. It has long viewed multilateralism in security affairs with suspicion, and long has considered military transparencies and confidence-building to fall somewhere between tricks and irrelevancies. Though it is hard to tell what *China* thinks of ARF as such, it is improbable that it sees the forum as especially reassuring or useful: ARF is either about tethering *China* (in which case *China* has little reason to be accommodating), or about nothing in particular at all (in which case *China* has no reason to take it seriously).

Were it a part of the Asia-Pacific regional forum—which, inexplicably it is not—*India* probably would have much the same kinds of skepticism. *India* historically has favored the UN over regional approaches to security issues (though it is currently interested in developing closer trade and economic ties with ASEAN), and in the past has

seen arms control and confidence-building as mischievous distractions from dealing with core political/strategic issues.

Australia, Canada and Russia—early proponents of CSCA—traditionally have been enthusiastic about ARF evolving into a wide-ranging forum to deal with specific issues and broader measures like arms control and military confidence-building. But the three are on the East Asian periphery (a geographical fact that East Asians regularly noted during the heydays of CSCA proponency); Russia and Canada are increasingly preoccupied with internal affairs; Australia appears to be downsizing its expectations for ARF, treating the forum almost incidentally in the 1994 Australian defense white paper.⁹

Japan actually may be the most eager of the Asia-Pacific countries for ARF to develop and grow in relevance. Multilateral venues are increasingly important in Tokyo's endeavors to build a security posture and regional role beyond the bilateral pact with the United States. ARF provides the kind of political cover for a larger security role and influence in the region than Japan, given the history, would not dare venture absent a multilateral framework.

Japan's split from the U.S. position in endorsing ASEAN's proposal to enter into regional security issues in 1991 (the United States at the time was still opposed) was one manifestation of this. The August 1994 report by the senior level advisory group on Japanese security appointed by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa—*The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan: The Outlook for the 21st Century*—is another. Though only advisory, the report calls for a new comprehensive security strategy for Japan resting on three pillars: the bilateral alliance with the United States, multilateral cooperation, and a modern and efficient military. The U.S. alliance is strongly reaffirmed. But as Patrick Cronin and Michael Green have spotlighted, "The report's attention to strengthening the bilateral relationship with the United States is overshadowed ... by the emphasis given to multilateralism and autonomous capabilities."¹⁰ Noting that Japan has "involved itself positively in the establishment of [the ARF] forum from the beginning," the advisory group urged that further efforts be taken by Tokyo in strengthening the ARF process.

Japan, however, is poorly positioned to assert a too-visible leadership role within ARF. Japan can endorse and support, but it is too encumbered by history (and its own ambivalences toward the region) to be the source of any large initiative.

Up to now, the *United States* has declined such a role as well. Apart from generalized statements about ARF's long-term potential and DoD's publicly expressed

hopes for progress on modest transparency measures, there has been little elaboration on the Clinton administration's endorsement of multilateral security dialogue in the region. U.S. national security strategy speaks only generally about supporting ARF "on the full range of common security challenges." Arrangements like ARF "can enhance regional security and understanding through dialogue and transparency."¹¹ DoD's current (mid-1995) prescriptions for ARF are modest and fairly eclectic.

We believe that discussion of modest transparency measures would be a constructive area for future work. Discussions might include such measures as limited exchanges of defense data, the publication of defense white papers, and submission of information to the UN arms register. Efforts in areas such as disaster relief and peacekeeping could also establish patterns of cooperation. Furthermore, the ARF presents an opportunity for a non-confrontational discussion of the relevance of democratization for regional security."¹²

Having moved decisively from opposing to encouraging greater multilateralism in the region's security dealings, the United States seems as uncertain as others about what should come next, and what after that.

ASEAN took a high-profile role in the Cambodian conflict in the 1980s, but it is questionable whether ASEAN itself or ASEAN members individually will provide the accelerator in security matters. ASEAN countries remain divided among themselves about how to perceive and deal with China, differ in their views of Japan, have differed historically in attitudes toward American military engagement in the region (with Malaysia and Indonesia far more "neutralist" on big power involvements than Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines), and have a wide-range of unresolved territorial issues among themselves (the South China Sea being only one).

ASEAN members are most agreed on areas that ARF should not venture into. The ASEAN countries have historically been "extremely concerned about external interferences in their domestic and regional affairs."¹³ ASEAN itself has stood for "the development of national and regional resilience free from any external interference."¹⁴ ZOPFAN, in its various expressions and incarnations, has been one manifestation. In ARF's case, this means, among other things, keeping the forum well away from issues that are sensitive to ASEAN governments—human rights, environmental issues, territorial disputes, etc. While ASEAN interest in a stable security environment is genuine, the priority for ASEAN governments seems essentially to be on ensuring that ARF does not stray into anything deemed sensitive to and by ASEAN members. ASEAN's principal concern in the time ahead will be in seeing to it that ARF does not

lose sight of its "ASEAN parentage." "While we build up the ARF process," Malaysia's acting foreign minister told an ASEAN forum in December 1994, "it must not be at the expense of ASEAN."¹⁵ In the rallying cry of a member of the Malaysian foreign ministry: "ASEAN initiated [ARF], let's keep it in ASEAN."¹⁶

Although downplayed at virtually every turn, an "insider/outsider" game—however confusing the lineup—is in play within the forum. Everyone involved in ARF at present has legitimate interests in the security and stability of the region. But there are differences in starting points, position and perspective. It did not go unnoticed in East Asia that the early champions of all-Asia forums and dialogues—the Soviet Union/Russia, Canada, Australia—were from the "occidental" periphery of East Asia proper. Theirs were the "out-of-region" ("outsider") schemes for organizing regional security that ASEAN sought to counter with its own proposals in 1991. ARF is partly a recognition that non-ASEAN interests are definite factors in ASEAN security (and thus need to be accommodated). But it is also partly a means to channel those interests in ways that are congenial to the ASEAN countries. As a Thai scholar phrased it:

[ASEAN's] efforts to establish a region-wide order in South-east Asia must be related to the larger Asia-Pacific framework of conflict-reduction and cooperation, not only because one needs to recognise the geographical and economic interdependence that exists in this, but also because one needs to find ways and means of ensuring that extraregional—that is non-South-east Asian—powers' involvements in this region continue to be "constructive engagements."¹⁷

To be sure, one can make too much of the insider/outsider undercurrent. ARF's existence and composition stand as evidence that any such differences have not gotten in the way of putting together a broadly inclusive venue. Australia, Canada, and Russia are more dissimilar than similar in what they bring to the table. There are differences within ASEAN as well. Indonesia and Malaysia have always been more sensitive to foreign intrusions and entanglements than have the other ASEAN countries. Indonesia at the same time has long aspired to a grander role on the regional and global stage than membership within ASEAN allows, and has long felt that in carrying out an activist foreign policy it must do so outside the confines of the ASEAN forum. Malaysia is more interested in Asia-firstism—manifested on the economic front in its campaign to establish an East Asian-only East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) as an alternative to or voting bloc within APEC, and in the military/security field in such things as the "Najib Initiative" of 1991, in which Malaysia's Defense Minister, Datuk Seri Najib, proposed that something akin to a CSCA should be established by the East Asians themselves.¹⁸

But if it is easy (and mistaken) to make too much of the differences, it is also prudent to not make too little of them either. Whether the "A" in ARF can be properly construed to mean Asia-Pacific in the broad sense, or merely ASEAN in a narrower sense, is not at all settled two years in.

Last are the *non-governmental organizations* (NGOs) that have sought affiliation with ARF—the so-called "second track." Concomitant with ARF's establishment in 1993, ten research institutes (including one from the United States) joined to form the Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP).¹⁹ The founding-ten see CSCAP as providing essential research, analytical, and conceptual help to ARF, and serving the function of pushing the process forward. (In the words of one commentary "The emergence of NGOs to work separately from, but in cooperation with, governments is one of the most helpful developments since the end of the Cold War.")²⁰ ASEAN has endorsed the creation of CSCAP as a means to complement dialogue within ARF at the official level.

That the second-track can bring a dynamism and motivation to the overall ARF process, as well as research and analysis of critical issues, is not in doubt. But there are limits in what NGOs can bring in shaping the process itself. Thus far, CSCAP has brought no greater focus or sense of direction to the ARF process than has ARF at the official level.²¹ Nor is it all sure that ASEAN has any inclination to allow its NGO affiliates to get much forward of the ASEAN-driven ARF process itself.

DOES IT MATTER?

Arguably, the cautious peace that obtains at mid-decade imparts no particular sense of urgency about getting organized or focused. It is healthy that countries in the region sort out their own security issues; if incrementalism and indirection are their preference, so be it. Given the region's history, any measures, however modest, that could serve to broaden the security horizons of countries and their militaries should be an improvement. For this reason, and *because it would be prudent to have even a modest mechanism in place for future conflicts and crises than no mechanism at all, it is better to have ARF than to be without it.*

Moreover, in the absence of a recognized and acknowledged threat (China is widely recognized to be such, but not as widely acknowledged), it is conceptually difficult to structure multinational security dealings. ARF is constructed on notions of "cooperative security"—the idea, in Evans of Australia's formulation, of a "commitment to joint survival, to taking into account the legitimate security anxieties of others, to

building step-by-step military confidence between nations, to working to maximize the degree of interdependence between nations; putting it simply, to achieving security with others and not against them.²² This is good rhetoric. It is a good overall goal. The difficulty is in translating it into tangible details and specific actions—substantive, architectural, procedural. ARF has yet to begin the translation. Historically, regional security communities have been “formed in the face of perceptions of external threat and where sufficient common security interests can be melded to agree on a common front.”²³

CSCE is a marred model for ARF, formed as it was 30 years into the Cold War, at a time when there were still clearly opposing sides and everyone more-or-less knew which side was which, which they were on (or not), and what, in a general sense at least, was at stake. Such conditions are absent in the Asia-Pacific of the 1990s. In this light, ARF with all its limitations may be the best to expect. It is probably correct that, in the USCSCAP’s formulation, “dialogue for dialogue’s sake” can be a valuable endeavor in its own terms “in redefining perceptions, bringing shared interests into focus, and creating new conditions among peoples.”²⁴

Institutions

Still, the judgments that led to opening the door to multilateralism in the region’s security dealings would seem correct. *If security issues and problems in the region’s future are going to be dealt with sensibly, this almost certainly will require some degree of multilateral consultation, coordination, and collaboration.* Bilateral security alignments will be an important feature of the Asia-Pacific’s security future, but bilateralism will carry only so far in managing the region’s security problems. Similarly, establishing frameworks for cooperation and conflict resolution is an important foundation for setting and enforcing rules of conduct among the key regional actors. Bilateralism and *ad hocery* are likely to fall short in this connection.²⁵

Multilateral security arrangements do not automatically or necessarily imply region-wide forums like ARF, nor does the implicit value of “multilateralizing” security horizons and dealings within the Asia-Pacific say much itself about *institutionalizing* the process. (ARF, which for now has no institutional existence independent of ASEAN, is hardly a structure, and is at best only arguably a mechanism.) It is difficult to look at other multinational security institutions—the UN, CSCE, NATO, WEU—and see anything working spectacularly well. In this light, the case for the institutionalization of Asia-Pacific security is no more self-evident than the case for regionalization. Certainly regime-building for its own sake is scarcely a compelling objective. Yet, it is also difficult

to look at the Asia-Pacific's security future without a respectful notice of Jean Monnet's counsel about Europe in the 1950s—"nothing is lasting without institutions"—and corresponding questions about whether the difference between stonework and sandcastles does not in fact turn on the development of an institutional foundation.

Institutionalization could work a more specific benefit in ARF, by allowing some greater degree of independence of the ARF mechanism from ASEAN—on which the forum is now almost entirely dependent.

Arms Control

Arms control in its broadest sense has not been entirely missing from the Asia-Pacific's recent past, though it bears little resemblance to the elaborate formalism of Cold War Europe and the Cold War's superpower dealings. The process has been almost entirely bilateral, *ad hoc*, informal, and devoid of the kinds of extensive verification measures that have been a feature of the superpower/European experience.²⁶

Structural arms control—that is, cutting back on existing forces—is not beyond the pale in the region's future, but it is doubtful that multilateralism will play any part in this. Threat perceptions simply are too asymmetric, overlapping and highly diffused to give rise sensibly to multilateral measures. Noted earlier, the heavy maritime security character of much (though not all) of the region also sets it apart from the European experience.

This, nevertheless, leaves open the question of influencing *arms buildups*. The same asymmetries that argue against multilaterally arranged cuts in existing forces present a reasonable case for multilateral approaches to prophylactic measures. Bilateralism in this vein is simply too narrow; the strategies and politics of weapons acquisitions are too multi-directional to lend themselves to bilateral deals; *multilateral arrangements and accords make much greater sense in managing the region's propensities for arms racing*. In this light, that conventional arms control has been pushed to the side in ARF makes for a decidedly incomplete picture. (The present emphasis on WMD nonproliferation is not misplaced, but it is not complete.) The area of greatest growth and proliferation in the Asia-Pacific's near future involves conventional weaponry. In arms-racing terms, the region's present fondness for acquiring strike capabilities—attack aircraft, anti-ship missiles, submarines—has an inflammatory potential. Conventional weaponry, and advanced conventional warfare concepts and technologies, also are likely to be a large growth area over the longer term.

To be sure, arms control of any kind is not on ARF's table at present. Noted above, there are compelling substantive reasons why a lot of Cold War-Europe-type arms control and confidence-building is not translatable to or appropriate in the Asia-Pacific in any case (earlier IDA papers have examined some of the reasons).²⁷ Compared with WMD, there also are complex and controversial questions concerning the relative legitimacy of regulating, constraining, and controlling conventional military means—similar kinds of opprobrium simply do not attach. Whether, accordingly, invocations of prophylactic forms of conventional arms control, variously conceived, would amount to tilting at windmills in the Asia-Pacific case is unsure.

China's opposition to discussing arms control is often cited as a major obstacle—no one else will move without China, and China will not move at all. Yet, China has shown that it can be pressed to cooperative approaches to international arms control in the past. In July 1991 it agreed to discuss limiting arms sales to the Middle East. In November 1991 it agreed to accede to NPT (it acceded in March 1992). In early 1992, it agreed to observe the "parameters and guidelines" of the MTCR. Having earlier resisted U.S. attempts to get it to adhere to generally accepted Western definitions in MTCR, it agreed, in the October 1994 joint statement with the United States, to accept the concept of "inherent capability" in interpreting the regime's restrictions, and also to ban all exports of ground-to-ground MTCR-class missiles.

China's attitude on arms control subjects is complicated. For each case cited above, one can point to multiple instances of opaqueness and truculence. China is scarcely alone in the region in its reticence about the subject. Still, if countries concerned with Asia-Pacific security are serious about averting arms races and limiting the risk of conflict, getting some sorts of controls over weapons buildups, arsenals, and force dispositions is an unmistakable and unavoidable element—*transparency, for all its merits, is a decidedly weak substitute.*

V. U.S. INTERESTS

Left to its own devices, ARF is not likely to look much different five years from now than now. In the characterization of the USCSCAP, it will be a forum with:

an emphasis on pragmatism and consensus building; a preference for informal structures of policy-making; a stronger emphasis on personal relationships than on formal legal structures; a deep commitment to the principle of noninterference; a predilection to think in the context of distant time horizons and of gradual and incremental change....¹

Some will view this to be enough. Yet, as we explore in a companion paper,[†] the security challenges that the region faces will not arise “in the context of distant horizons,” but, instead, over the course of the next several years. Developments and decisions taken between now and the end of the decade will go a long way in shaping the region’s security environment well into the next century. In this light, the present is about the future, and the future in the region’s security affairs will come sooner rather than later. In a region in which changes in political leadership will be pronounced in the next five years—dynastic in character in some cases, generational in character in others, revolutionary in character perhaps in a few—personal relationships forged between current leaders, without much more, are not going to amount to much. Consensus can be a good goal to strive for, but consensus as a governing principle can also mean inaction, and decisions taken at lowest common denominator. A regional security forum content to be little more than a discussion group for an indefinite period squanders opportunities. It also is likely to wear out its welcome among foreign ministries and ministries of defense that need to take the future less casually.

Although the United States has spoken generously of ARF in public, there is no secret about U.S. impatience with the forum’s lack of focus and progress. For the United States to be reduced to promoting exchanges of military information and reports to the UN arms registry in the name of preventive diplomacy—which is all that it has available in the present ARF context—is not a sustainable circumstance. The United States—inevitably but also appropriately—will lose interest in a status-quoist ARF with time. That would be

[†] James L. Lacy, *Cautious Peace: Strategy and Circumstance in Asia-Pacific Security*, IDA/P-3108, July 1995.

That would be unfortunate, especially if frustrations with ARF extended to disillusionment with multilateral security approaches in the Asia-Pacific more generally.

To be sure, the United States is in a tricky posture in all of this. Historically, it opposed multilateralizing security dealings in the region; it is not now well positioned to complain about initiatives undertaken and developed by others. The U.S. turnabout on the question in 1993 was at a highly abstract level. Apart from acknowledging the value of multilateralism in the region's security dealings, it is not readily apparent that the United States approached ARF's establishment and inaugural meeting with any clear idea of what specifically the United States would like to see come out of the ARF process.

With the Cold War over, the United States expects increasingly prosperous and secure countries to pull more of their own weight in solving problems and averting crises—that is, to assume a greater share of responsibility for regional stability and security. In this light, the Asians have to sort out many of their security problems and arrangements on their own. Americans, at best, can facilitate the process, not lead it or dictate its terms.

Yet, U.S. interests will require more than merely having a seat at the table, and consulting on agendas designed by others. The U.S. military investment in regional security is substantial—about 100,000 stationed forces in Northeast Asia and the U.S. Seventh Fleet. Breakdowns in regional security could impinge directly on U.S. strategic interests in maintaining a balance of power within a reasonably stable security context.

There are two other reasons for U.S. interest. One is to channel Japan's growing interest and roles in regional security affairs in constructive and regionally reassuring directions. The bilateral security tie with the United States can fill this bill only partly. Nearly everyone (Japan included) would prefer that Japan develop its place in the region's security dealings within a multilateral setting, as a better alternative to (and tether on) inclinations to doing so unilaterally. The second reason is that multilateral arrangements in which the United States participates can help to anchor U.S. interests and "presence." The United States will need some such mechanisms as part of shaping its own continuing role in the region's security affairs. This point was addressed in an earlier IDA study:

[A] United States interested in the promotion of regional stability [in the Asia-Pacific] will itself need some conceptual basis, and associated procedural and institutional mechanisms, for playing a regularized (versus episodic) role in regional security affairs, and for security interactions with regional players. In this, [the United States as] a "balancing wheel" may

be a good metaphor, but it is likely to come up short as government-to-government policy. Existing bilateral arrangements will fit the bill only partly; the United States will still need mechanisms for dealing with regional states which have not been traditional "allies" in the past.²

ARF

This said, there are large reasons to doubt whether ARF is, can be, or should be viewed as such a mechanism. Given its history, structure, and the security environment in which it operates, the ASEAN Regional Forum has limited potential to evolve into a decision-making, crisis-managing or peace-keeping body. As a venue for the periodic discussion of security issues and tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, the forum serves a useful purpose. At best, however, ARF will be a "talking shop-plus."

This could still be very useful. The "talking shop" part would be enhanced, however, were its participation to be broadened. At present, ARF meets only annually, and then only at the ministerial level. Meeting biannually at that level, and organizing consultative sessions throughout the year involving political and military personnel in participating countries at various other governmental levels, could be a substantial contribution in the general areas of "trust-building" and information exchange. NATO (not CSCE) developed the concept to an art-form over the Cold War period, such that it was hard to think of a security-related issue, no matter how remote, that NATO had not established a multinational committee to look into.

The "plus" will depend on participants' willingness and capacity for getting beyond the talk and "trust-building" stage to a modest but focused agenda in the near future. Two areas that might usefully lend themselves to a modestly but usefully fashioned agenda to focus the forum are:

- Multilateral cooperation in external law enforcement and order maintenance, to include anti-piracy, drug and smuggling interdiction, surveillance and policing of fishing and maritime economic zones, search and rescue, and coordination in the management of environmental mishaps and calamities. Though the nature of the activities is more law enforcement than national security, the national assets typically involved are military forces and equipment. Forging greater interstate military-to-military cooperation in these areas has the discrete advantage over generalized information and personnel exchanges in being discretely focused and purposeful. The areas themselves also are much sensitive, and arguably more tractable, than regional security issues, traditionally understood.

- Dispute management through the sponsorship of technical/legal research, arbitration, mediation, and negotiation in discrete areas for which some general agreement may be possible—such as transboundary fishing, exploitation of seabed resources, and multistate approaches to cross-boundary environmental problems—where international law has left jurisdiction and ownership issues clouded and conflicting, and where gaps exist to be filled. Sovereignty/jurisdictional disputes over the Spratly islands are probably too volatile and politically complex to be dealt with effectively in ARF. But UNCLOS-III left a sweep of unresolved legal and political issues concerning rights and areas for cooperation in fishery management and seabed resources that could lend themselves to resolution through arbitration, mediation, and “resource management regime building” that need not involve military forces at all, and that, if reasonably successful, might head off future problems that could, if left unattended, involve military forces and conflict eventually.

In any case, the forum would profit from an infusion of institutionalization that would permit it to operate more independently of ASEAN. Failing this step, which should be taken sooner rather than later, it is improbable that the “A” in ARF has a serious chance of meaning “Asian” with time. Independent institutionalization need not be elaborate or unduly costly. The permanent international secretariat that would be required within a structure separate from ASEAN need not be large. Its very establishment would be a significant step toward lessening ASEAN’s dominance and better “regionalizing” the forum.

Reorienting the forum will require governmental initiatives and action. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide a useful “second track” for supporting ARF through research, analysis and consultation, but they are not a substitute for governmental initiative.

BEYOND THE ASEAN FORUM

The United States could play an important role in encouraging ARF in the foregoing directions. At the same time, the United States will need to initiate and pursue a broader range of multilateral dialogues and interactions in Asia-Pacific security outside the ARF orbit.

Trilaterals

A discrete subregional consultative forum in Northeast Asia remains of keen interest to DoD, but the obstacles along that path were discussed in Section I.

“Trilaterals,” on the other hand, could be a highly productive venue for U.S. security dealings in the Asia-Pacific in the coming period. Trilateral security consultations—such as the ongoing U.S.–Japan–South Korea trilateral—can, in principle, enhance bilateral alliances, get a degree of multilateralizing momentum under way in the region, and provide an avenue for U.S. leadership that is not easily available in the ARF mega-forum. Substantively, a trilateral dialogue involving Korea and Japan could be a helpful early step toward easing the inevitable tensions and distrust that will take sharpened focus as Korean reunification comes closer in time.

The possibilities can be taken further. In theory, trilaterals (or something reasonably close) could facilitate, without clumsily formalizing, closer U.S. political and military involvement with the security accommodations between countries in the region that have begun to take early form. Combinations of trilaterals that could involve the United States with Australia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Singapore, for example, might enhance bilateral U.S. undertakings with these countries while bypassing unwelcoming larger mechanisms such as ASEAN and ARF. A closer U.S. security tie with the FPDA as it evolves over the next several years would be in a similar vein.

To be sure, the path is scarcely lacking in issues and obstacles—the U.S. experience thus far in the Japan/Korea and Japan/Russia trilateral talks has not been spectacularly encouraging. Still, trilaterals, and variations on them, have a distinct advantage over regional forums such as ARF in terms of both discrete participation and discrete issue focus.

Arms Control

At present, the temptation within the region is to write off conventional arms control measures (including operational forms of CSBMs) as neither needed nor regionally appropriate. Major power participants like the United States have been reduced to promoting the publication of defense white papers and annual reports of weapons buys to the UN.

Two arms control possibilities could (should) loom large in the time ahead. The first is U.S.-Chinese agreement on measures that would prevent dangerous military activities involving the two forces. Developing and reaching agreement on rules of behavior to manage the interactions of the two forces will become increasingly important in the time ahead. There are Cold War precedents for such an arrangement in the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas

(INCSEA) and the 1989 U.S.-Soviet Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (PDMA).

The second possibility, admittedly difficult, would entail developing and promoting within-region agreements on MTCR-like restraints on specific kinds of conventional arms acquisitions. The arms acquisitions being pursued within the region will have long term consequences for the character of the security environment. Conflicts in contested EEZ areas at sea are likely only to grow in the time ahead. The kinds of transparency-only measures currently favored within the region are difficult to square with the seriousness of an unregulated arms buying/arms selling/arms buildup market. MTCR, for all its current shortfalls, has been a modest success in imposing a degree of discipline in one area.

VI. AFTERWORD

ARF held its second annual meeting in Brunei on August 1, 1995. The participants “expressed concern on [sic] overlapping sovereignty claims in the region” and “encouraged all claimants to reaffirm their commitment to the principles contained in relevant international laws and conventions.” They recognized that the “Korean Peninsula issue has a direct bearing on peace and security in the Asia-Pacific.” They also “emphasized the importance of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in supporting regional peace and stability.” With Chinese nuclear testing a recent fact and renewed French testing in the South Pacific soon to begin, the participants called on “countries who plan to conduct further nuclear tests . . . to bring immediate end to such testing.” They also endorsed, albeit in very general terms, NWFZs “in strengthening the international non-proliferation regime” and encouraged further consultations on the possibilities for a Southeast Asia NWFZ.

Beyond these general prescriptions—which in most cases were not new for ARF and in all cases not new for the region—the Brunei agenda belonged essentially to ASEAN, whose concept paper—“The ASEAN Regional Forum—A Concept Paper”—was unanimously adopted by the participants. Among other things, the Brunei participants agreed that:

- “A successful ARF requires the active, full and equal participation and cooperation of all participants. However, *ASEAN undertakes the obligation to be the primary driving force.*”
- “The ARF process shall move at a pace comfortable to all participants.”
- “Decisions of the ARF shall be made through consensus after careful and extensive consultations among all participants.”
- “The approach shall be evolutionary, taking place in three broad stages, namely the promotion of confidence building, development of preventive diplomacy and elaboration of approaches to conflicts.”
- “The ARF process is now at stage I, and shall continue to discuss means of implementing confidence building. Stage II, particularly where the subject matter overlap, can proceed in tandem with stage I. Discussions will continue regarding the incorporation of elaboration of approaches to conflicts, as an eventual goal, into the ARF process.”

- ARF will continue to meet annually “in the context of the ASEAN Ministerial meeting and Post Ministerial conferences.”

The ministers participating in the Brunei meeting also agreed:

- To encourage all ARF countries “to enhance their dialogues and consultations on political and security cooperation on a bilateral, sub-regional and regional basis.”
- “For the ARF countries to submit to the ARF . . . *on a voluntary basis*, an annual statement of their defense policy.”
- “On the benefits of increased high level contacts and exchanges between military academies, staff colleges, and training.”
- “To take note of the increased participation in the UN Conventional Arms Register since the first ARF and encourage those not yet participating to soon do so.”
- To convene, at the intergovernmental level, an inter-sessional support group (ISG) on confidence building, “in particular, dialogue on security perceptions and defense policy papers,” and inter-sessional meetings (ISMS) on “cooperative activities, inter-alia, peacekeeping.” ISGs and ISMS will be co-chaired by ASEAN and non-ASEAN participants.

The participants “reaffirmed their belief that the Asia-Pacific region currently had an historical unprecedented opportunity to establish and consolidate long term conditions for peace and stability.” “Track two” activities (i.e., those undertaken by the NGOs that are affiliated with ARF through CSCAP) were noted, and it was agreed that the track two process should continue. “Track two activities shall be carried out by strategic institutes and relevant non-governmental organizations to which all ARF participants should be eligible.” But a greater governmental voice in these activities is desirable. “To be meaningful and relevant, the ARF chairman shall ensure that track two activities . . . result from full consultations with all ARF participants.”

To participating countries that might want to see more focus in the near term, the final communiqué “expressed the view that [the foregoing] specific ideas and proposals provided sufficient direction for the ARF process at this stage.”¹ ARF meets next in Indonesia in 1996.

GLOSSARY

ANZUS	(Security pact linking) Australia, New Zealand, and the United States
APEC	(Forum for) Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBM	Confidence-Building Measure
CFE	(Agreement on the Reduction of) Conventional Forces in Europe
CSBM	Confidence- and Security-Building Measure
CSCA	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia (proposed)
CSCAP	Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (non-governmental)
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone (UN Law of the Sea)
EU	European Union
FPDA	Five Power Defense Arrangements (Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia)
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFZ	Nuclear-Free Zone
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NWFZ	Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone
PACOM	Pacific Command (U.S.)
PMC	Post-Ministerial Conference (ASEAN)
SEANFZ	Southeast Asia Nuclear-Free Zone (proposed)
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization (disbanded)

SPF	South Pacific Forum
SPPKF	South Pacific Peacekeeping Force
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNTAC	UN Technical Assistance to Cambodia
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Friendship and Neutrality (ASEAN countries)

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NOTES

I. INTRODUCTION

- ¹ "South-east Asia's happy little village," *The Economist*, July 23, 1994, pp. 31-32.
- ² Chairman's Statement, The First Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Bangkok, July 25, 1994 [hereinafter, *Bangkok Statement*].
- ³ USIS, "Talbot Explains US Policy Goals for Region to ASEAN," July 29, 1994.
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (East Asia and Pacific Region), *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, February 1995, p. 13 [hereinafter *EASR 1995*].
- ⁵ *Bangkok Statement*.
- ⁶ "No one went into much detail," Foreign Minister Gareth Evans of Australia, a Bangkok participant, told the press at the Bangkok meeting's conclusion, "because we ran out of time." ARF/PMC Public Affairs, "Transcript of Media Briefing Given by Senator Evans, After ARF," Bangkok, July 25, 1994 [hereinafter *Evans Media Briefing*].
- ⁷ "None of this should be taken as constituting any remotely agreed list of things that will happen," in the caution of Senator Evans of Australia. "These are simply things that have been identified by one or more of the participants in the process All of them [are] ideas which it is intended will be compiled, collated, and made the subject of further study and, where appropriate, recommendation to future [ARF] meetings." *Ibid*.
- ⁸ The 1994 *Bangkok Statement* is illustrative. Adjoining paragraphs refer to "efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region" and, more narrowly, "a new chapter of peace, stability and cooperation for Southeast Asia." *Bangkok Statement*, paras. 4, 3.
- ⁹ At least ten countries, not now participants, have applied to join, including North Korea, Mongolia, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and Kirgызstan. Britain and France, former colonial powers in Asia, also believe they should be admitted.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, February 1995, p. 1 [hereinafter, *NMS 1995*].
- ¹¹ *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, The White House, February 1995, p. 29 [hereinafter *NSS 1995*].

II. LEADING UP

- ¹ SEATO, the product of the Manila Pact of September 8, 1954, linked the United States with seven countries: Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines, SEATO had some of the trappings of NATO—a Council, a secretariat, various commissions—but only trappings and only some. No integration of strategies or forces was contemplated, and none was ever realized. Nor was interest in promoting SEATO as a serious collective security structure either deep or widespread among the signatories—SEATO did not supersede other security pacts; it simply was constructed alongside them. In September 1975, the SEATO Council voted to phase the organization out of existence to "accord with the new realities in the region."
- ² Article III of the Helsinki Final Act, "Inviolability of Frontiers," provides: "The participating States regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all States in Europe and therefore they will refrain now and in the future from assaulting these frontiers. Accordingly, they will also refrain from any demand for, or act of, seizure or usurpation of part or all of the territory of any participating State." Signed initially by 33 European states (including the Soviet Union), Canada, and the United States, the Helsinki accord now has 53 signatories, including the independent republics of the former Soviet Union.

- ³ U.S.-Vietnam diplomatic relations were only re-established in early July 1995.
- ⁴ The sovereignty/jurisdictional issues that UNCLOS-III has spawned in the region are considered in Section III of the companion paper, *Cautious Peace; Strategy and Circumstance in Asia-Pacific Security*.
- ⁵ The UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (later renamed the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) was set up in 1947, but has never been more than a talking shop, with no power to dispense monetary assistance. The Colombo Plan, established in 1950 to coordinate economic assistance to developing Asian countries, has been a useful clearing-house for information, but little more.
- ⁶ Along with nuclear weapon-free zones (NWFZs), a pet rock of Soviet diplomacy since the late 1950s, Gorbachev's Asia-Pacific campaign intermingled heavy doses of bilateral (Soviet-U.S.) naval arms control with the regionalization-of-security aspects. The linkages, which had a good deal to do with the form in which U.S. policy on multilateralism and CBMs in the region evolved, are discussed in James L. Lacy, *The Baroque Debate: Public Diplomacy and Naval Arms Control, 1986-1989*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 1990.
- ⁷ Anatoly Dobrynin, "Dobrynin Writes on Asian Security," *World Marxist Review*, No. 9 (English), London, September 1987, pp. 5-15.
- ⁸ At the time, CSCE was composed of all European countries (except Albania), the Soviet Union, Canada, and the United States. Following the Soviet Union's dissolution in late 1991, CSCE's rolls were extended to include all of the former Soviet republics, in Asia as well as in Europe. In mid-1995, CSCE boasts a membership of 52 countries.
- ⁹ See Lacy (1992a), pp. 108-111.
- ¹⁰ The U.S. rationale is discussed in DoD, *Naval Arms Control: Report to Congress*, February 1991. See also, James L. Lacy, *Within and Beyond Naval Confidence-Building: The Legacy and the Options*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 1991.
- ¹¹ George Shultz, Address to the Stanford University Cornerstone Centennial Academic Convocation, Stanford, CA, May 14, 1987.
- ¹² U.S. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, "To Remain in Asia," *Speaking of Japan*, June 1990, p. 6.
- ¹³ Solomon (1990), p. 7.
- ¹⁴ November 19, 1990, cited in *Pacific Research*, May 1991, p. 9.
- ¹⁵ Gareth Evans, "What Asia Needs is a Europe-Style CSCA," *International Herald Tribune*, July 27, 1990, p. 6.
- ¹⁶ "Canada and Asia Pacific in the 1990s," Notes for a Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honorable Joe Clark, at a luncheon hosted by the Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Victoria, British Columbia, July 17, 1990, p. 8.
- ¹⁷ "ASEAN Wary of Pacific Security Plan," *The Australian*, October 8, 1990. By then, it should be noted, Gorbachev had largely backed off from the CSCE analogy: "[T]he only reason I referred to Helsinki is that so far the world community has had no other experience of this kind. This does not mean, of course, that the European experience can automatically be transplanted to Asia and the Pacific." FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, July 23, 1987.
- ¹⁸ Jin Dexiang, "China and Southeast Asia in a Changing Security Environment," Paper presented at the Conference on ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Region: Prospects for Security Cooperation in the 1990s," Manila, June 1991.
- ¹⁹ Yang Cheng Yu, "Peace and Stability in the Asia-Pacific Region: China's Perspective," Address to the Manila Conference, June 1991, *ibid*.
- ²⁰ Shigekatsu Kondo, "Japan's Security Interests and Role in the Pacific Rim Cooperation," Paper presented at the International Conference on Pacific Rim Security Cooperation, Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, Seoul, Korea, November 26-27, 1991, pp. 12-13.
- ²¹ Solomon (1990), pp. 6, 7.
- ²² *The Monthly Record*, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, May 1991, pp. 204-206.
- ²³ Speech to the North Pacific Security Dialogue Conference, Victoria, British Columbia, by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, April 6, 1991, p. 5.
- ²⁴ Press Kit, Canadian Department of External Affairs, "The Canadian Initiative for a North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue," Ottawa, April 3, 1991, pp. 2, 7. Andrew Mack of the Australian

National University (ANU) noted dryly shortly afterwards: "The Canadians were much clearer about what they were *not* seeking to do than what they were." Andrew Mack, "Regional Arms Control Proposals and Maritime Security," Paper presented to the Workshop on Naval Confidence- and Security-Building Regimes for the Asia-Pacific Region," Kuala Lumpur, July 8-10, 1991, p. 19.

²⁵ Solomon (1990), p. 4.

²⁶ Desmond Ball and Commodore W.S.G. Bateman, RAN, "An Australian Perspective on Maritime CSBMs in the Asia-Pacific Region," Paper presented at the Workshop on Naval Confidence- and Security-Building Regimes in the Asia-Pacific Region, Kuala Lumpur, July 8-10, 1991, p. 23.

²⁷ See, e.g., Barry M. Blechman, "Confidence-building in the North Pacific: a pragmatic approach to naval arms control," and Andrew Mack, "Problems and prospects for arms control in the North Pacific," in Andrew Mack and Paul Keal, eds., *Security & Arms Control in the North Pacific*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988.

²⁸ The North East Asia proposals are further discussed in James L. Lacy, *Military Security and the North Pacific: The Decade Ahead*, North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue (NPCSD) Working Paper Number 14, York University, Ontario, Canada, August 1992(b), pp. 28-30.

²⁹ ASEAN members at present are Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, and (joining in July 1995), Vietnam. At present, ASEAN also has several layers of limited "post-ministerial" participation by other countries. Australia, Canada, the European Union (EU), Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and the United States are "Dialogue Partners." China and Russia are "Consultative Partners." Laos, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam (until it joins) are observers.

³⁰ Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*, Routledge, London, 1989, pp. 1, 17.

³¹ Amitav Acharya argues that one reason for this was the members' sensitivity to ASEAN's being perceived as a successor to the defunct SEATO. SEATO "had been a favourite target for attack by communist powers such as China and the former Soviet Union, and any security role for ASEAN, it was feared, would lead to provocative comparisons with SEATO, given the ASEAN members' generally pro-Western security orientation." Amitav Acharya, *A New Regional Order in South-East Asia: ASEAN in the Post-Cold War Era*, Adelphi Paper 279, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1993, p. 53.

³² As one account phrased it, "Military cooperation, when it exists, has always been by bilateral arrangement outside of the multilateral organizational framework." James T.H. Tang, *Multilateralism in Northeast Asian International Security: An Illusion or a Realistic Hope?* NPCSD Working Paper Number 26, York University, Ontario, Canada, April 1993, p. 11. ASEAN's ambiguous security identity is richly examined in Acharya's 1991 piece, "The Association of Southeast Asian Nations: 'Security Community' or 'Defence Community'?" *Pacific Affairs*, Summer 1991.

³³ Although, it should be noted, Singapore was in the forefront in calling for moves to revitalize ZOPFAN in 1987.

³⁴ As Acharya reminds, the Vietnamese invasion "dashed ASEAN's hopes for a South-east Asia free of great-power rivalry since it had to accept US and Chinese support against perceived Vietnamese (backed by the Soviet Union) expansionism." Acharya (1993), p. 8.

³⁵ Ambassador Albert Talalla, "Regional Security in the 1990s: A Malaysian View," in Dora Alves, ed., *Pacific Security Through the Year 2000: The 1987 Pacific Symposium*, National Defense University Press, Washington, DC, 1988, p. 188. For the origins and evolution of ZOPFAN, the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace, and the South Pacific NWFZ, see Lacy (1992b), at pp. 38-41.

³⁶ Keynote address to the UN Regional Disarmament Workshop for Asia and Pacific, in Disarmament, UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, 1991, p. 14.

³⁷ See, e.g., Michael Vatikiotis, "Yankee Please Stay," *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, December 13, 1990.

³⁸ "The Asia/Pacific Security Forum Idea Takes Off—Sort Of," *Pacific Research*, August 1991, p. 22.

³⁹ By building outward from ASEAN, the idea, put forth initially by Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in 1988, is to retain ASEAN's primacy and identity. "In too big and amorphous a club, we will lose our sense of unity and our sense of purpose. But we can do it without losing our separate identity in ASEAN by dialogue with, say, the North Pacific countries and ... the South Pacific countries, and then both north and south." Interview in *The Australian*, September 1988, cited in Acharya (1993), p. 61.

- ⁴⁰ See, e.g., Michael Leifer, "Debating Asian Security," *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 5, no. 2, 1992, pp. 187-189. Leifer's argument is that the capacities of the ASEAN member states to move beyond consultation on matters of subregional concern are limited, and that, except at a general level of abstraction, issues affecting other subregions and/or the region as a whole will not be effectively addressed.
- ⁴¹ Andrew Mack of the Australian National University (ANU) has pointed out that there is already more transparency in North East Asia than among the ASEAN states—in the sense that Japan, South Korea, and now Taiwan, publish Defense White Papers, something that none of the ASEAN states has yet to do. Andrew Mack, *Naval Arms Control and Confidence-Building for Northeast Asian Waters*, NPCSD Working Paper Number 13, York University, Ontario, August 1992, p. 4.
- ⁴² As one analysis put it: "ASEAN—accounting for only four percent of the region's GDP—is not necessarily the best leadership for an exercise that should aim, near the top of its list, at securing agreement on the rules of the game among the region's economic and strategic powerhouses (namely the US, China and Japan)." David Dewitt and Paul Evans, eds., *The Agenda for Cooperative Security in the North Pacific: Conference Report*, North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue Research Programme, York University, Ontario, July 1993, p. 18.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- ⁴⁴ Current APEC members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, the People's Republic of China, Chile, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, and the United States.
- ⁴⁵ Barry M. Blechman, "Possible Roles for the United Nations in Regional Security," in Victor Utgoff, Barry Blechman, James Lacy, Robbin F. Laird, Jack L. Kangas, and Peter Stein, *Changing Face of Conventional Arms Control*, IDA, P-2956, January 1994, p. E4.
- ⁴⁶ The Asia-Pacific, it warrants noting, is scarcely unique in these regards. As Paul Evans has pointed out, "The relationship between the U.N. and most regional security organizations, especially in the developing world, has not been generally warm." Paul M. Evans, "Emerging Patterns in Asia Pacific Security: The Search for a Regional Framework," Unpub. Manuscript, York University, Ontario, September 15, 1991; cited in Lacy (1992a), p. 161.
- ⁴⁷ Kazakhstan's and Russia's enlarged forum proposals are discussed in earlier IDA papers. For Kazakhstan's interest and proposals, see Susan L. Clark, *The Central Asian States: Defining Security Priorities and Developing Military Forces*, IDA, P-2886, September 1993, p. 7. For the Russian interest in V-to-V, see Barbara Bicksler and James L. Lacy, *After the Fall: Russian Perspectives on Security Policy and Arms Control*, IDA, D-1141, March 1992, pp. 23-24.
- ⁴⁸ The rationale was set forth in Solomon (1990).
- ⁴⁹ See "Baker Vows Constancy on Asian Security Ties: 4-Nation Initiative Sought on Korean Issues," *Washington Post*, November 11, 1991, p. A21.
- ⁵⁰ James A. Baker, "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1991/92, pp. 4-6.
- ⁵¹ Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, "East Asia and the Pacific: U.S. Policy and Assistance," Statement before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, May 6, 1993.
- ⁵² Quoted in *EASR 1995*, p. 13.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ⁵⁴ See, e.g., Joseph A. Camilleri, *The Emerging Security Agenda in the Asia-Pacific Region*, NPCSD Working Paper Number 12, Ontario, May 1992.
- ⁵⁵ Gareth Evans, Address to the Asia-Australia Institute, Sydney, October 3, 1991.
- ⁵⁶ *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, The White House, July 1994, p. 24.
- ⁵⁷ *EASR 1995*, p. 13.

III. STARTING OFF

¹ *Bangkok Statement.*

² *Ibid.*

³ Evans, Media Briefing, July 25, 1994.

- ⁴ Jusuf Wannadi, chairman of Indonesia's Centre for International and Strategic Studies, quoted in "Treading Softly," *FEER*, August 3, 1995, p. 20.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ *Bangkok Statement*.
- ⁷ For the background on NWFZ initiatives in the region's past, see James L. Lacy, "Regional Perspectives in Conventional Arms Control and Confidence-Building: The Asia Pacific," in Utgoff, et. al. (1994).
- ⁸ August 5, 1995, p. 31.
- ⁹ By some accounts, Japan's early opposition to the Canadian and Australian proposals stemmed from the fact that it did not trust the assurances in this regard, and worried that Kuriles dispute with the Soviet Union would eventually get entangled in a multilateral forum. See, e.g., Trevor Findlay, *Asia/Pacific CSBMs: A Prospectus*, Working Paper No. 90, Peace Research Centre, ANU, Canberra, August 1990, p. 7.
- ¹⁰ The background is well-covered by Lee Lai To of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs in "ASEAN and the South China Sea Disputes," Paper presented at the AEI South China Sea Conference, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, September 7-9, 1994.
- ¹¹ The Spratly Islands sovereignty/jurisdictional disputes are discussed in detail in Section III of a companion volume, James L. Lacy, *Cautious Peace: Strategy and Circumstance in Asia-Pacific Security*, IDA, P-3108, July 1995.
- ¹² "The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)," *Pacific Research*, August 1994, p. 13.
- ¹³ Pan Shiyong, "South China Sea and the International Practice of the Historic Title," Paper presented at the AEI South China Sea Conference, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, September 7-9, 1994, p. 12. Pan Shying, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for International Technological Economic Studies in Beijing, is widely considered to be a spokesman for the Chinese government on South China issues.
- ¹⁴ See, e.g., Sheng Lijun, "Island Fever," *FEER*, December 8, 1994, p. 21: "Those who expect more Chinese concessions on the Spratly Islands in a post-Deng era are likely kidding themselves [T]he regime we now see in Beijing seems to be the most compromising one we can possibly have."
- ¹⁵ For a good summary review, see "South-East Asia's Sweet Tooth," *The Economist*, August 5, 1995, p. 31.
- ¹⁶ U.S. Pacific Command, *Asia-Pacific Economic Update: Spring 1994*, Honolulu, HI, 1994, pp. 45-49.
- ¹⁷ In the words of Malaysia's former chief of defense forces, "There is no arms race here and I am sure one will not occur." Quoted in Acharya (1993), p. 90, n. 62.
- ¹⁸ Quoted *ibid.*, p. 68.
- ¹⁹ Desmond Ball and W.S.G. Bateman, "An Australian Perspective on Maritime CSBMs in the Asia-Pacific Region," Paper presented at the Workshop on Naval Confidence- and Security-Building in the Asia-Pacific Region, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 8-10, 1991, p. 20.
- ²⁰ The categories are: battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large-caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles and missile launchers. The UN arms transfer registry lacks a verification and enforcement mechanism, and many weapons or components that could have destabilizing effects, like advanced munitions, need not be reported under the registry's terms. A good assessment is Blechman (1994).
- ²¹ As of March 1995, only three ARF participants—Vietnam, Brunei, and Laos—had submitted no conventional arms transfer information to the registry for calendar year 1993. Malcolm Chalmers and Owen Greene, "The UN Register and Asia-Pacific," *Pacific Research*, May 1995, pp. 46-49. But two major importers of weapons in the region, Thailand and non-ARF-participant Taiwan, refused to report on imports; North Korea, a major exporter (and not an ARF participant), did not report at all; China, another major importer, provided minimal and uninformative data.
- ²² See, *Pacific Research*, August 1994, p. 13; Acharya (1993), p. 68. Malaysia's 1989 proposal for regional arms register was intended, according to the Malaysian Defence Minister, so that "suspicions among each other could be minimised, and managed." In a similar vein, that same year, Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew proposed that Singapore and Malaysia open their key military installations for mutual challenge inspections. As with the Malaysian registry proposal, however, there was no follow-up. As regards the UN registry, most states in the region participated, at least (and mostly) perfunctorily, in the UN registry's first year (1993).

- ²³ On these counts, see Lacy (1994), pp. A19–A20. There are risks and downsides to military transparencies that are not lost on the East Asian states. As Desmond Ball of ANU makes the case: “Transparency is not a neutral strategic value. The effect of transparency is different for countries with more ‘defensive’ as opposed to ‘offensive’ postures, as well as for those countries more dependent upon arms imports rather than indigenous production. It can expose vulnerabilities (in both intelligence collection and force structure capabilities). Uncertainty about the capabilities of potential adversaries sometimes serves to enhance deterrence (or to induce caution).” Desmond Ball, “Arms and Affluence: Military acquisitions in the Asia-Pacific Region,” *International Security*, Winter 1993/94, p. 108.
- ²⁴ Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australian Paper on Practical Proposals for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region ... Commissioned by the 1993 ASEAN PMC SOM on Confidence-Building Measures Applicable to the Region*, Canberra, April 1994, p. 3 [hereinafter, Australia, *Practical Proposals*].
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.
- ²⁶ *EASR 1995*, p. 13.
- ²⁷ Australia, *Practical Proposals*, pp. 3–4.
- ²⁸ Europe has a long history of often blitzkrieg-like invasions back and forth across reasonably identifiable geographical axes. Force drawbacks, operational constraints, and transparency measures defined in geographical terms have thus made sense in the European setting. Similarly, ground and air forces factored prominently in Cold War Europe’s confidence-building, especially measures that would increase attack warning time or otherwise constrain standing-start attacks. There is little comparable history of repeated surprise attacks along definable corridors in the Asia-Pacific, and less of a defense (and arms control) culture of preparedness against them. For many Asia-Pacific countries, external threats will come primarily by air and sea, not land. For these states, it is not a massing of forces near or along a common border but rather an accumulation over time of power projection capabilities in the hands of potential adversaries that is the principal worry.
- ²⁹ Most of the naval confidence-building that was debated, and sometimes agreed, during the Cold War is hard to fit with the Asia-Pacific’s present maritime circumstances. Much of it concerned nuclear weaponry at sea. Some of it might still be applicable to large, ocean-roaming “blue-water” naval forces. With few exceptions, however—e.g., agreements to permit foreign observers at national naval exercises, general dialogue about naval theories and doctrines, agreements to prevent incidents and dangerous military activities at sea—it is hard to apply most of the accumulated concepts of naval confidence-building to the relatively small “green water/brown water” navies of the Asia-Pacific. By-and-large, smaller navies have neither the size and capabilities nor the range to be high-risk competitors and intruders. Moreover—a point that applies more generally—it is difficult to locate at present specific problems that these might discretely address. Agreements to prevent dangerous incidents involving ships at sea, for example, might have more appeal were such incidents an issue and a problem, but, for now at least, they are not.
- ³⁰ Trevor Findlay, *Confidence-Building Measures for Asia/Pacific*, Working Paper No. 55, Peace Research Centre, ANU, Canberra, December 1988, p. 25.
- ³¹ In the Cold War, CBMs were a form of *operational arms control*—consisting of regulations affecting the operations and associated readiness of forces—whose aims were not only to avoid misunderstandings and miscalculations that might lead to unintended crises or conflicts, but also to reduce operational capabilities for surprise attacks by specific adversaries. CBMs variously requiring advance notifications of military exercises and maneuvers; limiting their locations, size, and duration; stationing observers at them; reciprocally drawing back forces (or certain “offensively oriented” kinds of forces) from areas in which they might come into direct contact or conflict; and insisting on real-time information about force postures and deployments in order to give these kinds of measures credible effect, were key and tangible elements in the Cold War debate over arms control, no less than were measures aimed at reducing overall inventories of weapons and forces. See Paul K. Davis, *Toward a Conceptual Framework for Operational Arms Control in Europe’s Central Region*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 1988, and Lacy (1991).
- ³² Australia, *Practical Proposals*, pp. 3, 13.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14 [emphasis in original]. Taken up in the next section, this may not be as weak and unfocused as it seems. In the region in which states traditionally have considered security to be a topic reserved

for solely national consideration and discussion, broadening the dialogue has to amount to an improvement. But it is also confidence-building in only a rudimentary sense, and this, too, needs to be borne in mind.

³⁵ A South Pacific Peacekeeping Force (SPPKF), with 432 troops from Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu, was dispatched in September to support peace talks between Papua New Guinea's government and secessionist rebels. "History," said Fiji's prime minister, "will record this [development] as a watershed in regional cooperation." But the South Pacific suffers from a general perception within the region that, with the Cold War over, it is "a place of no significance except as a source of tuna for major fishing nations," and it is improbable that countries outside the immediate vicinity will pay much attention to developments there. Fiji Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, September 22, 1994, quoted in FEER, *Asia 1995 Yearbook: A Review of the Events of 1994*, December 1994, p. 72.

³⁶ Gareth Evans, "Cooperative Security and Intra-State Conflict," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1994, p. 16.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

IV. FROM HERE

¹ Kishore Mahbubani, "The Pacific Way," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1995, p. 110.

² Quoted in "Treading Softly," FEER, August 3, 1995, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ ASEAN official quoted, *ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ These and related points are examined at length in the companion volume, Lacy (1995).

⁸ Shared economic interests may provide a different kind of glue, although theories about the relationship between economic and military/security interests are not very well developed.

⁹ ARF gets a single passing mention in the 167-page white paper. "[The Australian Department of] Defence also participated in the processes relating to the inaugural meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1994. Defence will increasingly have a role in activities relating to that Forum as it directs its attention to issues such as transparency and confidence building among defence forces in the region." *Defending Australia: Defence White Paper 1994*, Canberra, 1994, p. 93.

¹⁰ Patrick M. Cronin and Michael J. Green, *Redefining the U.S.-Japan Alliance: Tokyo's National Defense Program*, McNair Paper 31, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington, DC, November 1994, pp. 8-9. A translation of the advisory report is included as an appendix.

¹¹ *NSS 1995*, p. 28.

¹² *EASR 1995*, p. 13.

¹³ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, "Regional Networking: Role of Non-Governmental Individuals," paper presented at the conference on "Democratization Trends in Southeast Asia: Sectoral Groups' Involvement in Mainstream Politics," Southeast Asian Forum for Development Alternatives, Jakarta, October 21-24, 1993(a), p. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ "Growing Asean faces Strains," *FEER*, December 29, 1994 and January 5, 1995, p. 23.

¹⁶ Frank Ching, "Growing Asean Faces Strains," *FEER*, December 29, 1994 and January 5, 1995, p. 23.

¹⁷ Quoted in Acharya (1993), p. 61.

¹⁸ "[T]he new strategic environment," according to Najib, "with no clear paradigms yet, certainly provides us with an opportunity to, perhaps for the first time in our history, chart the destiny of this region by ourselves and not to be determined by the interests of extra-regional states." "The 'Najib Initiative' and Confidence-Building in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Asian Defence Journal*, 7/92, p. 10.

¹⁹ The ten institutes are: (1) Strategic Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Australia; (2) University of Toronto-York University Joint Center for Asia Pacific Studies, Canada; (3) Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia; (4) Japan Institute of International Affairs, Japan; (5) Seoul Forum for International Affairs, Republic of Korea; (6) Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia; (7) Institute of Strategic and Development Studies, Philippines; (8) Singapore

Institute of International Affairs, Singapore; (9) Institute for security and International Studies, Thailand; and (10) Pacific Forum/CSIS, United States.

²⁰ "NGOs and Regional security: New forum created for experts to discuss security issues," *FEER*, June 30, 1994.

²¹ The work of the U.S. CSCAP Task Force on CSBMs is illustrative. Its 17 recommendations wander across a range from expanding military-to-military contacts in the region and establishing speakers programs "to open up currents of thinking in the region for broader understanding," to recommending establishment of a regional organization to oversee the nuclear fuel cycle, "strengthening systems of national export control," promoting a "dialogue on effective governance" in Asia-Pacific countries, and pressing the United States to sign the protocol to the 1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Treaty of Rarotonga). Brad Roberts and Robert Ross, "Confidence and Security Building: A USCSCAP Task Force Report," in Ralph A. Cossa, ed., *Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, DC, 1995, pp. 137-160 [hereinafter *USCSCAP 1995*].

²² Gareth Evans, "The Asia Pacific and Global Change," Address to the Trilateral Commission, Tokyo, April 20, 1991, p. 4. See also Evans (1994).

²³ Nancy Viviani, "Of Voices, Visions, and Texts," in Greg Fly, ed., *Australia's Regional Security*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1991, p. 30.

²⁴ *USCSCAP 1995*, p. 140.

²⁵ China is a case in point. "China is ready to settle disputes through dialogue on the basis of equality and bilateral negotiations," Premier Li Ping reaffirmed early in 1995. Weaker neighbors scarcely find this reassuring. As Nayan Chanda of *FEER* puts it, bilateralism "means China won't get outnumbered, but it also means that the complex disputes have little chance of being resolved by talking." "Fear of the Dragon," *FEER*, April 13, 1995, p. 28.

²⁶ For elaboration, see Lacy (1994), pp. A2-A4, A18-A23.

²⁷ Lacy (1992a) and Lacy (1994).

V. U.S. INTERESTS

¹ *USCSCAP 1995*, p. 144.

² Lacy (1992b), p. 159.

VI. AFTERWORD

¹ Chairman's Statement of the Second ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), 1 August 1995, Bandar Seri Begawan.

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Multilateral security dialogues and interactions are fairly new in the Asia-Pacific. The principal embodiment at present is the 18-nation ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), established in 1993. This paper examines ARF's origins, what the forum is about at present (mid-1995), where it may be plausibly headed over the next several years, and with what near and longer term implications for U.S. regional defense policy in the Asia-Pacific.				
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