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THESIS

**ASEAN SECURITY COOPERATION:
NTS AND WMD/CBRN**

by

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ASEAN SECURITY COOPERATION: NTS AND WMD/CBRN

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the developing response of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) toward weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) range of threats as a case study of its approach to non-traditional security issues. Over the past two decades, ASEAN-led WMD/CBRN cooperation largely emphasized rhetoric, dialogue, treaties, and confidence-building measures, which were especially notable in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Although ASEAN leaders previously expressed their support toward international cooperation, they initially limited their activities to diplomacy, which frustrated their extra-regional partners. However, ASEAN's activities within the last few years indicate that it has become more inclined toward developing the capabilities necessary for disrupting threat WMD proliferation efforts and responding to potential WMD/CBRN incidents. In 2018, defense leaders and practitioners of the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting established the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Defense Experts, or the "ASEAN CBR Network." The following year, the ARF heads of state planned to conduct a tabletop exercise to address WMD disarmament, non-proliferation, and capability generation. This thesis reveals that ASEAN's approach to region-specific WMD/CBRN security challenges is changing, although this shift has been mostly from diplomacy to consultation, education, and limited exercise planning.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCT	ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism
ACDFIM	ASEAN Chiefs of Defense Forces Informal Meeting
ADD	Agency for Defense Development
ADMM	ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting
ADMM-Plus	ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting-Plus
ADMM+1	ADMM and one designated extra-regional partner
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Center
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AHA	ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance
AMS	ASEAN member states
APSC	ASEAN Political Security Community
APT	advanced persistent threat
A.Q.	Abdul Qadeer
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ARF ISM	ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting
ARF SA	ARF Standby Arrangements
ARF SOM	ARF Senior Officials Meetings
ARMAC	ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN ERAT	ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
BMD	ballistic missile defense
BWTC	Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention
CBM	confidence-building measure
CBR	chemical, biological and radiological
CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear
CBRN CoE	CBRN Center of Excellence
CBRNE	chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive
CCA	Commission on Conventional Armaments
CCW	Convention on Conventional Weapons
CHART	Combined Humanitarian Assistance Response Training
COE	Center of Excellence
CR	conflict resolution
CS	cyber security
CSCAP	Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific
CT	counter-terrorism
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTX	counter-terrorism exercise
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention

DiREx	disaster relief exercise
DR	disaster relief
DTRA	Defense Threat Reduction Agency
EGM	Experts Group Meeting
ERW	explosive remnants of war
EU	European Union
EWG	Experts Working Group
FMCT	Fissile Missile Cut-off Treaty
FMP	Full Mission Profile
FTX	field training exercise
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HADR	humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
HDP	human development report
HMA	humanitarian mine action
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IDP	internally displaced persons
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGO	intergovernmental organization
INDOPACOM	Indo-Pacific Command
IS	Islamic State
ISG	Intersessional Support Group
ISG CBM	ISG on Confidence Building Measures
ISM	Inter-Sessional Meeting
ISM CT-TC	ISM on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime
ISM DR	ISM on Disaster Relief
ISM MS	ISM on Maritime Security
ISM NPD	ISM on Nonproliferation and Disarmament
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
MALSINDO	Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia
MM	military medicine
MS	maritime security
MSSI	Malacca Straits Security Initiative
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSAG	Non-State Armed Group
NTS	non-traditional security

NWS	nuclear weapon states
PD	preventive diplomacy
PE	practical exercise
PKO	peacekeeping operations
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
RMSI	Regional Maritime Security Initiative
SALW	small arms and light weapons
SCOPE	Scomi Precision Engineering
SCS	South China Sea
SEANWFZ	Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone
SLD	Shangri-La Dialogue
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
SOP	standard operating procedure
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
TCG	Tsunami Core Group
TTX	tabletop exercise
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNGGE	UN Group of Governmental Experts
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
U.S.	United States
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
UXO	unexploded ordnance
VEO	violent extremist organization
WMD	weapon of mass destruction

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis examines how the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has responded to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the chemical, biological radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) range of threats, specifically as a case study of its approach to region-specific non-traditional security (NTS) issues. ASEAN is essential for this study because it is the dominant regional institution in Southeast Asia that oversees regional security cooperation. This study is designed around the question of why the organization has previously subordinated CBRN threats to other region-specific NTS issues, even though this impeded the development of its counter-CBRN capabilities. Possible explanations include the following: ASEAN members consider CBRN threats a lower priority than other threats; ASEAN members are reluctant to embrace a strong commitment to counter-WMD/CBRN proliferation because they are concerned it could lead to excessive influence by extra-regional partners; ASEAN's institutional designs are not suited to a strong commitment to CBRN non-proliferation outside of consideration of other NTS concerns; and ASEAN members' behavior has resulted from more idiosyncratic influences, including region-specific security developments and domestic political factors.

In answering the question, this thesis examined ASEAN's approach to WMD/CBRN threats as a case study of its approach to engaging region-specific NTS issues. It first examined general ASEAN NTS cooperation from the 1990s onward, discussing the characteristics of NTS, the international community's shift to NTS in a post-Cold War environment, and examples of known NTS categories to establish a baseline understanding of the topic. It then shifted its focus toward addressing general ASEAN NTS cooperation, specifically through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM), and the ADMM-Plus. This section also highlighted the obstacles that limited the association's willingness, or ability, to advance beyond its historical practice of defaulting to diplomacy and rhetoric, despite awareness and concern toward an increasing number of regional security threats. It also explored how ASEAN transitioned from the ARF practice of engaging almost entirely in dialogue to engaging in defense consultation and cooperation with extra-regional partners.

The thesis then transitioned to investigating ASEAN-led WMD/CBRN security cooperation, beginning with the early characterizing of “weapons of mass destruction” and the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) range of threats during the mid-to-late 1940s. Similar to the previous chapter, it then shifted its focus toward addressing ASEAN WMD/CBRN cooperation in the previously-mentioned security forums, highlighting the challenges that hindered the organization’s ability to respond to emerging regional WMD/CBRN threats. Afterwards, it explored how ASEAN later acknowledged WMD/CBRN as a credible threat to regional peace, order, and stability during its signing of the 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT), identifying it as a sub-category of transnational terrorism. Lastly, it investigated how the organization attempted to transition from its practice of dialogue and rhetoric to exercise-planning, consultation, and education, as demonstrated by the 2018 establishment of the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defense Experts (“ASEAN CBR Network”), and the ARF’s 2019 CBRN tabletop exercise (TTX) proposal.

This thesis concludes that ASEAN’s approach to region-specific WMD/CBRN security challenges is changing; however, this shift was mostly from diplomacy and rhetoric to consultation, education, and limited exercise planning. This thesis also finds that ASEAN’s subordination of WMD/CBRN threats to other region-specific NTS issues began with its limited security focus during the ARF’s 1996 inaugural meeting, where it deliberately directed its efforts toward addressing transnational crime. It was not until 2007 that ASEAN explicitly acknowledged the need to address WMD/CBRN threats, specifically CBRN terrorism. However, ASEAN WMD/CBRN security cooperation remained largely diplomatic until 2018, when the ADMM established the “ASEAN CBR Network,” and later in 2019, when the ARF proposed a CBRN tabletop exercise (TTX) to address threats presented by the release of hazardous WMD/CBRN substances and agents.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Over the past two decades, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has expressed its support towards preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). However, this support resulted mainly in the form of diplomacy and rhetoric, especially in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). One such instance includes the 1999 annual ARF meeting, where ASEAN leaders called for members of the larger international community, specifically its extra-regional partners, to agree to the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).¹ Although diplomacy and rhetoric dominated ASEAN's approach to engaging WMD threats, its activities over the last few years indicate that it has become more open to the idea of advancing beyond diplomacy, to include developing the capabilities necessary to respond to potential WMD incidents, and deter and counter emerging region-specific threats.

Until the early 2000s, ASEAN WMD/CBRN cooperation focused mostly on dialogues, treaties, and confidence-building measures (CBMs). Transitioning from the post-Cold War period into the Global War on Terror (GWOT), ASEAN demonstrated its intent to drive the security agenda, opposing the initiatives proposed by extra-regional partners. It had done so despite increasing awareness and concern among its individual members regarding WMD and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) terrorism. It later attempted to shift the ARF's focus from dialogue to practical security cooperation, specifically in the areas of counter-terrorism, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), albeit in a seemingly ad-hoc and limited fashion.²

¹ ASEAN Regional Forum, *ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF)* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ASEAN Regional Forum Unit, 2018), https://media.nti.org/pdfs/arf_BGxKUe6.pdf.

² Jürgen Haacke, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 22, no. 3 (September 2009): 430–440, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557570903104057>.

In 2006, ASEAN established the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM). This initiative was meant to address the institutional weaknesses found in ARF security cooperation, which was dominated by foreign ministry officials, and to rectify the capability imbalances found among its members. While the action itself was revolutionary, it did not immediately address ASEAN's growing WMD concerns, considering that the organization elected to focus more on counter-terrorism, maritime security, peacekeeping operations, military medicine, and HADR.³ It was not until the 2007 signing of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) that it explicitly acknowledged the need to address emerging CBRN threats, as it adopted a rubric as part of its multi-dimensional counter-terrorism strategy. This acknowledgement demonstrated ASEAN's willingness to advance beyond diplomacy and take concrete action.⁴ However, this did not shift the organization's security priorities, nor did it immediately result in capability generation. This trend continued through 2010, when ASEAN established the ADMM-Plus, which includes the ten ASEAN members as well as eight extra-regional partners. Although it promoted security cooperation and consultation with these partners, ASEAN continued to focus on non-traditional security (NTS) issues outside of the WMD/CBRN realm.⁵

ASEAN reached a turning point in 2018, when the ADMM announced its establishment of the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defense Experts, or "ASEAN CBR Network."⁶ The following year, the ARF proposed that a tabletop exercise (TTX) for responding to CBRN incidents be held in 2020, to further "[p]romote disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, while enhancing ASEAN capacity to address deliberate/accidental release of hazardous substances/agents of weapons of mass destruction," demonstrating the organization's

³ See Seng Tan, "Is ASEAN Finally Getting Multilateralism Right? From ARF to ADMM+," *Asian Studies Review* 44, no. 1 (November 2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2019.1691502>.

⁴ Andrew Chau, "Security Community and Southeast Asia: Australia, the U.S., and ASEAN's Counter-Terror Strategy," *Asian Survey* 48, no. 4 (August 2008): 633, ProQuest.

⁵ Tan, "Is ASEAN Finally Getting Multilateralism Right? From ARF to ADMM+," 1.

⁶ "Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, Radiological Defense Experts," ASEAN, accessed December 27, 2020, <https://www.asean-cbr.org/about-us>.

intent to advance beyond diplomacy and rhetoric, and develop more measures toward concrete cooperation.⁷ On the one hand, these developments show how ASEAN gradually identified WMD/CBRN as a relevant region-specific NTS threat. However, its previous activities demonstrate that it had not advanced beyond information-sharing, implying that it has made little progress toward building capability. This thesis seeks to explain why ASEAN subordinates CBRN threats to other NTS threats, even though this impedes its development of counter-CBRN capabilities. It will also investigate whether ASEAN's approach to WMD/CBRN is changing, and if so, why.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In 2018, the White House released its National Defense Strategy, which stated that “Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.”⁸ Although the U.S. prioritized great power competition, terrorism remains a persistent security issue. Southeast Asia continues to be a domain for transnational terrorists, considering ongoing issues related to border security, territorial disputes, and ethnic strife. The ADMM's establishment of the CBR Network, and the ARF's WMD/CBRN TTX proposal, suggest that ASEAN acknowledges shortcomings within its security architecture, and that existing and emerging threats seek to leverage WMD/CBRN means to challenge the standing regional order. When it comes to the topic of WMD/CBRN, the U.S. has historically directed more of its focus toward Northeast Asian states like North Korea, and South Asian states like India and Pakistan. On the other hand, Southeast Asian states were viewed as partners in supporting U.S. efforts and placed

⁷ ASEAN Regional Forum, *ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Tabletop Exercise (TTX) on Response Capabilities to CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) Incidents* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ARF Unit, 2019), <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Annex-15-ARF-TTX-on-Response-Capabilities-to-CBRN-incidents.pdf>.

⁸ White House, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America*. (Washington, DC: White House, 2018), <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

on the periphery.⁹ However, ASEAN's recent broadening security focus, and its intent to enhance cooperation with extra-regional partners, presents the U.S. an opportunity to further develop cooperative security dialogues, partnerships, and address common threats throughout the greater Indo-Pacific region.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature that examines ASEAN's approach to WMD/CBRN can be broadly organized in the following categories: general NTS cooperation and WMD/CBRN cooperation. The first section focuses on general ASEAN NTS cooperation, specifically ASEAN's activities through the ARF and ADMM/ADMM-Plus. It also includes the circumstances leading to their establishment, and their intent, functions, and relevant challenges. The second section focuses on ASEAN WMD/CBRN cooperation, examining the organization's diplomatic opposition to nuclear weapons, its responses to rising international concern over arsenal proliferation, adoption of a CBRN rubric, and activities through the previously-mentioned security forums.

1. General Security Cooperation

a. The ARF

The ARF represents ASEAN's initial attempt to lead and foster regional security cooperation. In his article, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and Evolution," Morada illustrates the role of the ARF between the late 1990s and early 2000s, and its efforts to maintain its central role in the organization. Initially, non-ASEAN members accepted ASEAN's particularities in the ARF, which centered around diplomacy, rhetoric, and consensus.¹⁰ However, these later became sources of internal tension during the GWOT. The September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S., and the October 12, 2002 Bali bombings,

⁹ White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 1990), <https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/nss/nss1990.pdf?ver=x5cwOOez0oak2BjhXekM-Q%3d%3d>.

¹⁰ Noel M. Morada, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and Evolution," in *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada (New York: Routledge, 2010), 16–17.

marked a major turning point for the ARF security agenda. In response to emerging regional threats and security challenges, non-ASEAN members gradually advocated implementing security agreements of physical and force-oriented natures, which several ASEAN members openly opposed. Increasing extra-regional partner disapproval toward ASEAN's defaulting to diplomatic measures also brought into question the organization's ability to collectively respond to regional security challenges.¹¹ Along the same vein, Simon asserts that ASEAN's preference for diplomacy served as the reason that the ARF was unable to advance past CBMs, or develop long-term solutions.¹²

Persistent capability issues challenged the ARF's ability to collectively commit to long-term security solutions. Haacke's "The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?" provides an examination of how the ARF attempted to pursue more concrete security cooperation to address terrorism, maritime security, and HADR, as opposed to defaulting to rhetoric. He argues that despite the ARF's efforts, capability imbalances among the ASEAN members persistently hindered collective action.¹³ Jones and Smith note that in 2003, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia conducted a series of counter-terrorism operations that resulted in the detaining of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members in their countries. However, these successes were not the result of intra-ASEAN cooperation, but of existing bilateral partnerships between ASEAN and non-ASEAN ARF members. The concurrent execution of multiple bilateral operations gave an impression of a multilateral effort.¹⁴ Cha also highlights an instance where the ARF lacked the mechanisms to address NTS, specifically noting the events of the 2004 Indian Ocean natural disasters that led to over 300,000 deaths in the Indo-Pacific. Due to the ARF's lack

¹¹ Morada, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and Evolution," 26–34.

¹² Sheldon W. Simon, "The ASEAN Regional Forum," in *The Routledge Handbook of Asian Security Studies*, ed. Sumit Ganguly, Andrew Scobell, and Joseph Chinyong Liow (New York: Routledge, 2010), 302.

¹³ Haacke, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?," 430–440.

¹⁴ David M. Jones and Michael L. R. Smith, "Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order," *International Security* 32, no. 1 (2007): 171–173, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30129804>.

of HADR mechanisms and capabilities, non-ASEAN ARF countries like Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. established the Tsunami Core Group (TCG) to provide assistance.¹⁵ These articles demonstrate how some members found the ARF incapable as a means of facilitating collective action, prompting individual states to default to pre-existing security partnerships external to ARF mechanisms.

Due to the lack of commitment, resources, and solutions in the ARF, non-ASEAN members gradually became frustrated. Glosserman's "The United States and the ASEAN Regional Forum: A Delicate Balancing Act," provides insight on U.S. concerns about the ARF. He describes how the U.S. initially reassessed its Asia-Pacific strategy, as the post-Cold War environment questioned the relevance of its military alliances and partnerships. This left some ASEAN states concerned with the possibility of the U.S. leaving a power void in the region.¹⁶ Despite being a member of the ARF, the U.S. was critical of ASEAN's particularities, especially its defaulting to diplomacy and CBMs. Jones and Smith describe this as a criticism of ASEAN's tendency to emphasize adherence to processes and its particularities, specifically at the cost of organizational growth, improvement, and flexibility.¹⁷

In addition to Western representatives, Northeast Asian members also expressed their discontent with the ARF's ineffectiveness. In his article "Japan and the ASEAN Regional Forum, From Enthusiasm to Disappointment," Yuzawa explores Japan's changing perspective and policy toward the organization, to include its attempt to influence regional security in a post-Cold War environment. He also notes how Japan's diplomatic leaders gradually lost interest in the forum, expressing the same concerns that drove the

¹⁵ Victor D. Cha, "Complex Patchworks: U.S. Alliances as Part of Asia's Regional Architecture," *Asia Policy* 11 (2011): 37, <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2011.0004>.

¹⁶ Brad Glosserman, "The United States and the ASEAN Regional Forum: A Delicate Balancing Act," in *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada (New York: Routledge, 2010), 39–40.

¹⁷ Jones and Smith, "Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order," 151–154.

U.S. to criticize the organization.¹⁸ Both articles provide relevant insight on ARF member dynamics, specifically non-ASEAN member frustrations toward ASEAN's relatively laggard pace in advancing from diplomacy to concrete action.

b. ADMM/ADMM-Plus

In response to the ARF's institutional challenges, to include the persistent capability imbalances found among Southeast Asian states, ASEAN pressed forward with establishing the ADMM. In "Providers Not Protectors: Institutionalizing Responsible Sovereignty in Southeast Asia," Tan notes how ADMM aimed to avoid the ARF practice of engaging almost entirely in dialogue, specifically through leveraging the skills and resources of various world powers to develop regional capability.¹⁹ He notes that while ADMM was intended to make defense consultation and cooperation effective, ASEAN leaders continued to leverage other forums to carry out what he describes as the "real work."²⁰ ASEAN's ensemble of defense-related meetings also included forums like the ASEAN Chiefs of Defense Forces (or Chiefs of Staff) Informal Meeting (ACDFIM) and the ASEAN Military Intelligence Informal Meeting. Despite the disparate forums, ADMM leaders coordinated parallel efforts, suggesting their intent to streamline defense cooperation.²¹

However, streamlining processes did not immediately enable ASEAN to address the growing number of regional NTS challenges, which included counter-terrorism, HADR, maritime security, military medicine, and peacekeeping operations. Having identified capability shortages among ASEAN's militaries, ADMM pressed forward with establishing the ADMM-Plus, a multilateral framework which broadened ASEAN's scope

¹⁸ Takeshi Yuzawa, "Japan and the ASEAN Regional Forum, From Enthusiasm to Disappointment," in *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada (New York: Routledge, 2010), 77–78.

¹⁹ See Seng Tan, "Providers Not Protectors: Institutionalizing Sovereignty in Southeast Asia," *Asian Security* 7, no. 3 (October 2011): 210–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2011.615081>.

²⁰ See Seng Tan, "Talking Their Walk"? The Evolution of Defense Regionalism in Southeast Asia," *Asian Security* 8, no. 3 (October 2012): 238–239, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2012.723919>.

²¹ Tan, 238–239.

of defense cooperation. In “ASEAN and the ADMM-Plus: Balancing between Strategic Imperatives and Functionality,” Tang notes how ADMM-Plus provided opportunities for ADMM members to enhance the training and quality of their military and security forces. These opportunities also manifested in the establishment of Experts Working Groups (EWGs). This process involved pairing an ADMM country with an extra-regional partner, or a “Plus” member, to address a specific challenge. Although the institutionalization of ADMM-Plus was not necessarily groundbreaking, it enabled regional security cooperation to become more functional.²² In the same vein, Tan argues that since its founding, ASEAN and the “Plus” countries have made considerable progress, despite warnings from critics that ADMM-Plus will “end up as a ‘talk shop’ that achieves little real progress.”²³

Since its inauguration, ADMM-Plus has enabled ASEAN to develop organizational approaches towards NTS threats and challenges, and to broaden its scope to additional areas of cooperation, such as humanitarian mine action and cyber security.²⁴ In “Is ASEAN Finally Getting Multilateralism Right? From ARF to ADMM+,” Tan argues that ASEAN’s leveraging of ADMM-Plus has allowed it to achieve results, but also notes that the organization must manage its expectations in order to remain successful.²⁵

2. WMD/CBRN Cooperation

a. Limited Rhetorical Opposition

ASEAN’s initial efforts toward WMD cooperation featured limited rhetorical opposition. Simon highlights how ASEAN leveraged the ARF to lead security dialogues on WMD cooperation during the early-to-mid 1990s. These efforts included CBMs and discussions pertaining to the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, proliferation of conventional arsenals, ballistic missile defense (BMD)

²² Siew M. Tang, “ASEAN and the ADMM-Plus: Balancing between Strategic Imperatives and Functionality,” *Asia Policy*, 22 (July 2016): 76–79, <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2016.0029>.

²³ See Seng Tan, “The ADMM-Plus: Regionalism That Works?,” *Asia Policy* 22 (July 2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2016.0024>.

²⁴ Tan, “Is ASEAN Finally Getting Multilateralism Right? From ARF to ADMM+,” 33.

²⁵ Tan, 31–37.

deployments, the Korean Peninsula, and supporting the ratification of treaties like the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).²⁶

b. *Increasing External Pressure*

Transitioning from a post-Cold War environment to the GWOT, extra-regional partners like the U.S. expressed increasing concern over transnational terrorism and nuclear proliferation. In his article “Combating WMD Terrorism: The Short-Sighted US-led Multilateral Response,” Rosand describes how American concerns about groups like the Abdul Qadeer (A.Q.) Khan network prompted Washington to implement the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) to deny suspected terrorist groups WMD capabilities.²⁷ Ogilvie-White’s “Non-proliferation and Counterterrorism Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Meeting Global Obligations through Regional Security Architectures?” provides a complementary examination of the initiative, specifically highlighting U.S.-ASEAN interactions and ASEAN reactions to the PSI. She illustrates how the majority of ASEAN members opposed the U.S.-led initiative. She asserts that while the initiative presented potential for enhancing cooperation toward disrupting threat WMD shipping methods, it initially did not appeal to several ASEAN members. The PSI required additional legislation, export controls, security, training, financial resources, and technical expertise, which were all beyond ASEAN’s means.²⁸

Following the Bush Administration’s 2003 implementation of the PSI, the United Nations adopted UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540). Ogilvie-White notes how the resolution represented a shift toward the “global governance of WMD

²⁶ Simon, “The ASEAN Regional Forum,” 302–303.

²⁷ Eric Rosand, “Combating WMD Terrorism: The Short-Sighted US-led Multilateral Response,” *The International Spectator* 44, no. 1 (April 2009): 83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932720802692988>.

²⁸ Tanya Ogilvie-White, “Non-proliferation and Counterterrorism Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Meeting Global Obligations through Regional Security Architectures?,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 28, no. 1 (April 2006): 12, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/206165>.

materials.”²⁹ This resolution required member states to withhold support to non-state actors that may be involved in WMD proliferation networks, increase export control measures, and establish border control measures. While some of the measures seemed applicable, several ASEAN members took a non-cooperative stance. Like the U.S.-led PSI, UNSCR 1540 also failed to consider their resource limitations and region-specific challenges.³⁰ One exception was Singapore, whose economy depends largely on shipping and maritime trade. Ong notes that Singaporean government officials recognized the importance of implementing additional maritime security and counter-proliferation measures, having factored its large container throughput and shipping.³¹

Progressing into the GWOT era, extra-regional partners continued to push for implementing initiatives geared toward addressing WMD and terrorist threats. Simon also notes the Council of Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific’s (CSCAP) 2006 establishment of the “Study Group on Facilitating Maritime Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.” While the group focused on maritime security, it also addressed terrorism and WMD proliferation. Following the group’s meetings, non-ASEAN ARF members proposed the establishment of the Inter-sessional Support Group (ISG) on WMD nonproliferation, continuing the trend set by the U.S. proposal of the PSI, and the UN’s UNSCR 1540. In response, ASEAN members expressed concern that establishing such an ISG would intrude on their domestic affairs. Although CSCAP maintained that its efforts were nested within the ARF’s objectives, both ASEAN and non-ASEAN members were unable to achieve consensus on establishing the proposed ISG.³²

Despite ASEAN’s apprehension towards U.S. and UN-driven initiatives, Southeast Asia’s porous borders and weak export controls presented opportunities for WMD/CBRN

²⁹ Ogilvie-White, “Non-proliferation and Counterterrorism Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Meeting Global Obligations through Regional Security Architectures?,” 4.

³⁰ Ogilvie-White, 4–5.

³¹ Siew G. Ong, “The Proliferation Security Initiative and Counter-Proliferation: A View from Asia,” in *Global Non-Proliferation and Counter-Terrorism: The Impact of UNSCR 1540*, ed. Olivia Bosch, Peter van Ham, and Jeffrey Almond (Maryland: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 162–163.

³² Simon, “The ASEAN Regional Forum,” 309.

threat groups to penetrate the region. Albright and Hinderstein highlight that A.Q. Khan, a Pakistani scientist, was able to establish a transnational network of businessmen, industry managers, and engineers to support nuclear proliferation efforts for hostile states like North Korea.³³ Khan successfully acquired aluminum components from Scomi Precision Engineering (SCOPE), in Malaysia, to manufacture centrifuges for uranium enrichment. His network's ability to reach Malaysian industries, and leverage their shipping means, highlighted weaknesses in regional export controls. However, this did not prompt ASEAN to alter its security agenda.³⁴

c. Adoption of a CBRN Rubric

Although ASEAN was apprehensive toward extra-regional partner initiatives, its members gradually developed an awareness of terrorist and WMD/CBRN threats. In his article, "Security Community and Southeast Asia: Australia, the U.S., and ASEAN's Counter-Terror Strategy," Chau takes note of ASEAN's signing of a counter-terror agreement in the 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism. In addition to promoting information sharing and law enforcement cooperation, the agreement required ASEAN members to develop capabilities and readiness for countering chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN)-related terrorist activities. Although it did not address specifically how ASEAN members would develop counter-CBRN capabilities, it demonstrated the organization's acknowledgement of CBRN threats, and its intent to move past rhetorical opposition and take substantive action.³⁵

Although multilateral defense activities largely shifted to ADMM and ADMM-Plus, the ARF continued to be a relevant security framework for ASEAN and its extra-regional partners. ARF follow-on efforts to address CBRN threats include the Philippines' 2015 co-chairing of a workshop with the European Union (EU). The Business Mirror of

³³ David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, "Unraveling the A. Q. Khan and Future Proliferation Networks," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2010): 117, <https://doi.org/10.1162/0163660053295176>.

³⁴ Albright and Hinderstein, "Unraveling the A. Q. Khan and Future Proliferation Networks," 114–115.

³⁵ Chau, "Security Community and Southeast Asia: Australia, the U.S., and ASEAN's Counter-Terror Strategy," 633.

Makati City notes that during the event, the Philippines and the EU promoted ARF CBRN cooperation through risk mitigation and information sharing. The publisher also describes how the Philippines hosted the regional secretariat for Southeast Asia of the EU CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (COE) Initiative to further enhance regional CBRN mitigation efforts.³⁶

As for the ADMM, it pressed forward with establishing the ASEAN CBR Network, in 2018. As its establishment is a relatively recent occurrence, existing literature covering the topic is minimal. Prashanth Parameswaran's "Where Are ASEAN's Defense Initiatives Under Singapore's Chairmanship?" provides commentary on ASEAN's participation in the 2018 iteration of the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD), specifically noting that ADMM was in the process of assembling regional experts to address CBR threats and incidents. Parameswaran's article does not provide any information on regional terrorist groups and WMD capabilities, as the intent of his article was to provide a brief overview of ASEAN participation in the 2018 SLD, and the announcement of its new initiative.³⁷

ADMM's establishment of the ASEAN CBR Network suggests that its leaders have identified threats that have demonstrated the capability and intent to exploit weaknesses in its security posture, and challenge the standing order of power. In his article, "Counterterrorism: ASEAN Militaries' Growing Role," Gunaratna provides commentary on the 2017 defeat of the Islamic State (IS), and its impact on Southeast Asian security. He asserts that despite its defeat in the Middle East, its networks continue to expand into Southeast Asia. This presents immediate challenges to Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, states that have previously combatted regional terrorists. Furthermore, he concurs with ASEAN's decision to establish the ASEAN CBR Network in order to bolster its counter-terrorism measures.³⁸ Schulze and Liow provide a complimentary examination,

³⁶ "Philippines, EU Hold Forum On Chemical Threats," *Business Mirror; Makati City*, September 27, 2015, ProQuest.

³⁷ Prashanth Parameswaran, "Where Are ASEAN's Defense Initiatives Under Singapore's Chairmanship?" *The Diplomat*, June 8, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/where-are-aseans-defense-initiatives-under-singapores-chairmanship/>.

³⁸ Rohan Gunaratna, "Counterterrorism: ASEAN Militaries' Growing Role," *RSIS Commentary* 42 (2018), <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CO18042.pdf>.

noting that IS had conducted recruiting campaigns in Southeast Asia, resulting in militants traveling to the Middle East. This led states like Indonesia and Malaysia to express concern over the possibility of combat-tested extremists returning and destabilizing order.³⁹

In addition to extremists, weak security and control measures, porous borders, growing markets, and the increasing illicit use of materials present regional terrorist groups opportunities to transform Southeast Asia into an arena for CBR terrorism. Simpson illustrates that chemical and biological arsenals are cheaper to produce than nuclear ones, highlighting that even hostile states like North Korea continue to pursue offensive biological and chemical capabilities. She also argues that chemical and biological weapon proliferation is relatively less taxing on the research, development, and financial nodes of threat WMD networks.⁴⁰

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS

This thesis seeks to investigate why ASEAN subordinates CBRN threats to other NTS threats, even though this impedes its development of counter-CBRN capabilities. Potential explanations include:

- ASEAN members consider CBRN threats a lower priority than other threats.
- ASEAN members are reluctant to embrace a strong commitment to counter WMD/CBRN proliferation because they are concerned it could lead to excessive influence by extra-regional partners.
- ASEAN's institutional designs are not suited to a strong commitment to CBRN non-proliferation outside of consideration of other NTS concerns.

³⁹ Kirsten Schulze and Joseph C. Liow, "Making Jihadis, Waging Jihad: Transnational and Local Dimensions of the ISIS Phenomenon in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Asian Security* 15, no. 2 (2019): 122, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2018.1424710>.

⁴⁰ Erika Simpson, "Simpson: The Poor Man's Nuclear Bomb," *The London Free Press*, February 21, 2014, <https://lfpres.com/2014/02/21/simpson-the-poor-mans-nuclear-bomb>.

- ASEAN members' behavior has resulted from more idiosyncratic influences, including region-specific security developments and domestic political factors.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

To answer this question, this thesis will treat ASEAN's approach to WMD/CBRN as a case study of its approach to NTS issues. Initial cooperation began in the 1990s, and accelerated during the early 2000s in response to increasing threats. For that reason, this thesis will begin by exploring ASEAN NTS cooperation, paying special attention to the obstacles that limited the association's willingness, or ability, to move far beyond diplomacy and rhetoric. It will then transition to the topic of WMD and CBRN (labelled as WMD/CBRN). The thesis will trace the development of ASEAN's WMD/CBRN security cooperation, again paying careful attention to the reasons why states were reluctant to advance their activities beyond diplomacy and rhetoric, and develop counter-WMD capabilities. It will briefly sketch what is known about recent efforts to move toward more concrete forms of cooperation, and the factors influencing these efforts. The research design will examine a variety of sources, to include journals and scholarly articles, government reports, newspapers, and edited books, specifically those that focus on ASEAN-led security institutions and forums, general ASEAN NTS cooperation, and ASEAN WMD/CBRN security cooperation.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis is organized into four chapters. The first chapter introduces the readers to the research question and its importance before determining whether ASEAN's approach to WMD/CBRN is changing. The second chapter will examine general NTS security cooperation within ASEAN. It will introduce the concept of NTS, and explore ASEAN's cooperation, paying special attention to the obstacles that limited the organization's willingness and ability to move beyond diplomatic statements. The third chapter will examine ASEAN WMD/CBRN security cooperation, and trace the development of the organization's efforts to respond to the issues presented by emerging threat WMD/CBRN

proliferation networks, and other relevant challenges that may disrupt the standing regional order. The fourth chapter will present findings and discuss implications.

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II. GENERAL ASEAN NTS COOPERATION

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on NTS threats and explores general ASEAN NTS cooperation, specifically from the 1990s to 2020. Section B discusses the characteristics of NTS and the global community's shift to NTS issues during the post-Cold War period, and provides information on known NTS categories to establish a baseline understanding. Section C discusses ARF NTS cooperation since 1996, paying special attention to the obstacles that limited the association's willingness or ability to advance beyond diplomacy and rhetoric. Section D discusses ADMM and ADMM-Plus NTS cooperation from 2006 to 2020, highlighting ASEAN's transition from the ARF practice of engaging almost entirely in dialogue to facilitating defense consultation and cooperation between regional and extra-regional partners. Section E provides the chapter's conclusion.

B. NTS

Awareness of NTS issues gained significant traction after the Cold War, which can be attributed to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) releasing its 1994 Human Development Report (HDR). Whereas traditional security focuses on state-driven threats to territorial integrity or political sovereignty, NTS issues emphasize transnational threats that are non-attributable to state actors, but are capable of destabilizing states and societies.⁴¹ Focusing on the topic of “sustainable human development,” the UNDP HDR presented an analysis on “human security” that emphasized the following categories: economic, food, health, environments, personal, community, and political.⁴² Since then, policy-makers and security practitioners have periodically revised their security agendas to answer the following question: What qualifies as a security issue? The broadening of security-related criteria has contributed to an increasing number of identified NTS

⁴¹ Mely Caballero-Anthony, *An Introduction to Non-Traditional Security Studies: A Transnational Approach* (London: Sage, 2016), loc. 218, 266 of 7433, Kindle.

⁴² United Nations, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York, NY: United Nations Development Programme, 1994), http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf.

challenges, as well as a continuous re-defining of relevant criteria. Table 1 displays known NTS categories.

Table 1. Known NTS Categories⁴³

NTS Category	Description	Driving Factors
Conflict and Community Security	Protection against the destabilizing of communities	Political discrimination, economic discrimination, wealth inequality, resource competition, cultural discrimination, religious discrimination, human rights impacts, threats to physical existence, displacement of people, underdevelopment
Poverty and Economic Security	Physical: the lack of materials maintain stable a livelihood	Lack of human capital, barriers to entry to jobs and markets, exclusion from jobs due to physical disabilities
	Psychological: protection against powerlessness, marginalization, injustice, negligence, manipulation, and exploitation	Rudeness, humiliation, inhumane treatment
Environmental Security	Protecting the environment through climate change mitigation	Climate change, environmental stress and degradation, violent conflict
Food Security	Ensuring freedom from hunger; cooperation geared toward improved food production, distribution, and conservation	Lack of availability, waste, poor infrastructure, inadequate logistics, market issues, conflict, climate change, lack of technology
Energy Security	Ensuring research, development, innovation, accessibility, affordability, efficiency, and sustainability for consumption	Price fluctuations, energy poverty, lack of energy-efficient technology
Water Security	Protecting sustainable access to water to maintain human livelihood, ensuring protection from pollution and disasters	Conflict, climate change, environmental degradation
Health Security	Protecting the health of individuals and populations	Infectious disease, pandemics, HIV/AIDS, antimicrobial

⁴³ Adapted from Caballero-Anthony, *An Introduction to Non-Traditional Security Studies: A Transnational Approach*.

NTS Category	Description	Driving Factors
		resistance, biological weapons and bioterrorism
Migration and Movements of People	Transnational undocumented migration	Famine, poverty, environmental degradation, transnational criminal activity, human trafficking, migrant smuggling
Transnational Crime	Activities involving, but not limited to, the following: money laundering, illegal drug trafficking, cyber-crime; arms trafficking, terrorism, human trafficking, piracy, environmental crime	Corruption, profits, political goals, ideological goals, radicalization

C. THE ARF

1. Formation and Objectives

For ASEAN, the post-Cold War environment prompted its members to reevaluate their newfound roles in maintaining regional stability. While the larger international community engaged in reconceptualizing security and identifying NTS issues, ASEAN was preoccupied with traditional security issues, specifically China’s increasing assertiveness in seizing disputed territory throughout the South China Sea (SCS).⁴⁴ In response to increasing sovereignty concerns, ASEAN leaders established the ARF to enhance political and security cooperation among regional and extra-regional partners.⁴⁵ Table 2 displays the members of the inaugural ARF meeting.

⁴⁴ Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and Evolution,” 15.

⁴⁵ See Seng Tan, “A Tale of Two Institutions: The ARF, ADMM-Plus and Security Regionalism in the Asia Pacific,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 39, no. 2 (August 2017): 260–261, ProQuest.

Table 2. ARF Members (Inaugural Meeting)⁴⁶

Category	State
ASEAN Member	Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand
Dialogue Partner	Australia, Canada, European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, U.S.
Consultative Partner	China, Russia
Observer State	Laos, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam

Between 1994 and 1996, ASEAN directed its efforts toward identifying and establishing the ARF’s goals, expectations, and functions. In order to retain the initiative, ASEAN incorporated its organizational particularities, specifically those that highlighted maintaining consensus, and leveraging diplomacy and rhetoric.⁴⁷ It further strengthened its position by implementing a three-stage plan that involved confidence building measures (CBMs), preventive diplomacy (PD), and conflict resolution (CR).⁴⁸ Overall, ASEAN demonstrated its ability to be the driving force in regional security, as highlighted in its fostering of cooperation between states of varying power.⁴⁹

2. ARF NTS Cooperation

Although traditional security issues prompted the ARF’s establishment, it gradually shifted its attention to NTS issues. The organization first addressed NTS in 1996, during which the Chairman and other state leaders planned to discuss drug trafficking and money laundering in subsequent meetings. However, despite the increasing attention and initiative, the ARF initially limited its scope to “non-military” threats that aligned with its criteria of transnational crime, specifically illegal arms trafficking, piracy, and illegal

⁴⁶ Adapted from ASEAN Regional Forum, *The First ASEAN Regional Forum* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ARF Unit, 1994), <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/First-ARF-Bangkok-25-July-1994.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and Evolution,” 16–17.

⁴⁸ Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and cooperative security: Introduction,” in *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada (New York: Routledge, 2010), 9.

⁴⁹ Donald E. Weatherbee, *ASEAN’s Half Century: A Political History of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (Maryland: The Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2019), 162.

immigration.⁵⁰ Although the UN leveraged the 1994 HDR to identify the first set of NTS categories, the report did not necessarily reflect Southeast Asia's region-specific challenges. On the other hand, ASEAN experienced its own difficulties. In an interview with a previous ASEAN Secretary-General, Martel noted:

[NTS refers to] what is topical at [the] time or what is at that moment [...] on the radar scope. So people say [NTS]: Oh, what does that mean? You ask everybody in the ASEAN membership you get ten different answers. There was no effort made to converge the understanding or definition or anything like that. But it is a good [...] line to say: OK, now we agree on [NTS]. What is [NTS]? ABC or everything as long as you fully agree on something, [...] we go with it.⁵¹

ARF NTS cooperation remained largely discussion-based until the GWOT, where it later transitioned from strictly dialogue to limited practical security cooperation, specifically in the areas of transnational terrorism and crime, maritime security, and disaster relief. ARF activities continued to expand, to include annual ministerial meetings, the ARF Senior Officials Meeting (ARF SOM), the Intersessional Support Group meeting on Confidence Building Measures (ISG CBM), and other Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISMs).⁵² However, the lack of trust, resources, training, and capabilities among some members challenged the organization's overall ability to commit to long-term security solutions.⁵³ Combined with the increasing number of NTS issues, the question of ARF's effectiveness prompted ASEAN to later establish the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus, displacing it as the organization's primary forum for regional security cooperation. The

⁵⁰ Jurgen Haacke, "The ASEAN Regional Forum and transitional challenges: Little collective securitization, some practical cooperation," in *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada (New York: Routledge, 2010), 125–126.

⁵¹ Stephanie Martel, "From Ambiguity to Contestation: Discourse(s) of Non-Traditional Security in the ASEAN Community," *The Pacific Review* 30, no. 4 (December 2016): 553, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2016.1264462>.

⁵² Haacke, "The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?," 429.

⁵³ Haacke, 430–440.

ARF then became a mechanism of facilitating security-related dialogue and projects among ASEAN and extra-regional diplomats.⁵⁴

a. Transnational Terrorism

The ARF recognized terrorism as a NTS category during its 1997 annual meeting, but subordinated it as a sub-category of transnational crime, due to previously narrowing its focus to “nonmilitary” issues. As a result, counter-terrorism cooperation was executed in the context of addressing transnational criminal networks.⁵⁵ However, the September 11 attacks on the U.S. highlighted to ASEAN members how terrorism could no longer be classified as a simple sub-category, but as a major multi-aspect threat nexus capable of linking other regional issues. Early ARF initiatives addressing terrorism included the expansion of Track I activities, which manifested in the form of counter-terrorism meetings.⁵⁶ Despite increased education and communication, ASEAN could not conceptualize a tangible, regional threat. Therefore, it limited its activities to rhetoric and declaration-making. It later issued its “Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism,” highlighting the importance of strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation through mechanisms like the ARF. However, this neither outlined a detailed plan, nor spurred immediate collective action between ASEAN and non-ASEAN ARF members.⁵⁷

The 2002 Bali bombing marked a major turning point for the ARF security agenda, as it verified the presence of regional terrorists that demonstrated the capability, and intent, to challenge regional stability and order. According to Jones and Smith, “groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a regional franchise of al-Qaida, [sought] to transform, by violence, the ASEAN states into... an Islamic realm of Southeast Asia... which [threatened] the

⁵⁴ Tan, “Talking Their Walk”? The Evolution of Defense Regionalism in Southeast Asia,” 243.

⁵⁵ ASEAN Regional Forum, *The Fourth ASEAN Regional Forum* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ARF Unit, 1997), <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Fourth-ARF-Subang-Jaya-27-July-1997.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and Evolution,” 30.

⁵⁷ Christopher B. Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values, and Institutionalisation* (UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), chap. 4, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=958552>.

ASEAN norms of noninterference and peaceful conflict resolution.”⁵⁸ Prior to the events at Bali, the ARF leveraged the Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM CT-TC) to identify means for promoting security cooperation and capability building.⁵⁹ However, the presence of groups like JI prompted the ARF to advance its efforts toward practical counter-terrorism cooperation. At the onset of the GWOT, the ARF utilized the ISM CT-TC to conduct an increasing number of meetings, workshops, seminars, and exercises, which enabled a shared understanding of the multi-dimension nature of terrorism and of known terrorist networks. This prompted it to then explore options for future multilateral action within the organization.⁶⁰ Table 3 displays ARF counter-terrorism/crime activities.

Table 3. ARF Counter-Terrorism/Crime Meetings, Workshops, Seminars, and Exercises⁶¹

Year	Activities
2000	- April: ARF Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Transnational Crime - October: EGM on Transnational Crime
2001	- April: EMG on Transnational Crime
2002	- March: Workshop on Financial Measures Against Terrorism - April: Workshop on Prevention of Terrorism - October: Workshop on CT
2003	- March: 1 st ISM CT-TC - June: CBM/Workshop on Consequences Management of Terrorist Attacks
2004	- March: 2 nd ISM CT-TC - October: Seminar on Cyber Terrorism
2005	- April: 3 rd ISM CT-TC - September: Seminar on Cyber Terrorism - November: Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

⁵⁸ Jones and Smith, “Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order,” 169.

⁵⁹ Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum,” 126.

⁶⁰ Noel M. Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and counter-terrorism,” in *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada (New York: Routledge, 2010), 160–167.

⁶¹ Adapted from “ASEAN Regional Forum: List of Track I Activities (By intersessional year from 1994 to 2020),” ASEAN Regional Forum, accessed April 4, 2021. <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/List-of-ARF-Track-I-Activities-by-Inter-Sessional-Year-as-of-September-2020.pdf>.

Year	Activities
2006	- April 2006: 4 th ISM CT-TC - October: Workshop on Stockpile Management Security Man-Portable Air Defense System and Small Arms
2007	- May: 5 th ISM CT-TC - October: Seminar on Cyber Terrorism - December: Workshop on “Management and Security of Stockpiles of Small Arms and Light Weapons Including Their Ammunition”
2008	- February: 6 th ISM CT-TC - November: Conference on Terrorism and the Internet
2009	- May: 7 th ISM CT-TC
2010	- April: 8 th ISM CT-TC; Cybercrime Capacity-Building Conference
2011	- May: 9 th ISM CT-TC
2012	- March: 10 th ISM CT-TC
2013	- March: 11 th ISM CT-TC
2014	- April: 12 th ISM CT-TC
2015	- May: 13 th ISM CT-TC - September: Workshop on First Response Support for Terrorism and Other Mass Casualty Victims
2016	- March: Workshop on Strengthening Management of Cross-Border Movement of Criminals; 14 th ISM CT-TC
2017	- February: Workshop on Support for Terrorism Victims - April: 15 th ISM CT-TC
2018	- July: Workshop on Best Practices in Using Maritime Data to Combat Transnational Organized Crime
2019	- March: 16 th ISM CT-TC

Through the ISM CT-TC, the ARF established a shared understanding of terrorism amongst its members. While it could gain a general consensus on defining terrorism and determining the appropriate agencies for executing counter-terrorism operations, it experienced difficulties in pursuing actual multilateral cooperation. Morada highlights that “Counter-terrorism cooperation under the ARF framework [was] saddled by at least three major issues... (1) information and intelligence sharing; (2) capacity building among participating states; and (3) the institutional weakness of the ARF itself.”⁶² The issue of information and intelligence sharing was due to the lack of inter-ASEAN participation, and the lack of trust between extra-regional ARF members. Under the terms of the 2004

⁶² Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and counter-terrorism,” 160–167.

Vientiane Action Program, ASEAN established the ACCT, where it identified cooperation in airport security, anti-terrorism, and intelligence-sharing as essential tasks. Despite intelligence-sharing being a critical area, there were no existing mechanisms to ensure participation, resulting in only Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines pledging support.⁶³ As for the lack of trust between non-ASEAN members, states like the U.S. and China refrained from sharing intelligence, largely due to clashing interests in the region.⁶⁴

The lack of standardized capabilities across the ARF formation has brought to question the ability of some members to participate in counter-terrorism operations, specifically the ASEAN states. Morada also highlights that “in various ISM CT-TC meetings, many developing states do not measure up to international standards... Some of them expect assistance from more developed ARF participants in the form of training and even technology transfer...”⁶⁵ As a result of capability and functional imbalances, some ARF members resorted to leveraging existing bi-lateral partnerships. In 2003, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia conducted a series of counter-terrorism operations that resulted in the detaining of JI cells in their countries. However, these successes were not the result of intra-ASEAN cooperation, but of existing bilateral partnerships between ASEAN and non-ASEAN members, which gave the impression of an ARF effort.⁶⁶ As for institutional weaknesses, the ARF lacked the forcing mechanisms necessary to ensure participation in multinational counter-terrorism operations. Therefore, it was forced to rely on the political goodwill of its members.⁶⁷

b. Maritime Security

The ARF incorporated maritime security as part of its NTS agenda on June 2003. Growing awareness and concern regarding seaborne terrorism prompted some ARF

⁶³ Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values, and Institutionalisation*, 87.

⁶⁴ Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and counter-terrorism,” 167.

⁶⁵ Morada, 167.

⁶⁶ Jones and Smith, “Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order,” 171–173.

⁶⁷ Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and counter-terrorism,” 167.

members to gradually view it as another multi-threat nexus, resulting in its co-domination of the ARF NTS agenda with transnational crime and terrorism.⁶⁸ One such concern involved JI, the group previously responsible for the October 2002 Bali bombing, and for unveiling the shortcomings of Southeast Asian counter-terrorism efforts.⁶⁹ On December 2001, a thirteen-man JI cell planned to conduct maritime suicide attacks against U.S. naval forces visiting Singapore, to which Singaporean security forces successfully thwarted.⁷⁰ However, JI's broadening scope of tactics and techniques underscored the ARF's need to advance cooperation, contributing to its expansion of Track I activities. Table 4 displays ARF's meetings, workshops, seminars, and exercises pertaining to maritime security.

Table 4. ARF Maritime Security Meetings, Workshops, Seminars, and Exercises⁷¹

Year	Activities
1998	- November: Meeting of Specialist Officials on Maritime Issues
2000	- October: Workshop on Anti-Piracy
2003	- February/March: Workshop on Maritime Security Challenges
2004	- September: Seminar on Regional Maritime Security
2005	- March: CBMs on Regional Cooperation in Maritime Security - October: Workshop on Training for the Cooperative Maritime Security - December: Workshop on Capacity Building of Maritime Security
2006	- December: Maritime Security Shore Exercise Planning Conference
2007	- January: Maritime Security Shore Exercise - August: Round Table Discussion on Maritime Security Issues
2008	- March: Training for Maritime Security - November: 2 nd Security Training Programme for ARF Member States
2009	- March: 1 st ISM on Maritime Security (ISM MS) - November: Seminar on Measures to Enhance Maritime Security
2010	- March: 2 nd ISM MS
2011	- February: 3 rd ISM MS
2012	- June: 4 th ISM MS

⁶⁸ Ian Storey, "Maritime Security in Southeast Asia and the United States," in *ASEAN-U.S. Relations: What Are the Talking Points?*, ed. Pavin Chachavalpongpon (Singapore: ISEAS, 2012), 49.

⁶⁹ Yuzawa, "Japan and the ASEAN Regional Forum, From Enthusiasm to Disappointment," 81.

⁷⁰ Storey, "Maritime Security in Southeast Asia and the United States," 49.

⁷¹ Adapted from ASEAN Regional Forum, "ASEAN Regional Forum: List of Track I Activities (By intersessional year from 1994 to 2020)."

Year	Activities
2013	- April: Workshop on Ship Profiling; 5 th ISM MS
2014	- May: 6 th ISM MS - December: Seminar of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) Security
2015	- March: Seminar on Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia; 7 th ISM MS - April: 7 th ISM MS (continuation) - December: Workshop on Regional Confidence Building and the Law of the Sea; Workshop on Maritime Risks Management and Cooperation
2016	- April: 8 th ISM MS; Workshop on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing; Workshop on National Maritime Single Points of Contact
2017	- February 9 th ISM MS - December: 1 st Workshop on Ferry Safety
2018	- January: Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation - March: Workshop on International Cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness; 10 th ISM MS - July: Workshop on Best Practices in Using Maritime data to Combat Transnational Organized Crime - November: 2 nd Workshop on Ferry Safety
2019	- February: 1 st Workshop on Implementing United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and Other International Instruments to Address Emerging Maritime Issues - March: 2 nd Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation; 11 th ISM MS - June: Workshop and Table-Top Exercise on Enhancing Law Enforcement, Preventive measures and Cooperation to Address Complex issues in the Fisheries Sector - November: 3 rd Workshop on Ferry Safety; 2 nd Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and Other International Instruments to Address Emerging Maritime Issues
2020	- February: 2 nd Workshop on Maritime Domain Awareness; Workshop on Dispute Resolution and Law of the Sea

Although maritime security was viewed as another emerging threat nexus, there were concerns that maritime security cooperation would also be subject to an exclusively-diplomatic approach. Following the ARF's establishment, it became more apparent to the extra-regional partners that ASEAN norms and principles would challenge the ARF's ability to take action. Mak notes, "the [2003] statement reemphasized that: 'Nothing in this statement, nor any act... carried out pursuant to this statement, should prejudice the position of ARF countries with regard to any unsettled dispute concerning sovereignty or

other rights over territory’.”⁷² The purpose of the statement was to ensure that the non-ASEAN members adhered to ASEAN’s principles. However, this hampered any possible efforts toward developing long-term security solutions, to include extra-regional partner proposals.⁷³ Such proposals included the U.S. Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI). In June 2004, the U.S. offered to station military forces along the Malacca Straits to combat maritime terrorist threats. However, it was met with mixed results among ASEAN members. Whereas Singapore welcomed U.S. support, others like Indonesia and Malaysia opposed the initiative. This stemmed from concerns that the U.S. would establish a permanent regional presence and conduct unilateral military action, resulting in Southeast Asia becoming a “second front” of the U.S.-led GWOT.⁷⁴ As a result, Indonesia and Malaysia, later joined by Singapore, proceeded to patrol the straits under their own Malacca Straits Security Initiative (MSSI).⁷⁵ Although they excluded the U.S. from participating, they welcomed financial support from Washington, which enabled them to bolster their capabilities and overall efforts.⁷⁶

In 2008, the ARF had established the ISM on Maritime Security (ISM MS).⁷⁷ However, since 2003, it achieved relatively little in advancing collective maritime security cooperation. Although it held annual meetings to address relevant regional concerns, the establishment of the MSSI highlights that the ARF Statement on Cooperation Against Piracy and Other Threats to Maritime Security, the driving document behind ARF’s identifying of maritime security as a focus area, was just another instance of rhetoric. ASEAN ultimately assumed responsibility for physically securing the Malacca Straits,

⁷² J. N. Mak, “Maritime security and the ARF: Why the focus on dialogue rather than action,” in *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Jurgen Haacke and Noel M. Morada (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 194.

⁷³ Simon, “The ASEAN Regional Forum,” 302.

⁷⁴ Storey, “Maritime Security in Southeast Asia and the United States,” 49–51.

⁷⁵ Mak, “Maritime security and the ARF: Why the focus on dialogue rather than action,” 193.

⁷⁶ Storey, “Maritime Security in Southeast Asia and the United States,” 51.

⁷⁷ Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and transitional challenges: Little collective securitization, some practical cooperation,” 142.

initially rejecting support from its extra-regional partners.⁷⁸ Cooperation between Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore (MALSINDO) proved especially beneficial for Indonesia, who at the time “[lacked] trained maritime police... boats and equipment, and inexperience with complicated concepts of law enforcement such as the doctrine of hot pursuit” due to an inadequate defense budget.⁷⁹ However, this level of cooperation was a far cry from the rhetoric of the 2003 statement, resulting in the ARF being further criticized as a “talk shop, unable to move beyond the confidence building stage.”⁸⁰

c. Disaster Relief

Early ARF efforts directed toward addressing natural disasters includes its 1997 establishment of the Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM DR). Like other ISMs, the ARF leveraged the ISM DR to advance training, education, and information sharing among its members. The ARF also leveraged it to facilitate discussions with external organizations, which included the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Collectively, they explored topics like disaster management and preparation and transnational environmental issues.⁸¹ Despite early progress, the ARF later suspended ISM activities in May 2000, largely due to differing opinions over the role of military and security forces during operations.⁸²

The most prominent of these issues concerned the intervention of external forces and the respect for sovereignty. Haacke highlights, “As the co-chairs of the third ISM-DR (ARF 1999a) had formulated it, ‘national and multilateral military capabilities should be

⁷⁸ Storey, “Maritime Security in Southeast Asia and the United States,” 51.

⁷⁹ Catherine Z. Raymond, “Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia: A Risk Assessment,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no. 2 (January 2007): 249, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550500383225>.

⁸⁰ Glosserman, “The United States and the ASEAN Regional Forum: A Delicate Balancing Act,” 47.

⁸¹ Mely Caballero-Anthony et al., “Natural Disasters,” in *Non-Traditional Security in Asia*, ed. Mely Caballero-Anthony and Alistair D. B. Cook (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 2013), 111–112.

⁸² Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and transitional challenges: Little collective securitization, some practical cooperation,” 143.

engaged in disaster relief... only upon the request of the country suffering damage’.”⁸³ When the ARF’s non-ASEAN members previously endorsed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), they not only agreed to abide by principles that promoted effective cooperation, but also principles that underscored ASEAN’s concerns regarding state stability and integrity.⁸⁴ The significance of Haacke’s statement is that it highlights how an ARF member, more so an ASEAN member within the ARF, can deny assistance in the event of a disaster, even if it lacks the means to react unilaterally. Overall, the suspension of activities also underscored that the ARF did not dedicate any resources toward disaster relief and management, leaving the question of readiness to individual countries.

The December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami highlighted the ARF’s collective inability to conduct disaster relief operations. Half of the ASEAN members were impacted, with Indonesia suffering the most. Due to the lack of relevant ARF mechanisms, and ASEAN’s persistent capability imbalance, Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. pressed forward to establish the TCG and provide relief effort.⁸⁵ Another thirty-one countries later followed suit to provide support, but Indonesian leadership later complicated relief efforts. According to Haacke, “[T]he tsunami had brought TNI Commander General Endriartono Sutarto to initially approach his counterparts in Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the [U.S. for] assistance. However, Jakarta later insisted that foreign military assets would have to be withdrawn within ninety days.”⁸⁶ While this may have appeared to have been a simple civil-military disconnect between Indonesian leaders, Indonesia has historically rejected the intervention of external militaries, as demonstrated by its previous opposition to the U.S. RMSI earlier that year.⁸⁷

⁸³ Haacke, 143.

⁸⁴ Weatherbee, *ASEAN’s Half Century: A Political History of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, 52.

⁸⁵ Cha, “Complex Patchworks: U.S. Alliances as Part of Asia’s Regional Architecture,” 171–173.

⁸⁶ Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?,” 439.

⁸⁷ Mak, “Maritime Security and the ARF: Why the Focus on Dialogue Rather than Action,” 193.

The Indian Ocean tsunami also underscored the ARF’s need to advance practical disaster relief cooperation, prompting it to resume ISM DR activities the following year. During the 2005 annual ARF meeting, the foreign ministers had discussed establishing “standby arrangements” for disaster relief operations, but depended on volunteers.⁸⁸ The Yogyakarta and Central Java earthquake in May 2006 resulted in a major ARF overhaul of standard operating procedures (SOPs), the establishment of the ARF Standby Arrangements (SA), and in the organization broadening its focus to include humanitarian assistance. In 2008, Indonesia and Australia led the first ARF Disaster Relief desktop exercise, which enabled members to explore civil and military options for various scenarios. However, the immediate events of Cyclone Nargis once again raised the question of capability and effectiveness, as the ARF had no dedicated forces under the ARF SA. In lieu of an ARF humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) coalition, ASEAN mobilized its ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ERAT) to assess the impact of Nargis.⁸⁹ Following Nargis, the ARF continued to advance practical cooperation, but found itself hastily establishing and modifying cooperative frameworks while trying to respond to subsequent disasters. Table 5 displays ARF HADR meetings, workshops, seminars, and exercises.

Table 5. ARF HADR Meetings, Workshops, Seminars, and Exercises⁹⁰

Year	Activities
1997	- February: 1 st ISM on Disaster Relief (ISM DR) - March: ISM on Search and Rescue Coordination and Cooperation (Singapore)
1998	- February: 2 nd ISM DR
1999	- January: EGM on Disaster Relief - April: 3 rd ISM DR
2000	- January: Training Seminar “Towards Common approaches to Training in Disaster Relief”

⁸⁸ Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?,” 440.

⁸⁹ Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and transitional challenges: Little collective securitization, some practical cooperation,” 143–144.

⁹⁰ Adapted from ASEAN Regional Forum, “ASEAN Regional Forum: List of Track I Activities (By intersessional year from 1994 to 2020).”

Year	Activities
	- May: 4 th ISM DR - July: Combined Humanitarian Assistance Response Training (CHART) (Singapore)
2002	- December: HADR Seminar (Singapore)
2005	- November/December: 5 th ISM DR
2006	- September: 6 th ISM DR
2007	- September: Desk Top Exercise on the Disaster Relief Planning Conference (Darwin) - October: 7 th ISM DR
2008	- May: Desk Top Exercise on the Disaster Relief - December: 8 th ISM DR
2009	- April: Seminar on Laws and Regulations on Disaster Relief Cooperation - May: Voluntary Demonstration of Response on Disaster Relief - September: 9 th ISM DR
2010	- February: Meeting of Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) Potential Co-Sponsors - May: The Preparatory Meeting for the ARF DiREx - August: Meeting on the Development of Table Top Exercise Concept for the ARF DiREx 2011; Initial Planning Conference/Site Survey of the ARF DiREx (Manado); 2 nd Seminar on Laws and Regulations in the International Disaster Relief by the Armed Forces - September: 2 nd Seminar on Laws and Regulations in the International Disaster Relief by the Armed Forces; 10 th ISM DR - November: Training on Developing a Common Framework for Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, Recovery and Reconstruction - December: Final Planning Conference / Site Survey for DiREx
2011	- March: DiREx
2012	- April: 11 th ISM DR - June: 3 rd Seminar on Laws and Regulations in the International Disaster – Relief by the Armed Forces
2013	- January: DiREx 2013 Initial Planning - March: 12 th ISM DR - April: DiREx 2013 Final Planning Conference - May: DiREx 2013
2014	- February: 13 th ISM DR - August: Cross-Sectoral Security cooperation on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response Workshop - September: DiREx 2015 Initial Planning Conference
2015	- February: ARF DiREx 2015 Final Planning Conference (Alor Setar); 14 th ISM DR - May: DiREx 2015
2016	- February: 15 th ISM DR - May/June: Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Management

Year	Activities
	- July: Workshop on Urban Emergency Rescue
2017	- April: 16 th ISM DR - July: Workshop on National Earthquake Disaster Response and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Capacity Building - October/November: Training on Disaster Loss and Damage Assessment and the Recovery and Reconstruction Capacity Building - December: Workshop on Typhoon Disaster Risk Reduction and Damage Mitigation
2018	- April: 17 th ISM DR - May: Training on USAR Capacity Building - July: 2 nd Workshop on Urban Emergency Response - November: Workshop on Regional Climate Change and Coastal Disaster Mitigation; 2 nd Training on USAR
2019	- April: 18 th ISM DR

D. ADMM/ADMM-PLUS

1. Formation and Objectives

The 2006 establishment of the ADMM represented ASEAN’s efforts to deliberately institutionalize security cooperation, dialogue, and consultation amongst its defense leaders and practitioners. Key to this success was ensuring that the forum avoided the ARF practice of defaulting to dialogue and rhetoric to address persisting security issues, whether it be in response to natural disasters or to violent extremist organizations (VEOs).⁹¹ However, the establishing of the ADMM did not immediately remediate ASEAN’s security concerns. The increasing complexity of Southeast Asia’s NTS threats highlighted ASEAN’s ongoing capability and readiness challenges, prompting the establishment of the ADMM-Plus.⁹² According to Tang, “ASEAN’s primary interest in the ADMM-Plus is clear: ‘to benefit ASEAN member countries in building capacity to address shared security challenges, while [maintaining awareness] of... ASEAN[’s capability imbalance].”⁹³

⁹¹ Tan, “Providers Not Protectors: Institutionalizing Sovereignty in Southeast Asia,” 210–211.

⁹² Tang, “ASEAN and the ADMM-Plus: Balancing between Strategic Imperatives and Functionality,” 76–79.

⁹³ Tan, “The ADMM-Plus: Regionalism That Works?,” 78.

Although the institutionalizing of ADMM-Plus was not necessarily groundbreaking, it highlighted ASEAN’s realization of its limitations, and its willingness to formally include extra-regional partners in a security forum. Table 6 lists ADMM/ADMM-Plus members and designated areas of practical cooperation.

Table 6. ADMM/ADMM-Plus Members and Areas of Practical Cooperation⁹⁴

	Members	Areas of Practical Cooperation
ADMM	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam	Counter-Terrorism (CT), Defense Industry, HADR, Maritime Security (MS), Military Medicine (MM), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)
ADMM-Plus	ASEAN/ADMM core members, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea (South Korea), Russian Federation, U.S.	Counter-Terrorism (CT), Cyber Security (CS), HADR, Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA), Maritime Security (MS), Military Medicine (MM), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)

2. ADMM/ADMM-PLUS NTS Cooperation

Following its 2010 inauguration, the ADMM-Plus established a number of Experts Working Groups (EWGs), which focused on the following areas: Counter-Terrorism (CT), HADR, Maritime Security (MS), Military Medicine (MM), and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO).⁹⁵ This process also involved pairing an ADMM core/ASEAN member with an extra-regional “Plus” partner to address a specific area. Tang highlights, “The ADMM-Plus’s EWGs go a step further in ensuring that these co-chairing responsibilities extend beyond the humdrum intellectual and policy-drafting exercises to involve a substantive degree of practical and operational coordination and leadership.”⁹⁶ Following the

⁹⁴ Adapted from “ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM),” ASEAN, accessed October 29, 2020, <https://asean.org/asean-political-security-community/asean-defence-ministers-meeting-admm/>.

⁹⁵ ASEAN, “ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM).”

⁹⁶ Tang, “ASEAN and the ADMM-Plus: Balancing between Strategic Imperatives and Functionality,” 79.

appointing of teams, the EWG co-chairs proceeded to develop one-to-three-year work plans, composed of meetings, workshops, and exercises involving all eighteen member states. Initial planning for the first five EWGs occurred in 2011, being executed as early as June 2013.⁹⁷ The significance of this process was found in the development of bilateral military-to-military partnerships, which enabled the ADMM core/ASEAN members to leverage the skills, experiences, and resources of the “Plus” members to address capability challenges and to standardize approaches to common security threats. Arguably, the rotating of bilateral partnerships further enabled the development of multilateral partnerships within the organization.⁹⁸ Table 7 highlights ADMM-Plus activities between 2010 and 2020.

Table 7. ADMM-Plus Meeting and Exercise Count (2010-2020)⁹⁹

EWG Category	Cycle ID'd	Meeting Count	Workshop Count	TTXs	FTXs	Non-Specific Exercises
Maritime Security (MS)	2011-2013	14	1	1	2	1
Counter-Terrorism (CT)		10	2	2	1	2
Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)		16	0	2	0	2
Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)		13	4	1	1	0
Military Medicine (MM)		12	2	2	0	2
Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA)	2014-2017	9	1	0	2	0

⁹⁷ Kurt Leffler, “The ADMM-Plus and the U.S. Department of Defense: Beyond the ‘Talk Shop’ Paradigm,” *Asia Policy* 22 (July 2016): 127, ProQuest.

⁹⁸ Tang, “ASEAN and the ADMM-Plus: Balancing between Strategic Imperatives and Functionality,” 78.

⁹⁹ Adapted from ASEAN, “Current Calendar Year,” accessed April 18, 2021, <https://admm.asean.org/index.php/events/current-calendar-year.html> and ASEAN, “Past Meetings and Events (2006 - 2019),” accessed April 18, 2021, <https://admm.asean.org/index.php/events/past-meetings-and-events.html>.

EWG Category	Cycle ID'd	Meeting Count	Workshop Count	TTXs	FTXs	Non-Specific Exercises
Cyber Security (CS)	2017-2020	6	0	2	0	0

a. HADR and Military Medicine

Although ADMM-Plus established several co-chairs to lead the EWGs, it is worth noting that these teams did not simply plan standalone exercises for their individual areas of concentration, but complex exercises designed to address possible multi-aspect contingencies, as previously demonstrated by the 2008 events of Cyclone Nargis.¹⁰⁰ On June 2013, ADMM-Plus conducted its first joint HADR-MM field training exercise (FTX), which continues to be acknowledged as one of the organization’s most noteworthy achievements:

[A] joint exercise on HADR and military medicine was conducted in Brunei, which brought together all eighteen countries and their respective armed forces for the first time and involved 3,200 personnel, seven ships, and fifteen helicopters as well as military medical, engineering, and search-and-rescue teams. Notably, China dispatched the People’s Liberation Army Navy hospital ship *Peace Ark* to the exercise, and U.S. Marines and Seabees worked side by side with their counterparts from China and other participating countries.¹⁰¹

Although ADMM-Plus successfully planned and executed this HADR-MM exercise, it was unable to translate this to practical application later that year, specifically in the Philippines during Typhoon Haiyan. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, “[N]either ASEAN or ADMM-Plus played a role in coordinating the response to Haiyan... the bulk... came from extra-regional forces... [raising] questions about ASEAN’s capacities as a regional security actor, particularly given the emphasis it had placed on HADR.”¹⁰² Despite mobilizing elements of the Armed Forces of the

¹⁰⁰ Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and Transitional Challenges: Little Collective Securitization, Some Practical Cooperation,” 143–144.

¹⁰¹ Tan, “The ADMM-Plus: Regionalism That Works?” 72–73.

¹⁰² International Institute for Strategic Studies, “Asian Disaster Relief: Lessons of Haiyan,” *Strategic Comments* 20, no. 1 (2014): iii-iv, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13567888.2014.899739>.

Philippines (AFP), the Philippine government experienced significant logistical and manpower issues, prompting it to request for support. Australia, Canada, Japan, Russia, the UK, and the U.S. were among the extra-regional partners that mobilized military forces in response.¹⁰³ As for ASEAN, its lack of planning and coordination within the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance (AHA) Center resulted in the member states defaulting to their bilateral channels with the Philippines to send aid, further questioning the overall effectiveness of ASEAN-driven mechanisms.¹⁰⁴

b. Counter-Terrorism and Maritime Security

On September 2011, ADMM-Plus began planning its first Counter-Terrorism Exercise (CTX). Led by the Counter-Terrorism EWG co-chairs of the U.S. and Indonesia, the organization aimed to “lay a solid framework... [define] counter-terrorism, [determine] roles of defense in counter-terrorism, [capability] challenges, [and] scenarios.”¹⁰⁵ ADMM-Plus’s immediate challenge toward counter-terrorism cooperation was addressing ongoing standards and capability imbalances, given the activities of individual ASEAN members who defaulted to existing bi-lateral partnerships with extra-regional states to combat JI cells operating within their countries.¹⁰⁶ ADMM-Plus later executed the CTX on September 2013, following its June joint HADR-Military Medicine Field FTX. It consisted of a TTX that presented hypothetical terrorist scenarios, a practical exercise (PE) that involved lectures and sharing of best practices of anti-terrorism measures, and a Full Mission Profile (FMP) that involved a demonstration of counter-terrorism tactics of special units from several ADMM-Plus countries. While the exercise was successful in promoting capability building and interoperability, several leaders had identified areas that required

¹⁰³ International Institute for Strategic Studies, “Asian Disaster Relief: Lessons of Haiyan,” iii.

¹⁰⁴ Gabrielle Simm, “Disaster Response in Southeast Asia: The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Response and Emergency Management,” *Asian Journal of International Law* 8 (2018): 138–139, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2044251316000205>.

¹⁰⁵ ASEAN, *ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting-Plus, Counter-Terrorism Exercise* (Sentul, Indonesia: Indonesian Peace and Security, 2013), <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/47707>.

¹⁰⁶ Jones and Smith, “Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order,” 171–173.

further improvements.¹⁰⁷ Table 8 highlights the findings and recommendations from ADMM Plus's 2013 CTX.

Table 8. ADMM-Plus 2013 CTX Findings and Recommendations¹⁰⁸

Topic	Findings	Recommendations
Continuity of Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key players in planning maintained continuous engagement - There were instances where key individuals had to be replaced during the CTX, resulting in disruptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appoint personnel that can remain engaged with the planning cycle - In the event of personnel turnover, conduct a thorough handover to reduce risk of exercise disruption.
Improved Understanding of the Threat Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Including presentations on the root causes of terrorism provided insight toward identifying effective counter-terrorism measures - Time constraints resulted in more focus being placed on workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct additional conferences, seminars, and workshops to enable ADMM-Plus members to develop a shared understanding of the threat environment
Greater Diversity of Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the participants were military personnel - There was a general consensus that interagency and multinational efforts were essential toward developing effective counter-terrorism strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include more subject matter experts of non-military backgrounds - Explore military support to civil authorities to foster cooperation between military and civil leaders
Enhanced Strategic Communications and Public Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was a general consensus that terrorists have developed the capability to leverage mass media - Communication and coordination between public affairs groups among ASEAN states should be stressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop means of facilitating regional communication for crises - Establish multilateral committees to further explore the subject
Greater Unity of Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was a general consensus that there were too few 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include other EWGs in the planning, when necessary

¹⁰⁷ ASEAN, *ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus, Counter-Terrorism Exercise*.

¹⁰⁸ Adapted from ASEAN, *ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus, Counter-Terrorism Exercise*.

Topic	Findings	Recommendations
	mechanisms to coordinate multilateral responses - The maritime scenario did not include the maritime security EWG	- Plan future exercises with additional contingencies in mind, such as HADR events
More Emphasis on Education, Training and Exercises	- There was a general consensus that there must be more training and education regarding how to leverage the military in counter-terrorism operations, to include de-radicalization	- Include Command Post Exercises (CPXs) and additional TTXs, Pes, and FTXs to promote integration and interoperability between ADMM-Plus members.

Planning for the second CTX began on February 2015, with execution occurring on May 2016. It was during this period that ADMM-Plus began incorporating the maritime security EWG into the planning process, developing more complex CTX scenarios. Observers of security cooperation within the Indo-Pacific region, including Tan See Seng and Penghong Cai, paid particular attention to its growing scope and scale, as the second CTX involved “3,500 personnel, 18 naval vessels, 25 aircraft and 40 special forces teams.”¹⁰⁹ Then-joint operations director, Singaporean Brigadier-General (BG) Desmond Tan, highlighted the significance of the exercise and of the organization’s collaborative efforts:

This has... more relevance and realism... [as] terrorism and maritime security are sometimes intertwined... I think we all recognise that these are transboundary challenges that no one country can tackle by itself... This is exactly the purpose of this exercise - to bridge some of these challenges and to allow the various countries... to come together to exercise and to understand each other better and to build trust and confidence.¹¹⁰

ADMM-Plus’s CTX development occurred during a period when there was resurging concerns of regional terrorist activity. While Southeast Asia has not become a frontline for the GWOT, the 2014 emergence of the Islamic State (IS) in the Middle East

¹⁰⁹ See Seng Tan, “A Defense of ADMM Plus,” *East Asia Forum Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (January-March 2018): 26, ProQuest.

¹¹⁰ Sam Jo Yeo. “Nations Team up against Terrorism at Sea,” *The Straits Times*, May 9, 2016, <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/nations-team-up-against-terrorism-at-sea>.

prompted several regional governments to increase their counter-terrorism efforts. Following the end of the first CTX, the senior leadership that participated in the TTX and PE identified the need to discuss de-radicalization in counter-terrorism planning.¹¹¹ The advent of social media had enabled the linking of several disparate VEOs, such as Al Qaeda, JI, and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines.¹¹² According to Dolven et al., “IS has conducted online recruitment efforts in Indonesia’s national language... and in the Malay language. Analysts estimate that hundreds of Southeast Asians have travelled to the Middle East to fight with IS—just as some did in the late 1990s in Afghanistan with Al Qaeda.”¹¹³ In addition to recruiting, IS’s leveraging of social media to inspire, and radicalize, VEO activities continued to challenge ADMM-Plus, especially the ASEAN states. One such example includes the 2017 siege in Marawi, Philippines, where the pro-IS ASG and the Maute group attempted to seize control of Marawi, threatening to transform it into the “Mosul of Southeast Asia.”¹¹⁴ Although the Philippines received material and technical support from extra-regional partners, the five-month long conflict highlighted the persistent capability challenges among ASEAN’s military and security forces.¹¹⁵

c. Peacekeeping Operations

When the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) established ADMM and ADMM-Plus, it had identified the need to prevent regional disputes and conflicts, and if necessary, conduct conflict resolution.¹¹⁶ ADMM executed the first PKO initiatives between 2011 and 2013, having established its network of ASEAN peacekeeping centers throughout the region. Indonesia had spearheaded this effort, leveraging its partnership

¹¹¹ ASEAN, *ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting-Plus, Counter-Terrorism Exercise*.

¹¹² Ben Dolven, Bruce Vaughn, Emma Chanlett-Avery, Thomas Lum, and John W. Rollins, *Terrorism in Southeast Asia*, CRS Report No. R44501 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2017), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44501>.

¹¹³ Dolven et al., *Terrorism in Southeast Asia*.

¹¹⁴ See Seng Tan, “Sending in the Cavalry: The Growing Militarization of Counterterrorism in Southeast Asia,” *PRISM* 8, no. 4 (2018): 139, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26542712>.

¹¹⁵ Tan, 139.

¹¹⁶ ASEAN, *ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ASEAN Secretariat, 2009), <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/archive/5187-18.pdf>.

with the U.S. to bolster the capability of its ground and air forces.¹¹⁷ ADMM-Plus later conducted its first peacekeeping operations TTX in 2014. Since then, the organization conducted it jointly with other types of operations.¹¹⁸ However, it is worth noting ADMM-Plus peacekeeping was not designed to be a standalone effort, but a means to facilitate cooperation toward addressing other region-specific NTS issues.¹¹⁹ Table 9 highlights the APSC’s implementing of peacekeeping activities in support of other areas of cooperation.

Table 9. Other Areas of Concentration in Peacekeeping Operations¹²⁰

Area of Concentration	Supporting Actions
Counter-Terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assisting in addressing the root causes of terrorism - Enhancing cooperation toward addressing associated criminal activities (e.g., drug and arms trafficking) - Support implementing of ASEAN counter-terrorism plans
HADR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting cooperation from orderly repatriation of refugees and displaced persons; supporting resettlement - Promoting the safety of humanitarian relief workers - Supporting cooperation with external agencies in support of HADR - Promoting civil-military cooperation - Providing basic services/assistance to victims

d. Humanitarian Mine Action

The HMA EWG first convened on June 2014, later executing its first FTX in April 2016. Subsequent exercises were later planned jointly with other EWGs, to include the co-chairs of the peacekeeping operations EWG.¹²¹ Similar to the previously-mentioned EWGs, ADMM-Plus’s HMA efforts were rooted in other ASEAN-driven initiatives and mechanisms. In November 2012, ASEAN leadership established the ASEAN Regional

¹¹⁷ Ritian A. Supriyanto, “The U.S. Rebalancing and Indonesia’s Strategic Engagement,” in *Policy: Report Strategic Engagement in the Asia Pacific: The Future of the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus)*, ed. Sarah Teo and Mushahid Ali (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2013), 17.

¹¹⁸ ASEAN, *ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting-Plus, Counter-Terrorism Exercise*.

¹¹⁹ ASEAN, *ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint*.

¹²⁰ Adapted from ASEAN, *ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint*.

¹²¹ ASEAN, “Past Meetings and Events (2006 - 2019).”

Mine Action Center (ARMAC) to address explosive remnants of war (ERW).¹²² According to ARMAC, “The presence of explosive ordnance in the soil poses constant threats to the safety of the people, hinders socio-economic development and aggravates humanitarian problems in the five affected ASEAN Member States (AMS)...” which includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.¹²³ In response to the ERW threat, ARMAC pursued partner networking efforts to develop the necessary mine detection and demining capabilities, with ADMM-Plus later serving as a means for promoting training, research, and education.¹²⁴

Although there has been progress in training personnel and promoting HMA cooperation, there has also been an ongoing debate regarding the need to commit to all states impacted by ERWs, particularly Myanmar. MacLean notes, “Myanmar is the third most landmine-contaminated country in the world... perhaps as much as five million acres nationwide are contaminated, the most heavily affected areas being the country’s border regions due to decades-long low-intensity armed conflicts.”¹²⁵ On the one hand, there has been increasing awareness and concern among intergovernmental (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) regarding ERWs in Myanmar, especially considering their likelihood of impacting groups of internally displaced persons (IDPs) travelling along mine-infested corridors. However, the lack of support from the Tatmadaw, and from the Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) in the outlying regions, has discouraged IGOs and NGOs from addressing the issue, resulting in little action being taken.¹²⁶

¹²² “ARMAC’s History,” ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center, accessed June 22, 2021, <https://aseanmineaction.org/armac/armac-history/>.

¹²³ ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center, *Integrated Approaches to Explosive Ordnance Risk Education in ASEAN Member States* (Phnom Penh, Cambodia: ARMAC, 2020), <https://aseanmineaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ARMAC-Integrated-Approaches-to-EORE-in-AMS.pdf>.

¹²⁴ ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center, *Annual Report 2018* (Phnom Penh, Cambodia: ARMAC, 2020), <https://aseanmineaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ARMACs-Annual-Report-2018.pdf>.

¹²⁵ Ken MacLean, “Humanitarian Mine Action in Myanmar and the Reterritorialization of Risk,” *Focaal* 74 (March 2016): 84, ProQuest.

¹²⁶ MacLean, 84–89.

e. Cyber Security

ADMM-Plus identified cyber security as its seventh area of concentration during its third (2017-2020) cycle, following the ADMM's decision to follow suit with the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) proposal to regulate cyberspace activity.¹²⁷ The CS EWG first convened on July 2017, later conducting its first TTX on August 2019.¹²⁸ According to Noor, "[ASEAN] has long been a target of cyber campaigns. Networks and systems within the ASEAN Secretariat, [and] member states, have been compromised by... advanced persistent threat (APT) actors sponsored by states."¹²⁹ Increased globalization and digitalization has raised ASEAN awareness toward cybercrime, cyber terrorism, and disinformation and misinformation campaigns. However, its primary challenge in responding to such threats has been generating the necessary manpower, and physical and digital infrastructure, to respond to these threats.¹³⁰ Additional factors further complicating ADMM-Plus efforts include discord on defining cyberspace, and the applicability of international law in the cyberspace domain.¹³¹

In light of the ongoing cyber security challenges, ADMM has sought to promote cooperation with "Plus" partners that possess the technical sophistication to combat cyber threats, such as Japan. Over the last decade, ASEAN has leveraged this "ADMM+1"¹³² arrangement to conduct its ASEAN-Japan Cyber Online Exercise program, enabling ASEAN members to develop skills in information security, and bolster individual

¹²⁷ Candice Tran Dai and Miguel Alberto Gomez, "Challenges and Opportunities for Cyber Norms in ASEAN," *Journal of Cyber Policy* 3, no. 2 (June 2018): 217–218, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2018.1487987>.

¹²⁸ ASEAN, "Past Meetings and Events (2006 - 2019)."

¹²⁹ Elina Noor, "Positioning ASEAN in Cyberspace," *Asia Policy* 27, no. 2 (April 2020): 107, ProQuest.

¹³⁰ Noor, "Positioning ASEAN in Cyberspace," 107–108.

¹³¹ Dai and Gomez, "Challenges and Opportunities for Cyber Norms in ASEAN," 218–219.

¹³² Victor Sumsky, "A Russian Perspective on the Relevance and Challenges of the ADMM-Plus," *Asia Policy*, no. 22 (July 2016): 116, <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2016.0027>.

government responses to cybersecurity incidents.¹³³ However, the exercise continues at the level where the primary focus is on increasing the skills of individual cybersecurity personnel from ASEAN, similar to the ARF's implementing of CBMs when it first attempted to address NTS.¹³⁴

E. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Since 1996, ASEAN has leveraged the ARF, ADMM, and ADMM-Plus to address region-specific NTS issues. However, the persistent need to adhere to diplomacy, rhetoric, and maintain consensus limited its activities, resulting in little-to-no concrete action. ASEAN also experienced several growing pains in determining issues relevant to its own security priorities, and developing the architecture and capabilities necessary to handle them. Further complicating this issue was the initial lack of understanding of what could be construed as a category of NTS, as previously highlighted by ASEAN leadership. As a result, ARF NTS security cooperation for the duration of the 1990s centered on transnational crime.

From 2001 onward, the ARF expanded its security focus, but capability and resource constraints among ASEAN states hindered its ability to address region-specific challenges. In turn, this resulted in individual ASEAN members defaulting to bilateral partnerships with extra-regional states, or extra-regional partners and organizations leading efforts to assist ASEAN states during times of crises. There were also instances where ASEAN states deliberately refused the assistance of extra-regional partners and pursued inter-ASEAN initiatives, despite having later accepted extra-regional partner intelligence and financial support toward counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, and maritime security operations.

¹³³ Dessy Permatasari Saputri, Surryanto D. Waluyo, and Helda Risman, "Indonesian Cyber Diplomacy: Asean-Japan Online Cyber Exercise," *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 9 (2020): 457, <https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences/article/view/911>.

¹³⁴ Saputri, Waluyo, and Risman, "Indonesian Cyber Diplomacy: Asean-Japan Online Cyber Exercise," 462.

The challenges of the ARF prompted ASEAN leaders to establish the ADMM and ADMM-Plus. Following ADMM-Plus's inaugural meeting, it established a number of EWGs, to include CT, HADR, MS, MM, PKO, HMA, and CS. These EWGs enabled ASEAN's defense leaders and practitioners to engage in more streamlined cooperation, dialogue, and consultation with their extra-regional partners, unlike the relatively ad-hoc cooperation found in the ARF. Although it streamlined its processes and broadened its focus, transnational terrorism, maritime security, and disaster relief continued to dominate the ASEAN security agenda. The emergence of groups like IS, and the activities of pro-IS groups in the region, prompted several regional state governments to bolster their counter-terrorism efforts. Although CBRN was previously acknowledged as a sub-category of transnational terrorism, most regional counter-terrorism operations seemingly reflected those of Marawi in 2017, which exhibited engaging VEOs in close combat, conceptualizing de-radicalization strategies, and addressing issues pertaining to border security.

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III. ASEAN WMD/CBRN SECURITY COOPERATION

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on ASEAN WMD/CBRN security cooperation from 1995 to 2020. Section B introduces the concepts of WMD and CBRN to provide a baseline understanding. Section C discusses ARF WMD/CBRN security cooperation since 1995, specifically in the periods of 1995–2008 and 2009–2019. The first period highlights how the ARF initially approached WMD/CBRN and how it had seldom advanced beyond diplomatic statements. The second period highlights how it attempted to shift toward more concrete action. Section D discusses ADMM and ADMM-Plus WMD/CBRN cooperation from 2013 to 2020. Section E provides the chapter’s conclusion.

B. DEFINING WMD/CBRN

Early uses of the term “weapons of mass destruction” can be traced throughout the first half of the twentieth century, most notably during the immediate post-World War II years. In 1945, Canada, the UK, and the U.S. jointly advocated establishing a UN committee to oversee the control of nuclear arsenals and energy, addressing concerns regarding the proliferation of technologically advanced and unregulated weaponry that could exponentially increase human suffering. The following year, the UN General Assembly founded the “Commission to Deal with the Problem Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy” to establish organizational procedures for eliminating atomic arsenals. However, it failed to make progress, partly due to the group’s inability to reach a consensus on defining “weapons of mass destruction.” However, the UN reached a turning point in 1948, when its Commission on Conventional Armaments (CCA) formally defined the term¹³⁵:

The [CCA] resolves to advise the [UN] Security Council: 1. that it considers that ... weapons of mass destruction should ... include atomic explosive weapons, radio-active material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which have

¹³⁵ W. Seth Carus, *Defining “Weapons of Mass Destruction,”* Occasional Paper, No. 8 (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012), 6–9, 37.

characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those... mentioned above.¹³⁶

Since 1948, the boundaries of the definition have changed, reflecting the international community's re-evaluation of WMDs, and assessment of existing and emerging threats. More recent efforts can be attributed to an awareness concerning CBRN, which has been used to describe the range of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials incorporated into the development of WMDs.¹³⁷ According to Martellini, Novossiolova, and Malizia, "the CBRN security paradigm is a relatively recent development which has been steadily evolving over the past two decades... its origins can be traced back to 2004 when the [UNSC] unanimously adopted Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540)..."¹³⁸ It is worth noting that CBRN, unlike WMD, includes a "dual-use" characteristic. Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials can be found in manufacturing, industry, medical, and pharmaceutical settings.¹³⁹ Transitioning into the GWOT, there has been rising concern over CBRN-related terrorism, to include the ability of terrorists to exploit security gaps in pursuit of said materials.¹⁴⁰ Figure 1 shows a model of known WMD threats and hazards.

¹³⁶ United Nations, *Commission for Conventional Armaments* (New York, NY: United Nations Security Council, 1948), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/755665?ln=en>.

¹³⁷ Department of the Army, *Combined Arms Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction*. ATP 3-90.40 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2017), https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/ARN3912_ATP%203-90x40%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf.

¹³⁸ Maurizio Martellini, Tatyanna Novossiolova, and Andrea Malizia, "A Reflection on the Future of the CBRN Security Paradigm," in *Cyber and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives Challenges: Threats and Counter Efforts*, ed. Maurizio Martellini and Andrea Malizia (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), 2–3.

¹³⁹ Department of the Army, *Combined Arms Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction*.

¹⁴⁰ Ogilvie-White, "Non-proliferation and Counterterrorism Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Meeting Global Obligations through Regional Security Architectures?," 15.

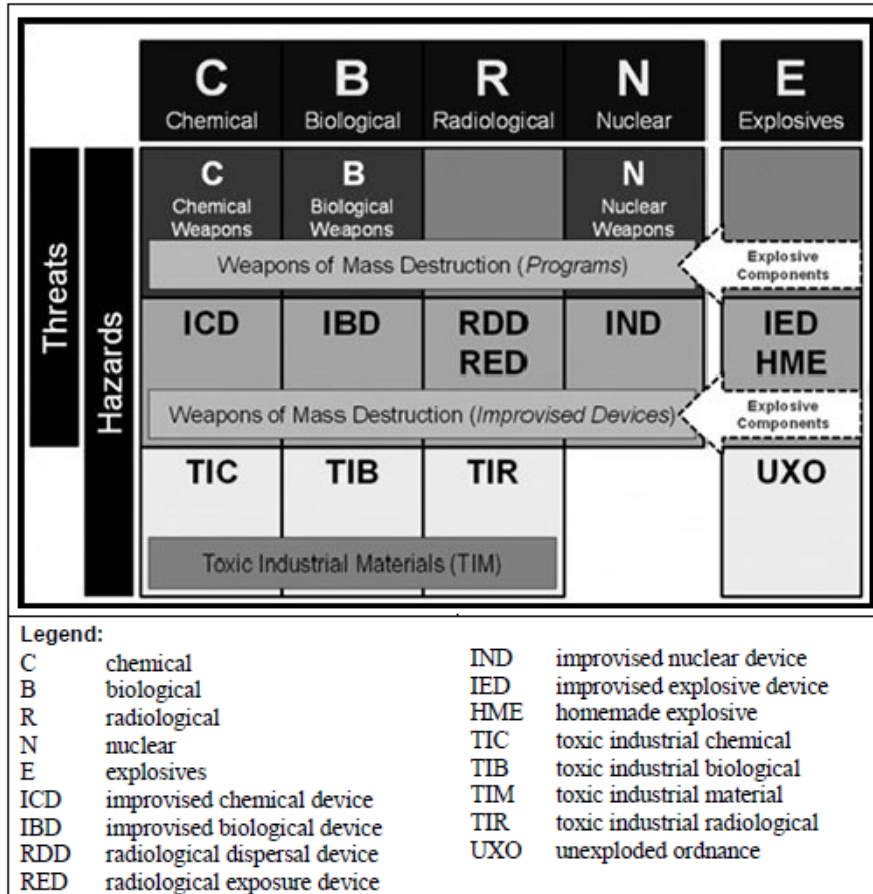


Figure 1. WMD Threats and Hazards Model (U.S. Army)¹⁴¹

C. ARF WMD/CBRN COOPERATION

1. 1995-2008: Rhetoric, External Pressure, and Adopting a CBRN Rubric

Increasing ASEAN awareness and concern regarding the buildup of technologically advanced, and unregulated, weaponry prompted organizational leaders to first pursue diplomatic efforts to establish a nuclear weapon-free region.¹⁴² Subsequent actions continued through the ARF, specifically with ASEAN advancing its stance against the development, acquisition, and employment of nuclear arsenals, doing so in a manner to garner the support of the international community and of the five nuclear weapon states

¹⁴¹ Source: Department of the Army, *Combined Arms Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction*.

¹⁴² Weatherbee, *ASEAN's Half Century: A Political History of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, 135.

(NWS). However, these endeavors seldom advanced beyond CBMs and discussions that centered on pre-existing international treaties, such as the NPT.¹⁴³ Despite this setback, the ARF continued to pursue similar endeavors, gradually broadening its focus to address a growing threat spectrum. Table 10 highlights ARF WMD/CBRN cooperation between 1995 and 2008.

Table 10. ARF WMD/CBRN Cooperation (1995-2008)¹⁴⁴

Category	Topic	Years Conducted
Chemical	Discussion on ARF Member Accession of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)	1998-1999, 2002–2003
Biological	Discussion on Completion of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BWTC)	1998-2002
Radiological		
Nuclear	Discussion on Nuclear Proliferation, Delivery, Disarmament, or Elimination	1995, 1997–2006
	Discussion on NWS accession of the SEANWFZ Treaty	1997, 1999, 2001–2002, 2004, 2006–2007
	Discussion on AR Members Accession of the UN NPT	1998-2001, 2003–2004, 2006–2007
	Discussion on ARF Member Accession/Ratification of the CTBT	1999-2002
	Discussion on Fissile Missile Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)	1999, 2001, 2007
	Discussion on UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 53/77D	1999-2000
	Discussion on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula	2003-2004, 2006, 2008
	Discussion on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Agreement	2003, 2006, 2007
	Discussion on IAEA Additional Protocol	2003
	Discussion on International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism	2005-2006
	CBM on UNSCR 1540	2007

¹⁴³ Weatherbee, *ASEAN's Half Century: A Political History of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, 158.

¹⁴⁴ Adapted from ASEAN Regional Forum, *ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ASEAN Regional Forum Unit, 2018), https://media.nti.org/pdfs/arf_BGxKUe6.pdf and ASEAN Regional Forum, “ASEAN Regional Forum: List of Track I Activities (By intersessional year from 1994 to 2020).”

Category	Topic	Years Conducted
Explosive	Discussion on Ballistic Missile Defense Systems Impacts	1997, 2000–2001
	Discussion on Implementing of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction	1998-1999
	Discussion on Implementing the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW)	1998-1999
	Discussion on Demining Operations and the Removal of Unexploded Ordnance (UXOs)	1999
	Discussion on Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation	2003
Non-Specific	Discussion on Export Controls to Prevent the Illicit Transport of Nuclear, Chemical, or Biological Weapons	2004
	Discussion on UNSCR 1540	2006-2007
	Discussion on UNSCR 1673 and the Prevention of WMD Proliferation by Non-State Actors	2006
	Seminar of WMD Nonproliferation	2006

Despite addressing several WMD-related topics between 1995–2008, ARF WMD cooperation was largely rhetorical, focusing mostly on dialogues, treaties, and CBMs. Transitioning into the early 2000s and the GWOT, ASEAN members within the ARF opposed the initiatives of extra-regional partners, despite their awareness and concern of WMD/CBRN-related terrorism.¹⁴⁵ Among these concerns was the U.S.’s 2000 discovery of the A.Q. Khan nuclear proliferation network. Khan, a Pakistani scientist, had established a transnational network of businessmen, industry managers, and engineers to support nuclear proliferation projects for hostile states like North Korea.¹⁴⁶ He had successfully acquired aluminum components from SCOPE, in Malaysia, to manufacture centrifuges for uranium enrichment. His ability to penetrate Malaysian industries, and leverage their dual-

¹⁴⁵ Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?,” 430–440.

¹⁴⁶ Albright and Hinderstein, “Unraveling the A. Q. Khan and Future Proliferation Networks,” 117.

use material acquisition and shipping businesses, demonstrated the potential vulnerabilities within other ASEAN states.¹⁴⁷

Activities like those of the A.Q. Khan network prompted the U.S. to later implement the PSI in 2003, reflecting increasing external pressure to take a more proactive stance on curtailing the proliferation activities of transnational terrorist networks.¹⁴⁸ According to Ogilvie-White, “Growing agreement between participants over the role of the U.S.-led PSI is particularly interesting... with the exception of Singapore, it was originally greeted with... suspicion by ASEAN members...”¹⁴⁹ While the initiative presented potential for enhancing cooperation toward disrupting threat WMD shipping methods, it initially did not appeal to several ASEAN members. This was largely from administrative and resource standpoints, which included requirements that were beyond ASEAN’s means.¹⁵⁰ Singapore was the exception, as its government officials recognized the importance of implementing additional maritime security and counter-proliferation measures to protect its maritime economy, especially considering its position as a regional shipping hub.¹⁵¹

Following the Bush Administration’s 2003 efforts to implement the PSI, the UN pressed forward with adopting UNSCR 1540. Like the U.S.-led PSI, UNSCR 1540 proposed to address threat WMD proliferation networks through increased legislation and physical security measures.¹⁵² Another characteristic of the resolution that ASEAN opposed was its adoption under UN Charter Chapter VII, which legally bound members to implement the aforementioned measures to deny non-state actors’ opportunities to pursue

¹⁴⁷ Albright and Hinderstein, 114–115.

¹⁴⁸ Rosand, “Combating WMD Terrorism: The Short-Sighted US-led Multilateral Response,” 83.

¹⁴⁹ Ogilvie-White, “Non-proliferation and Counterterrorism Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Meeting Global Obligations through Regional Security Architectures?,” 19.

¹⁵⁰ Ogilvie-White, 12.

¹⁵¹ Ong, “The Proliferation Security Initiative and Counter-Proliferation: A View from Asia,” 162–163.

¹⁵² Ogilvie-White, “Non-proliferation and Counterterrorism Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Meeting Global Obligations through Regional Security Architectures?,” 4–5.

WMD/CBRN materials.¹⁵³ Malaysia, whose export controls had been identified as deficient, openly opposed the resolution. Salisbury notes, “in April 2004... the Malaysian government suggested that the most effective way of preventing WMD terrorism was through nuclear disarmament, and expressed concern about the use of Chapter VII of the UN Charter.”¹⁵⁴ Arguably, Malaysia held a narrow view on the topic. But, it can also be said that the resolution failed to consider ASEAN’s limitations and region-specific challenges, prompting several members to take a non-cooperative stance.¹⁵⁵

Although ASEAN had previously opposed externally-driven initiatives in the ARF, it was not opposed to confronting CBRN-related terrorism. In 2007, ASEAN conducted its inaugural ACCT summit, where its leaders had endorsed an agreement that required all signing parties to “strengthen their capability and readiness in dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear... methods of terrorism,” as well as establish means for facilitating information and intelligence sharing.¹⁵⁶ This move suggested that ASEAN had acknowledged CBRN threats as a subcategory of transnational terrorism and crime, a key NTS category within ASEAN-led security forums. It also demonstrated that it was willing to transition from diplomatic action toward more concrete security cooperation, and align its efforts within those of the UN.¹⁵⁷ However, this agreement did not specify how ASEAN leaders would generate the necessary capabilities to address WMD/CBRN-related terrorism. Lastly, this effort depended on the cooperation of the collective organization, as

¹⁵³ Stephanie Lieggi, Catherine Dill, and Diane Lee, *Project Final Report: The Growing Nonproliferation Challenges in Southeast Asia – Forecasting Emerging Capabilities and its Implications on the Control of Sensitive WMD-Related Technologies* (Monterey, CA: James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, 2016), 5–6, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/48708>.

¹⁵⁴ Daniel Salisbury, “Exploring the Use of ‘Third Countries’ in Proliferation Networks: The Case of Malaysia,” *European Journal of International Studies* 4, no. 1 (2019): 118, <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2018.11>.

¹⁵⁵ Salisbury, 118.

¹⁵⁶ Chau, “Security Community and Southeast Asia: Australia, the U.S., and ASEAN’s Counter-Terror Strategy,” 633.

¹⁵⁷ Abdul R. Ahmad, “The ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism 2007,” *Asia-Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law* 1 & 2 (2013): 96–97, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718158-14010295>.

individual ASEAN states have previously relied on bilateral partnerships to build capabilities and deter threats.¹⁵⁸

2. 2009-2019: Transition to Substantive Action?

In July 2009, the ARF conducted its first ISM on Nonproliferation and Disarmament (ISM NPD), where participants discussed the organization’s role in WMD nonproliferation, disarmament, and arms control.¹⁵⁹ This contrasted with its previous struggle to gain consensus on establishing the ISG on WMD, a proposal that previously emerged following the CSCAP’s 2006 establishment of the “Study Group on Facilitating Maritime Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.” Several non-ASEAN members in the ARF advocated establishing the aforementioned ISG to promote security cooperation and capability-building toward potential WMD/CBRN terrorist threats. However, several ASEAN members were concerned that the activities included in this ISG would intrude on their sovereignty and domestic affairs, similar to the mixed responses to the U.S.’s 2004 RMSI proposal.¹⁶⁰ Developments since then have prompted ASEAN, and the ARF, to reassess its role in WMD nonproliferation, elevating it as a key area of security cooperation. Table 11 highlights ARF WMD/CBRN cooperation between 2009 and 2019.

Table 11. ARF WMD/CBRN Cooperation (2009-2019)¹⁶¹

Category	Topic	Years Conducted
Chemical	Workshop on Precursor Chemicals and Synthetic Drugs	2015
Biological	Workshop Biological Threat Reduction	2009
	Workshop on Disease Detection and Surveillance: Enhancing Public and Veterinary Health	2011

¹⁵⁸ Chau, “Security Community and Southeast Asia: Australia, the U.S., and ASEAN’s Counter-Terror Strategy,” 633, 637.

¹⁵⁹ ASEAN Regional Forum, *ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Non-Proliferation And Disarmament Work Plan* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ARF Unit, 2018), https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WORK-PLAN-ARF-ISM-NPD-Work-plan-2018_final-31-May.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Simon, “The ASEAN Regional Forum,” 309.

¹⁶¹ Adapted from ASEAN Regional Forum, *ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)* and ASEAN Regional Forum, “ASEAN Regional Forum: List of Track I Activities (By intersessional year from 1994 to 2020).”

Category	Topic	Years Conducted
	Networks to Combat Infectious Diseases and Bioterrorism	
	Workshop of Preparedness and Response to a Biological Event	2012
	Planning Workshop on ARF Cross-Sectoral Security Cooperation on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response	2013
	Workshop on ARF Cross-Sectoral Security Cooperation on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response	2014
	TTX and Workshop on Bio-Preparedness	2015
Radiological		
Nuclear	Discussion on NPT Review Conference	2009
	Discussion on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) Follow-on Treaty	2009
	Discussion on UNSCR 1874	2009
	Workshop on Non-Proliferation Nuclear Forensics	2011, 2013
	Discussion on SEANWFZ	2012
	Discussion on Implementing UNSCR 1540	2013, 2017
	Workshop on Promoting the Nuclear-Weapon Free Status of Mongolia	2015
Symposium on Nuclear Security Capacity Building	2019	
Explosive		
Non-Specific	ISM NPD	2009-2019
	Adoption of the ARF Work Plan on NPD	2012
	Workshop on Countering Illicit Trafficking of CBRN Materials	2013
	Workshop on CBRN Risk Mitigation	2015, 2018
	Discussion on Expanding the SEANWFZ into a WMD, Reprocessing, and Enrichment-Free Zone.	2016
	Reaffirming ACCT Commitments	2016
	Discussion on ISM CT-TC CBRN Issues	2017

Although diplomacy persisted as a defining feature of ARF WMD/CBRN Cooperation between 2009 and 2019, the ARF gradually included workshops and TTXs to incorporate training, education, and information-sharing. Although these did not directly result in more concrete security cooperation, they presented ASEAN leaders opportunities

to break from their historical practice of defaulting to diplomacy and rhetoric.¹⁶² One factor that contributed to this shift was the emergence of regional nuclear energy plans, with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam announcing their intent to pursue nuclear energy between 2006 and 2008.¹⁶³ In the early stages of their nuclear power plant (NPP) projects, their governments dismissed the likelihood of threat proliferation issues, despite regional nuclear energy experts expressing concerns regarding transnational threats, possible structural vulnerabilities, and the challenges associated with nuclear waste storage.¹⁶⁴ However, the growing demand for energy prompted these states to explore means for improving their long-term energy security plans.¹⁶⁵

Despite an interest toward researching and implementing nuclear energy, extra-regional events like the 2011 Fukushima Disaster prompted several ASEAN members to assess if they had the means to mitigate the associated risks. Caballero-Anthony notes that there safety and economic risks that states must factor when considering nuclear energy, to include “construction delays due to safety issues... high costs of operations and maintenance... radioactive waste management... nuclear accidents.... and... nuclear proliferation.”¹⁶⁶ The disaster was caused an earthquake and tsunami damaging reactor power and cooling systems, prompting the meltdown. For East Asia, it was also an eye opener from environmental and food security perspectives, considering the release of radioactive contaminants into nearby ecosystems.¹⁶⁷ From the ARF position, the Fukushima Disaster did not discourage discussions regarding the peaceful use of nuclear

¹⁶² ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

¹⁶³ Julius C. I. Trajano, “Advancing a Regional Pathway to Enhance Nuclear Energy Governance in Southeast Asia,” in *Non-Traditional security issues in ASEAN: Agendas for Action*, ed. Mely Caballero-Anthony (Singapore: ISEAS, 2020), 159.

¹⁶⁴ Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific, *Regional Security Outlook 2008* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: CSCAP, 2008), 24–27, <http://www.cscap.org/uploads/docs/CRSO/CRSO%202008.pdf>.

¹⁶⁵ Trajano, “Advancing a Regional Pathway to Enhance Nuclear Energy Governance in Southeast Asia,” 159.

¹⁶⁶ Caballero-Anthony, *An Introduction to Non-Traditional Security Studies: A Transnational Approach*, loc. 3310.

¹⁶⁷ Caballero-Anthony, loc. 3310–3332.

energy, but it did renew efforts geared toward a stricter adherence to international and regional nuclear safety standards.¹⁶⁸

With growing concerns regarding safety, cooperation, and proliferation, states like the Philippines have been increasingly active in promoting and facilitating CBRN cooperation between regional and extra-regional partners. In 2019, it had taken the lead in proposing a TTX on “Response Capabilities to [CBRN] Incidents.”¹⁶⁹ It also contributed to bolstering ARF readiness through its hosting of the CBRN Center of Excellence (CBRN CoE) in Southeast Asia, which conducted other workshops and TTXs, to include CBRN awareness and risk management, trafficking of prohibited materials, and biological threat reduction and management.¹⁷⁰

D. ADMM/ADMM-PLUS WMD/CBRN COOPERATION

ADMM/ADMM-Plus first addressed regional WMD/CBRN threats during its 2013 CTX, where participating members attended a presentation on CBRN weapons. It is worth noting that it was during this portion of the CTX that ASEAN leaders explicitly recognized CBRN as a component of the WMD threat spectrum. ASEAN notes, “As CBRN weapons have the capacity to cause large numbers of casualties, they are considered ‘[WMDs],’ with the potential for major societal impact even in relatively small incidents.”¹⁷¹ While this move enabled its members to establish a shared understanding of WMD and CBRN, it was not groundbreaking, but rather one that followed trends set by the ARF’s ministers and heads of state.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ ASEAN, *ASEAN Regional Forum Annual Security Outlook 2011* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ARF Unit, 2011), <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/librarycat/arf-annual-security-outlook-2011/>.

¹⁶⁹ ASEAN Regional Forum, *ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Tabletop Exercise (TTX) on Response Capabilities to CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) Incidents*.

¹⁷⁰ ASEAN, *ASEAN Regional Forum Annual Security Outlook 2020* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ARF Unit, 2020), <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/librarycat/arf-annual-security-outlook-2020/>.

¹⁷¹ ASEAN, *ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting-Plus, Counter-Terrorism Exercise*.

¹⁷² Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?,” 430–440.

ADMM’s next major move took place in 2018, when its leaders announced their intent to establish the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defense Experts.¹⁷³ The move followed the events of the 2018 SLD, where Singaporean Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen addressed the rise of region-specific transnational threats leveraging weapons of the CBR spectrum, calling for the need to establish a forum among the region’s subject matter experts.¹⁷⁴ The Network has since reached out to relevant Plus member organizations to enhance its own knowledge base, to include the U.S.’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), and South Korea’s Agency for Defense Development (ADD). As a newer organization, most of its activities have centered around information exchange, largely to develop ASEAN’s technical expertise.¹⁷⁵ Table 12 highlights its cooperative efforts toward addressing the CBRN range of WMD threats.

Table 12. ADMM/ADMM-Plus WMD/CBRN Cooperation (2013-2020)¹⁷⁶

Category	Topic	Years Conducted
Chemical	Network of ASEAN CBR Defense Experts’ Workshop: Chemical Sampling	2020
Biological	Network of ASEAN CBR Defense Experts’ Workshop: “Promoting Scientific Cooperation to Manage Infectious Disease Outbreaks”	2020
Radiological	Network of ASEAN CBR Defense Experts’ Workshop: Radiological Sampling	2020
Nuclear		
Explosive		
Non-Specific	CTX: CBRN TTX	2013
	Inaugural Meeting of the Network of ASEAN CBR Defense Experts	2019-2020

¹⁷³ ASEAN, “Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, Radiological Defense Experts.”

¹⁷⁴ Parameswaran, “Where Are ASEAN’s Defense Initiatives Under Singapore’s Chairmanship?”

¹⁷⁵ ASEAN, *Concept Paper on the Ad-Hoc ADMM-Plus Conference on Chemical, Biological and Radiological Threats* (Jakarta, Indonesia: ASEAN Secretariat, 2021), [https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/2021_Jun_15th%20ADMM_15%20June%202021,%20VC_4.%20Concept%20Paper%20on%20the%20Ad-Hoc%20Establishment%20of%20ADMM-Plus%20Conference%20on%20CBR%20Threats%20\[Singapore\].pdf](https://admm.asean.org/dmdocuments/2021_Jun_15th%20ADMM_15%20June%202021,%20VC_4.%20Concept%20Paper%20on%20the%20Ad-Hoc%20Establishment%20of%20ADMM-Plus%20Conference%20on%20CBR%20Threats%20[Singapore].pdf).

¹⁷⁶ Adapted from ASEAN, “Past Meetings and Events (2006 - 2019).”

The ADMM’s decision to address a subset of the CBRN threat spectrum may also be attributed to its own assessments regarding the likelihood of regional threats employing chemical, biological, and radiological agents. According to Vican and Vicar, “Chemical and biological agents attract [threats] because their production is easy. Even a small amount... can result in heavy losses... Of course, terrorism does not use only... [military-focused] agents... [Commercial] industrial toxic agents... may easily become a focus....”¹⁷⁷ Chemical and biological weapons are also relatively easier to obtain because there is a perception that there are multiple acquisition methods, to include theft and production.¹⁷⁸ The digital and information ages have also increased the likelihood of accessing relevant technical information, supposedly spurring the interest of threat actors that seek to develop their own arsenals.¹⁷⁹

In the case of radiological weapons, the increase in stolen radioactive materials has led to discussions regarding the use of “dirty bombs” by transnational criminals, terrorists, and violent non-state actors. According to Trajano, “from 2013 to 2017, there were four reported cases in Southeast Asia involving illicit trafficking and theft of radioactive material,” with additional equipment being stolen from Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines in the following years.¹⁸⁰ Following the 9/11 attacks on the U.S., the IAEA provided training throughout the Asia-Pacific to enable states to pinpoint, extract, transport, and monitor radiation sources.¹⁸¹ However ADMM’s primary challenge has been standardizing region-specific radiological security measures. In lieu of a regulatory

¹⁷⁷ Dusan Vican and Radim Vicar, “CBRN Terrorism: A Contribution to the Analysis of Risks,” in *Journal of Defense Resources Management* 2, no. 2 (July 2011): 22, ProQuest.

¹⁷⁸ Gary Ackerman and Michelle Jacome, “WMD Terrorism: The Once and Future Threat,” in *PRISM* 7, no. 3 (2018): 26–27, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26470532>.

¹⁷⁹ Vican and Vicar, “CBRN Terrorism: A Contribution to the Analysis of Risks,” 21–22.

¹⁸⁰ Trajano, “Advancing a Regional Pathway to Enhance Nuclear Energy Governance in Southeast Asia,” 165–166, 168.

¹⁸¹ Jonathan Medalia, “*Dirty Bombs*”: *Technical Background, Attack Prevention and Response, Issues for Congress*, CRS Report No. R41890 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41891>.

body, individual ADMM core/ASEAN states have resorted to developing state-level measures.¹⁸² Table 13 highlights such measures.

Table 13. ASEAN/ADMM-Core State Radiological Security Measures¹⁸³

State	Action(s)	Year(s)	Note(s)
Indonesia	Two national universities developed a MSc program on radiological security (as part of a larger nuclear security program)	2017-2018	Facilitated research collaboration on nuclear security between universities, facilities, and the IAEA.
	Introduction of radiological security culture	2018	Introduced radiological security self-assessments in local facilities
	Developed a nuclear security practical pocketbook	2019	Introduced the roles on individuals and supervisors in radiological facilities
Malaysia	Conducted national workshops on radiological security culture (as part of a larger nuclear security program)	2017	Facilitated information sharing on radiological security culture with the IAEA
Philippines	Conducted regulatory training for licensees and users of radioactive sources		Licensees and users of radioactive materials found violating regulations were sanctioned
	Conducted training on reactor engineering, environmental monitoring, and emergency response with Japan	2018	Facilitated information sharing on radiological security culture between both states
Thailand	Conducted additional training corresponding with revisions of the Nuclear Energy For Peace Act		Provided updated regulatory guidelines for state licensees and users
Vietnam	Conducted a projects involving self-assessment questionnaires pertaining to radiation security	2016	

¹⁸² Trajano, “Advancing a Regional Pathway to Enhance Nuclear Energy Governance in Southeast Asia,” 166–170.

¹⁸³ Adapted from Trajano, 166–167.

E. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Until the early 2000s, ASEAN WMD/CRBN security cooperation was largely conducted under the auspices of the ARF, which was initially characterized by limited rhetorical opposition to the development, acquisition, and employment of nuclear arsenals. As ASEAN continued to nest its efforts within larger international commitments, it gradually endorsed diplomatic efforts that addressed a broader range of threats. However, it maintained a largely diplomatic stance, despite increasing awareness and concern regarding transnational WMD/CRBN groups, to include the A.Q. Khan network that previously leveraged dual-use facilities and materials from Malaysia to manufacture centrifuges for uranium enrichment. In response these activities, the U.S. and other extra-regional partners had proposed measures to address the threat of WMD proliferation networks. Although these initiatives were designed to enhance security cooperation, they were met with resistance from several ASEAN members, which opposed their demanding legislative, financial, and manning requirements.

In 2007, ASEAN's approach to WMD/CRBN began to change in two important ways. First, it agreed that its members should move beyond making statements about CBRN and begin to generate the capabilities needed to respond to CBRN terrorism in the region. Second, ASEAN decided to address this threat with actions beyond the diplomatic efforts of the ARF, to include CBRN defense consultation and cooperation within ADMM and ADMM-Plus. ADMM-Plus first addressed regional WMD/CRBN threats during its 2013 CTX, where member states attended a presentation on CBRN weapons, and formalized CBRN as a component of the WMD threat spectrum. However, it was not until the 2018 SLD that Singaporean Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen addressed the growing connections between transnational threats and CBR weapons, prompting the ADMM to establish the Network of ASEAN CBR Defense Experts. Overall, ASEAN WMD/CRBN security cooperation between 1995 and 2019 seldom deviated from the organization's historical practice of defaulting to diplomacy and rhetoric, despite emerging regional threats, growing awareness, and increasing pressure from extra-regional partners.

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IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to explain why ASEAN previously subordinated WMD/CBRN threats to other region-specific NTS issues, even though this impeded its development of counter-WMD/CBRN capabilities. Potential explanations, as highlighted in Chapter I, included the following: ASEAN members consider CBRN threats a lower priority than other threats; ASEAN members are reluctant to embrace a strong commitment to counter WMD/CBRN proliferation because they are concerned it could lead to excessive influence by extra-regional partners; ASEAN's institutional designs are not suited to a strong commitment to CBRN non-proliferation outside of consideration of other NTS concerns; and ASEAN members' behavior has resulted from more idiosyncratic influences, including region-specific security developments and domestic political factors. In order to determine which explanation is the most persuasive, this thesis treated ASEAN's approach to WMD/CBRN threats as a case study of its methods toward addressing NTS issues.

Chapter II explored general ASEAN NTS cooperation from the 1990s onward, highlighting the actions that the organization took to align its security efforts with the rest of the global community, specifically in a post-Cold War environment. Furthermore, it identified known NTS categories and characteristics to establish a baseline understanding of the topic. It then discussed ASEAN-led NTS cooperation through the ARF, ADMM, and ADMM-Plus, highlighting ASEAN's transition from the practice of engaging almost entirely in dialogue to facilitating defense consultation and cooperation between regional and extra-regional partners. Chapter III utilized the same framework, specifically addressing ASEAN-led WMD/CBRN security cooperation, tracing its efforts to respond to the growing threats posed by emerging threat WMD/CBRN networks, and the factors influencing these efforts.

A. FINDINGS

The first explanation is strongly supported by evidence presented in Chapters II and III. ASEAN's subordination of WMD/CBRN threats to other region-specific NTS issues began with its limited security focus during the ARF's 1996 inaugural meeting. As the

driving force of the ARF, ASEAN dictated that the organization prioritized addressing transnational crimes – such as illegal arms trafficking, piracy, and illegal immigration – rather than military threats. Transitioning into the GWOT era, ASEAN elected to address more pressing issues, which included transnational terrorism and crime, maritime security, and disaster relief operations. Despite increasing concern and awareness regarding WMD/CBRN threats, border security issues, and weak export controls, ASEAN refrained from including WMD/CBRN-related threats as a security focus. It was not until 2007 that it explicitly acknowledged the need to address WMD/CBRN threats, followed much later by the ADMM's establishment of the ASEAN CBR Network in 2018, and the ARF's CBRN TTX proposal in 2019.

The second explanation is weakly supported by the evidence in Chapter III, as excessive influence by extra-regional partners was only one factor that contributed to ASEAN's hesitation toward countering threat WMD/CBRN proliferation. It is worth reiterating that ASEAN serves as the driving force of the ARF, and would have continued to dictate the organization's security agenda in spite of extra-regional frustrations and initiatives. ASEAN's prioritizing of region-specific NTS issues, and its relatively laggard pace in explicitly acknowledging WMD/CBRN threats, frustrated several extra-regional partners in the ARF. This included a post-9/11 U.S. that increasingly sought to take action against transnational WMD terrorism, as reflected in initiatives like the PSI and UNSCR 1540, both which several Southeast Asian states opposed. However, ASEAN's driving of the ARF security agenda, and its tendency to default to rhetoric and declaration-making significantly contributed to this hesitation.

The third explanation is strongly supported by evidence in Chapters II and III. On the one hand, ASEAN demonstrated its ability to facilitate cooperation among regional and extra-regional powers. However, ASEAN leaders initially experienced difficulty in maintaining a consensus on categorizing region-specific NTS issues, largely due to the different priorities of its members. This was further complicated by the persistent resource challenges and capability imbalances among its members, which hindered the organization's collective ability to determine long-term solutions. It experienced several growing pains in developing the architecture and capabilities necessary to address the

aforementioned categories, as its need to adhere to organization particularities limited the ARF's activities to rhetoric and declaration-making, resulting in little-to-no concrete action. Even after ASEAN explicitly accepted the need to foster WMD/CBRN security cooperation, that cooperation remained largely diplomatic until the 2018 establishment of the CBR Network, and the 2019 proposal for a CBRN TTX.

The fourth explanation is partially supported by Chapters II and III. This is due to the majority of the evidence pertaining more to regional developments, as opposed to the domestic political factors of individual states. As previously mentioned, ASEAN did not explicitly address WMD/CBRN as a threat until the signing of the 2007 ACCT. Furthermore, it did not identify CBRN as part of the WMD threat spectrum until ADMM-Plus's 2013 CTX. Regardless, ASEAN WMD/CBRN security efforts mostly consisted of diplomatic statements that reflected those of international organizations and commitments, specifically treaties that sought to limit the development, acquisition, and employment of relevant arsenals (e.g., nuclear weapons and the NPT, biological weapons and the BWC, and chemical weapons and the CWC). This was due to ASEAN's prioritizing of criminal activities, maritime security, and disaster relief operations for over the last twenty years.

B. IMPLICATIONS

This thesis reveals that ASEAN's approach to region-specific WMD/CBRN security challenges is changing, although this shift has been mostly from diplomacy and rhetoric to consultation, education, and limited exercise planning. As mentioned in Chapter II, ADMM-Plus currently utilizes EWGs centered on seven areas of security cooperation. The ADMM's establishment of the ASEAN CBR Network, and the ongoing consultation process, implies that ASEAN has acknowledged the need to address WMD/CBRN-related capability challenges, and standardize approaches toward engaging region-specific threats.

Although ASEAN had previously identified WMD/CBRN as an immediate threat in 2007, cooperation between regional and extra-regional partners remained largely limited to information-sharing and expertise development. This implies that ASEAN is not yet prepared to collectively deter, or counter, emerging threats in the region. As demonstrated in Chapters II and III, ASEAN has driven the security agenda in the ARF, ADMM, and

ADMM-Plus, repeatedly demonstrating its intent to address only immediate, region-specific NTS challenges. However, despite setting the agenda, ASEAN continues to experience difficulty addressing its capability imbalances. What these considerations mean for U.S. policymakers and defense leaders is that ASEAN is unlikely to expand its current multinational WMD/CBRN activities beyond ASEAN forums. In other words, it is unlikely to become an effective partner in responding to WMD/CBRN contingencies in the Indo-Pacific region. Instead, the U.S. may have to rely on bilateral partnerships and alliances with individual Southeast Asian states, specifically with those that have developed some counter-WMD/CBRN niche capability, for assistance in regional WMD/CBRN contingency responses.

If ASEAN continues to encounter capability shortfalls, despite consulting partners like DTRA and ADD, it is possible that it may leverage the ADMM to elevate CBR as an area of concentration in the ADMM-Plus. ASEAN's previous EWG planning activities suggest that if it pursues this course of action, CBR may become the next area of cooperation during the 2021–2023 cycle, with the co-chairs conducting exercise planning afterward. Potential regional co-chairs include the Philippines, which has been active in promoting and facilitating CBRN cooperation between regional and extra-regional partners, and the U.S. and South Korea, which have previously provided technical expertise to ADMM leaders and defense practitioners.

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