



SECURITE, INTERDEPENDANCE ET LE RÔLE DE L' UNION EUROPEENNE DANS LA ZONE ASIE-PACIFIQUE

Mémoire de géopolitique

du Lieutenant-colonel Mazlan Bin Hussin

dans le cadre de l'étude dirigée

« Géopolitique de l'Europe en construction : défense et sécurité »

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6 L'Asie Pacifique semble subir une restructuration significative. La crise économique que tous les pays ASEAN ont connu depuis mi 1997, a projeté une ombre sur le développement de la région entière admirée une fois pour avoir accompli "un miracle". Les pays de la région ont été forcés de réajuster et réorganiser leur économie. Ces réajustements affecteraient non seulement l'économie mais aussi la politique et les institutions de la sécurité du pays. Par exemple, certains pays de la région ont déjà annulé et reporté leurs contrats majeurs d'achats d'armements aux Etats Unis et/ou en Europe, ce qui a touché leur programme de modernisation des armes.

Pendant ce temps, les pays ASEAN qui sont toujours en train de subir des tensions économiques, sont aujourd'hui sous le process de ramener tous les pays de la région au sein de l'association. Au niveau de la libération des échanges, ASEAN espère intégrer le marché régional dans son programme pour ce nouveau siècle. D'un autre côté, si nous regardons les relations entre les intérêts des puissances majeures par rapport à la stabilité et à la prospérité de la région, nous pouvons constater que l'influence de la Chine a été bien planté et significative dans l'économie, la politique et la diplomatie régionale sans oublier la sécurité régionale.

Etant un pays qui possède les armes nucléaires, une importante puissance militaire régionale et qui est un acteur important possédant un siège permanent aux Nation Unis, la Chine joue un rôle clé dans la sécurité de l'Asie Pacifique. Ainsi, il est impératif d'examiner ce "facteur Chine" dans le contexte de la politique régionale et de la sécurité des relations avec les puissances majeures concernées.

Les objectifs de ce rapport sont :

- Premièrement, voir dans l'ensemble le contexte de la sécurité des années 90 dans l'Asie Pacifique (Nord-Est et Sud-Est). Mais dans ce rapport, la discussion est centrée sur les affaires du Sud Est d'Asiatique et ses relations avec les puissances extérieures.
- Puis, nous allons examiner l'agrandissement de l'ASEAN comme un facteur important qui affecte le cours des événements de toute la région, pour le dialogue sur la sécurité, dans laquelle ASEAN a commencé avec leurs partenaires de dialogue depuis juillet 1994 sous le drapeau de "l'ASEAN Regional Forum" (ARF). Ce dialogue concerne tous les états de la région qui espèrent traiter des divers issues de la sécurité régionale qui les concernent. Cependant, il semble que l'ARF en lui-même est peu structuré et simplement un dialogue multilatérale.
- Ensuite, nous allons voir de plus près la Chine, qui domine la région par sa grande taille; sa population importante et son armée dominante par rapport aux autres pays du sud est asiatique. Quelques spécialistes argumentent que la Chine est considérée comme une menace pour la sécurité du pays de Sud Est d'Asie comme il n'y a aucun pays qui est aussi grand qu'elle pour la contrebalancer.
- Dernièrement, ce rapport va traiter et expliquer la politique de l'Union Européene dans la région dans ce 21ème siècle, son rôle et ses limites, ainsi que leur opinion sur l'Union-même.

Les changements actuels et la tendance actuelle dans l'environnement de la sécurité de l'Asie Pacifique correspondent à une transition de la situation chaotique de la Post Guerre Froide à un ordre actuel arrangé et construit par les états régionaux eux-même. Une relation amicale avec les puissances extérieures possédant des intérêts dans la région est indispensable pour maintenir et étendre cet ordre.

La Chine, une fois considérée comme une possible menace à la sécurité de la région, fait aujourd'hui partie intégrante du système régional, malgré le fait qu'elle continue à construire et moderniser l'armée ainsi que ses récents mouvements pour avoir un accès à l'Océan Indien via Myanmar. Cela laisse également des doutes sur leurs futures intentions dans la région.

La poussée de la Chine vers l'Océan Indien pourrait inquiéter l'Inde ainsi que l'ASEAN mais elle pourrait également persuader l'Inde de prendre une part de la

responsabilité de la région Asie Pacifique. Une approche progressive est suggérée pour la sécurité régionale à travers la consultation et la transparence dans les mesures de croissance au niveau de l'acquisition de matériel militaire, les échanges d'informations ou l'habileté de séminaire des séances d'études avec les pays participants dans et en dehors du cadre d'ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

L'ARF en elle-même prendra du temps pour développer complètement la seconde étape, par exemple, la diplomatie préventive et la résolution du conflit. Mais ce concept et cette approche de sécurité de la région ASEAN, a été envisagé par rapport à leurs expériences durant les trois derniers siècles. Il a certainement été bien enraciné dans la région et a été aussi une mutuelle compréhension avec les autres états membres par leur participation dans le forum d'ARF.

L'Union Européenne (UE) est une figure importante dans les affaires internationales et totalement engagé dans le mécanisme élaboré par l'ASEAN et fait sa propre contribution vers le succès de la mode ASEAN. Malgré ces défauts, la collaboration de l'UE a été bien réussi pour gagner contre la Chine et même contre les Etats Unis et contribuera à l'amélioration de la sécurité régionale "basé sur la prospérité et la cohérence sociale de chaque état". L'entrée de la Corée du Nord dans l'ARF sera tout à fait significatif pour la sécurité de l'Asie Pacifique.

7 Mots clés : l'Asie Pacifique / l'ASEAN / l'ARF / l'UE / sécurité/ interdépendance/ économie / préventive diplomatie/ la Chine/ les Etats Unis.

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SECURITY, INTERDEPENDENCE AND EUROPEAN UNION'S ROLE
IN ASIA-PACIFIC

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SECURITY, INTERDEPENDENCE AND EUROPEAN UNION'S ROLE IN ASIA-PACIFIC

INTRODUCTION

Asia-Pacific seems to be undergoing significant restructuring. The economic turmoil caused by the currency crisis that many countries have experienced since mid 1997 onward has cast a big shadow over developments the entire region once admired as having achieved a « miracle ». The countries in the region are rather forced to readjust and reorder its economic institutions and systems which for the last decade have been almost specified for rapid growth only. These readjustments will affect not only the economic, but political and security institutions as well. For instance, some of the governments in the region have either already cancelled or postponed major contracts of purchasing arms from the US and/or Europe, thus affecting their arms modernization programs.

Meanwhile the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the member states of which are still suffering from the economic hardship, is now under the process of bringing all the regional states under its fold. Cambodia, ASEAN's the last member to formally integrated into one. Also in terms of trade liberalization, ASEAN is expected to integrate the regional market at the turn of the century. On the other hand, if we look at the relations between the major powers interested in the stability and prosperity of this region, it is quite obvious that the China's influence has been growing steadily and significantly in the areas of regional economy, politics and diplomacy, and even security. As a nuclear weapons state, a leading regional military power, and global player with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, China play a key role in Asia-pacific security. Thus it is quite worthwhile to examine the « China factor » in the context of the regional political and security relations among other major powers concerned.

AIM

The aim of this paper is fourfold :

- First to overview the security environment in the 1990s in Asia-Pacific, that is, Northeast and Southeast Asia. But the discussion here is rather centered on the affairs in Southeast Asia and its relation with external power.
- Second it will examine the enlarging ASEAN as an important factor that affects the course of events in the entire region, for the security dialogue which ASEAN started in July 1994 with its « dialogue partners » under the banner of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)¹. which involves almost all the regional states, and it is expected to deal with various security issues concerning Southeast Asian affairs and beyond. It has been found however that the ARF itself is still a loose structure and merely a multilateral dialogue².
- Third we will have a closer look at China, which dominated the region by its vast size ; its huge population and its dominant military might as compared to the countries of Southeast Asia. Some realists argue that Southeast Asia countries considered China as a threat to their security since there are no other states in the region big enough to counter balance it³.
- Lastly, this paper is of course required to touch upon and explain what the European Union's policy is towards the region in the twenty-first century, and what role the European Union should play, and what the limits to it are, or at least how they perceive what they are.

¹ The ARF is presently composed of 23 members ; Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, New Zealand, North Korea, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, South Korea, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States.

² Asian Defence Journal, December 2000 p. 6.

³ Harry Harding « A Chinese Colossus ? » Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol 18 No 3, September, 1995 p. 75.

DEFINITION

Before any discussion is presented, let's define what is meant by the words security and interdependence ? according to the dictionary, security is « the condition of being protected from or free from harm, danger or loss »⁴ and interdependence is « depending on each other or necessary to each other »⁵.

Stability in its different angles social or international and economy are closely interrelated, they cannot go on without the other. At the end of Cold War, security is defined more on economic terms. With nations, all over the world, becoming increasingly interdependence because of the economic and technological conditions of the modern society, even localized conflicts are likely to hit the entire international community. The primary task for international security nowadays is to prevent deterioration of the security environment and strive to improve it.

Interdependence, is not per se the nation's dream. It can even be a nightmare when it constraints the partners too tightly, just like two convicts tied up at the same chain, but it can be a way to pull or push in the same direction to the greatest common benefit of partners. Obviously, we are looking at interdependence with latter view. The three main ingredients of a sound interdependence inside the world global village seems to be a common vulnerability to all kinds of instability, a common interest in a strong and wealthy economy and a clear respect for others social and moral values.

⁴ Times-Chambers Essential English Dictionary.

⁵ Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture.

PARTIE I

SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN ASIA-PACIFIC

1.1 Security Environment towards the Post Cold War

Like the rest of the world, the Asia-Pacific region has undergone profound changes in the past decade and more. There are about 50 countries in this vast region with a population of 3.57 billion accounting for 60% of the world's total. This is the region where four major powers, namely China, the United States, Russia and Japan converge. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that to a great extent, international security and stability hinge upon the security situation and the relationship among the major powers in this region.

The security environment in Asia-Pacific in the late 1990s is generally stable, except for the uncertain and unpredictable situation in the Korean Peninsula remain, given the massing of conventional and other capabilities, as well as North Korea's continued reliance on military tension and diplomatic brinksmanship. North Korea's periodic ratcheting of tensions--- through missile firings, incidents at sea, incursions at the demilitarized zone (DMZ)-constitutes a most dangerous game⁶. Even the turmoil of Cambodia does not seem to affect the entire region security environment as it did during the late 1970s through the 1980s⁷. « China threat » over the disputes in South China Sea seems to have been somewhat calmed down since Beijing and ASEAN agreed to the principles of « the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea », adopted by the Association in July 1992. The latest development saw both sides expressing optimism that the code of conduct will be adhered to⁸.

China has never abandoned its territorial claim so that it can control what it regards as its own lake, since the tiny islands and reefs in the South China Sea are the same as Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan in the mentality of Beijing. But it seems, at least superficially, China has so far restrained its military activities around the Spratlys since Beijing gave the assurance after the second ARF meeting in Bandar Sri Begawan in August 1995 that it would observe the above-mentioned « Declaration » together with other countries concerned.

⁶ Stephen E. Noerper, *The Two Kingdoms Period : Toward a New Stability on the Korean Peninsula*, <http://www.nyu.edu/globalbeat/asia/napsnet060800.html>

⁷ *Cambodian Communities out of Crisis, Three Decades of Turmoil*, <http://www.myers.dircon.con.uk :cccpages :history .html>

⁸ « Another bid for Spratlys Code of Conduct next month », *New Straits Times*. (Thursday, March 16, 2000), p.20.

It was presumed in the late 1980s and the early 1990s that regional powers like China, India or even Japan might try to fill « the power vacuum » in the region after the Cold War. This kind of argument aroused serious concern among the ASEAN member countries, especially in the early 1990s. Around that time it was quite ambiguous whether the US military bases in Philippines which had been considered explicitly and implicately as a keystone in the security in the Post Vietnam Southeast Asia would remain or withdraw. As anticipated, by the end of 1992 all the US troops and facilities left Subic and Clark, which brought the ASEAN states to face the necessity to work in earnest upon a new framework of security cooperation, together with concern aroused by the above mentioned « fill-the-vacuum » argument.

1.2 Positive Security Developments

Due to its unique feature of political, economic and culture diversity, the Asia-Pacific region, unlike Europe, does not have a region-wide security organization or mechanism. However, security cooperation at bilateral, trilateral and sub-regional levels has been growing rapidly in the past decade and more, which is conducive to a better security environment in the region and provides good opportunities for economic development and relations among the countries. Recent years have seen many positive developments in the Asia-Pacific region that have enhanced security and security cooperation.

Looking back from now, the years from late 1980s to early 1990s were quite important in the sense that all the uncertainty and unpredictability about the future of peace and stability in Asia-Pacific became quite visible and realistic, and therefore various ideas and proposals for the security cooperation were discussed enthusiastically outside as well as inside the region. A number of proposals for building the security cooperation mechanism came about out of such discussions in the Russia, Australia, Canada and Japan, some of which envisioned an Asian version of CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), which was proposed at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) in Jakarta in July 1990, by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Gareth Evans, suggested that consideration might be given to the establishment of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia (CSCA), similar to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)⁹. The essence of the proposal was summed up by Evans in an article he published later that month :

⁹ Senator the Hon. Gareth Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Address to the Opening « 6+6 » Session of the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference', Jakarta, 27 July 1990, pp.4-5.

We should now be looking ahead to the kind of wholly new institutional processes that might be capable of evolving, in Asia just as in Europe, as a framework for addressing and resolving security problems. In Europe, wildly implausible as this would have seemed even just a year ago, the central institutional framework for pursuing common security has become the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The CSCE is made up of all countries in NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Why should there not be developed a similar institutional framework, a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia, for addressing the apparently intractable security issues, which exist in the region¹⁰.

The regional reaction to the CSCA proposal was generally negative. It was argued that the conditions that had facilitated the concept of the CSCE have not been obtained in Asia, and there was a general disinclination to consider the establishment of 'wholly new institutional processes'. Rather, the institutionalisation of dialogue should proceed cautiously, at the rate determined by regional interests and perceptions, and involving the evolutionary adaptation and employment of extant regional structures – most particularly, the ASEAN PMC¹¹ (Post Ministerial Conference).

However, all these ideas and proposals were not all that futile to, but rather converged on what was created after a while, which became a security dialogue, based on the existing Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) of ASEAN, to chaired and managed by ASEAN ; the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The present section explain the background of the ARF and the circumstances surrounding its establishment in rather a theoretical term.

Regional security in the post Cold War era, especially in the context of Asia-Pacific diversity, was, and still is considered in a comprehensive manner, which means sufficient attention should be paid to the non-military aspects of security rather than military defense per se. Formal alliances, collective security formula, or legalistically binding treaties or pacts are not quite suitable to the Asia-Pacific climate. In this sense what is needed for peace and stability in Asia-Pacific is still the same idea as in the Cold War era ; to promote economic and social development, to reduce tensions caused by political and social unrest in each and every nation, and not to diffuse the ramifications of such tensions to neighbouring countries.

¹⁰ Gareth Evans, 'What Asia Needs Is a Europe-Style CSCA', International Herald Tribune, 27 July 1990, p.6.

¹¹ Desmond Ball, 'Australia's Strategy for Security Engagement in Asia', Nation, region and Context : Studies in Peace and War in Honour of Professor T.B. Millar, pp.11,12.

The threat once posed by armed anti government movements in most of the countries in the region during the Cold War period, for sure, has now been removed only to a negligible extent. However, there still remain numerous issues which could become the sources of tension inside as well as between nations differences and differentials in ethnicity, social stratum, local regional setting (which means urban and rural), and so on. What is still essential to the national, thus regional security may be to take into consideration all these issues basically domestic in nature. With the economic downturn, it must be the time for every government and people in the region to review and tackle them once again.

1.3 An Arms Race ?

Indeed the trend that emerged in the early years that most of the governments pursued their arms modernization programs may not be reversed easily. This meant that even in terms of military defense itself security concerns have prevailed in the post-Cold War asia-Pacific. Some specialists argue that such arms modernization programs will never ensure power projection capabilities in the foreseeable future. And even the large increases in defense expenditure by the regional states are modest in nature, especially when compared to defense programs pursued by the European or Middle Eastern countries¹². So these programs will not cause a serious concern about the regional arms race. Also it is even be understandable that by the defense modernization the basis of indigenously developing highly advanced technology may be provided in the regional states.

Asian countries are among the largest defense spenders in the world. Despite a ‘blip’ defence spending after the economic crisis that hit Asia in 1997, a constant military build-up has taken place region-wide over the past 20 years¹³.

Thailand provides a good example of acquisitions spending in the region. Between 1980 and 1990, major equipment deliveries to Bangkok increased by 56%, from an estimated \$357 million to \$558 million.

The wider picture reflected an increase in overall defence spending, too. For example, total expenditure by South Korea’s Ministry of National Defence shows a similar leap- from \$581 million in 1980 to \$933 million in 1990- a 61% gain.

Broadening the geography and moving forward by a decade, military spending covering Asia / Oceania continued a steady 26% growth from 1991 to 2000, while global

¹² Robert Karniol , Asia-Pacific Arms Trend, JDW, 28 November 2001,p.28

¹³ Ibid.

defence expenditure dropped by 11%. Not only in military spending still broadly increasing across the region, four Asia-Pacific countries were among the world's top 15 defence spenders last year. These are Japan at number four, China at eight, India at eleven and South Korea at thirteen.

Broken down by sub-region, military expenditure in Central Asia is estimated to have grown by 21% between 1990 and 2000 to \$2.4 billion. It was up 21% to \$96.1 billion in East Asia, and 50% to \$17 billion in South Asia. Oceania increased by 2% to \$7.3 billion.

This may alter the strategic balance in the region significantly. It must be wise of the regional states as well as the external powers concerned with peace and stability of the region, that an economical or less costly security in terms of expense and the allocation of (limited) resources should be continuously pursued as was during the Cold War era. It has been successful to a great extent, and in the region cannot be anymore overconfident in the myth of economy growth which has supported their defense modernization programs. Although the defense modernization may not lead to an arms race in the region, but it will surely sacrifice the economic and social welfare in terms of domestic resources.

Considering the Korean, Cambodian, Spratly and other residual questions from the old period, it may be quite premature, but still can be said that the region has already entered from the post Cold War into the transitional period towards a post Cold War era. If we define the post Cold War World as a unipolar system with the only superpower which was able and willing to conduct the role of an international policeman, a post Cold War World will be a full-fledge multipolar and thus multilateral system with several middle and major powers to manage in concert the course of events in the region upon their consultation and mutual understandings. The basis for this new approach to the regional security has already been unfolded by the institutionalization of ARF. The next section will deal with this Forum.

PARTIE II

THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF)

2.1 Evolution and Growth of the ARF

The ASEAN Regional Forum, was formed in 1993 and started its first working session in Bangkok in July 1994. This session was patterned after the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences or the PMC which were consultative meetings between ASEAN and its dialogue partners on economic and security issues of common interest and concern. At this session it brought together the Foreign Ministers of 18 Asia-Pacific countries for a multilateral dialogue on the various security issues that posed a problem to the region. These were the ASEAN-6 that is Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Brunei, the United States, Russia, China, Japan, Vietnam, Laos, the European Union, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Papua New Guinea. The ARF also hopes to make significant contributions to confidence building and preventive diplomacy in the region, with the goal of evolving into a third stage officially tagged as elaboration of approaches to conflict¹⁴.

At the outset, it should be made clear that the ARF is not a collective defense organization, nor is it based on collective security, nor is it a managerial control-oriented regime¹⁵. Instead, the ARF is a unique alternative security arrangement premised on multilateralism¹⁶. It is different from the bilateral alliance system in the region, providing a multilateral venue for the discussion of confidence building and preventive diplomacy rather than deterrence or identification of a common enemy. It seeks to develop a more predictable constructive pattern of relations for the Asia-Pacific through political and security cooperation.

The uniqueness of the ARF derives from the novelty of a multilateral undertaking in security in the Asia-Pacific, and the lead role of the grouping of small states the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in a forum which brings together the major regional powers US, Japan, China and Russia. The ARF has no formal institutions or secretariat.

This first meeting consisted of three-hour discussion on security issues pertaining to the South China Sea, the need for and the development of CBMs (Confidence-Building

¹⁴ Maria Consuelo C. Ortuoste, Reviewing the ASEAN Regional Forum and its Role in the Southeast Asian Security, http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Paper_Reviewing_ASEAN_Forum.htm

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

Measures) within the region and various aspects of the usage of preventive diplomacy. At this inaugural session the participants also agreed to convene the meetings of the ARF annually, which were to be along the lines of the ASEAN Annual Ministerial meetings. Its Thai chairman pointed out that « being the first time ever that high-ranking representatives from the majority of states in the Asia Pacific region came to specifically discuss political and security cooperation issues, the Meeting was considered a historic event for the region »¹⁷. He added that, « more importantly, the Meeting signified the opening of a new chapter of peace, stability and cooperation for Southeast Asia ».

Subsequently, Cambodia joined the ARF in the 1995 meeting at Brunei, India and Myanmar in 1996, Mongolia in 1999 and North Korea at ARF7 in 2000.

In its functioning the ARF had followed a two-pronged policy¹⁸. The first was the official or the Track I approach in which the security platform was enhanced by the conduct of regular meetings and inter-sessionary seminars where the members of the ARF articulated their security concerns in a broader framework which ensured a common platform for such discussions. The ARF also has a secondary method of dialogue through the Track II or the unofficial seminars and workshops on regional security issues which involve academics and officials in their personal capacities.

2.2 ARF :The Main Objectives

It is interesting to note that the formation of the ARF has occurred at a time when the end of the Cold War has ushered in a phase in international politics, where the development of multilateralism is seen as a viable option for the solution of regional and even extra-regional issues pertaining to security in the Asia-Pacific. With the growing interdependence among nations, in both economic and security matters, the need for a platform like the ARF is even more augmented. The assessment of the ARF's extant is to be evaluated within this context of change in the post-Cold War period. Due to the complexity of the political issues which have plagued the region, the ARF has been instilled with three main objectives – confidence building measures, preventive diplomacy and the question of non-proliferation and arms control.

¹⁷ Chairman's Statement : The First Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) 25 July 1994, Bangkok.

¹⁸ ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum)-Global Issues-Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, [Http://www.dfat.gov.au./arf/arfintro.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au./arf/arfintro.html).

The significant value of the ARF lies primarily in the recognition by its members of interdependence nature of security in the post-cold war era. That understanding has been expressed in the notion of « comprehensive security »¹⁹ as the basis for deliberation and dialogue within the ARF. The concept embraces all aspects of security, to include non-military aspects of it such as economic, social, culture, and political dimensions. Within such a broad understanding of security, the non-ASEAN members of ARF share ASEAN's view that security in Asia-Pacific region is indeed interdependent, in which events or actions in one country might have impacts upon others. The adoption of the concept of comprehensive security also reflects the growing acceptance by regional countries that security can be achieved through cooperation among the countries concerned. More importantly, it has also been agreed upon that the ARF should proceed at a « pace comfortable to all participants ». This evolutionary approach to security is then translated into three broad stages²⁰ ; from initial confidence building, through preventive diplomacy, to elaboration of approach to conflict. Finally, it is also important to note that the whole ARF process should be based on consultation and consensus.

2.3 The ASEAN Way

From 1994 to 1996, the ARF members were trying to lay the foundations for multilateral security cooperation. With the forum established as an expanded PMC, it was inevitable that ASEAN would become the core of the forum with the ASEAN Way implicitly adopted as guiding to the ARF. This ASEAN way can be seen as functioning on three levels ; the web of relations it involves, its approach towards interstate relations, and its operating principles²¹.

First, the ASEAN Way involves a process of building a dense web of relations among member countries. This is based on the assumption that the more interaction, contacts and areas of cooperation are established, the easier it becomes to deal with more difficult issues such as territorial conflicts in the longterm. Moreover, it is hoped that states would not risk endangering the benefits of their relations by resorting to threats or use of force.

¹⁹ For interpretation of comprehensive security, see Gareth Evans, *Cooperating for Peace : The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond*.

²⁰ Shankar Sundararaman, *The ASEAN Regional Forum : Reassessing Multilateral Security in the Asia-Pacific*, <http://www.idsa-india.org/an-ju18-11.html>.

²¹ Maria Consuelo C. Ortuoste, *op.cit*

Why adopt the ASEAN model and make ASEAN the core of the forum ? First, ASEAN was seen, at this point in time, to have quite successfully managed the diversity of its members. It was felt that any insecurity which may arise from the greater diversity in the ARF may be best addressed and rationally managed through organizational informality, state sovereignty, and flexible consensus. It was also noted that the ASEAN model was particularly appropriate for the post-Cold War era in which regional tensions were no longer expressed in a tangible and imminent common threat that called for a countervailing military coalition. Furthermore, a regional arrangement rooted in respect for sovereignty and consensus did not pose high political risks for any member.

Second, ASEAN emerged as the most acceptable partner for major powers in the Asia-Pacific. Notwithstanding the rapprochement after the Cold War, suspicions lingered and tensions erupted intermittently among China, the USA, Japan and Russia. A regional arrangement led by either one of these powers would surely be viewed with reservation by other major powers as well as by smaller states.

Finally, on a practical note, ASEAN maintained cordial relations with these major powers and had an extensive network of contacts with various Asia-Pacific countries through its dialogue partnerships. Establishing the ARF required tapping into these linkages

2.4 The Prospect for ARF

The ARF has managed to sustain, and even increase, its point of contact over its eight-year existence. It also increased its membership from 18 to 23 with India, Mongolia and North Korea as the most recent additions. While this fulfills the principle of inclusivity, there are concerns that the ARF has become quite unwieldy with a larger and more varied membership. In their annual meeting in July 2001 the ARF seems to be now progressing into a new stage. The chairman's statement issued at the meeting²² states that while the successfully developed confidence building arrangements or agreements would continue to be promoted, a preparatory study on Preventive Diplomacy by the track-II group had already been made. At the same time it is quite significant that the same statement refers to the common recognition among the participants that the importance of peaceful and stable relations between major powers in Asia Pacific-China, Japan, Russia and the US are key to regional peace and security, and believed that the major power would continue their effort to improve and develop their

²² Chairman's Statement ; The Eight Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Hanoi , 25 July 2001, see ASEAN's official Webpage, [http:// www.asean.or.id](http://www.asean.or.id)

relation so as to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. But it also asserts that ASEAN continue to play its leading role for a successful ARF.

Two observations can be made from the above statements. One is that ARF is now trying to go beyond a mere forum in the literal (true) sense. For, if the participating countries work upon preventive diplomacy in earnest, they will be required to show their determination and commit themselves to what is sometimes difficult to differentiate from interference. What is regarded as interference is still unacceptable matter for Asian governments. To be certain, preventive diplomacy theoretically premises that in the first place « acts that require military action or the use of force lie outside the scope of it ». No coercive (forced into doing something) measure is required for preventive diplomacy and it seems quite fit for the security cooperation formula that ASEAN and ARF could employ. However the operational part of it is not that easy.

Some practices of preventive diplomacy may be regarded by some as mounting to interdependence in the internal affair of the state. They include the use of fact finding missions and the (third party's) offer of good offices to the confronting parties. But potential cases which need such measures are not just ordinary or traditional type of conflict. It may be a territorial dispute having the potential to be escalated into a conflict between the states concerned. As a less apparent case. It may be a serious large scale violation of human rights to cause an exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries. Or it may be a clandestine arms build-up in border areas. In such cases, it seems quite doubtful if the governments concerned would give consent to the offer of a third party, supposedly to the multinational fact-finding mission. As was the case of Iraqi situation a few years back, some kind of coercive measure behind the diplomatic efforts might be necessary but such an idea not seem to fit in with the Asia-Pacific climate.

So far as we have seen, even though ARF has been successful to a remarkable extent, it still need strengthening mutual confidence or trust, considering the differences on even such ideas and concepts as democracy or human rights among the participants. In that sense, it must be quite important for the regional states to form a consensus on what could be the causes of intra-regional concern, and to what cases preventive diplomacy could be extended by which institution of ARF. The further institutionalization of the forum may become necessary, even if an ad hoc basis.

A second observation to be drawn from the current condition surrounding ARF is, that there seems a kind of tug-of-war between the organizer of ARF, that is ASEAN, and the external major powers involved. At least there seems a dilemma on the ASEAN side that

while it is confident to be the « driving force » behind the regional security dialogue, it surely recognizes that the security cooperation like ARF is possible only under a stable regional environment ensured by positive relations among the major powers. The paragraph 13 of the 2001 chairman's statement, which was referred to above, plainly shows the ARF's characteristics as well as its limitations. At the same time there is no denying the fact that without ASEAN's initiative such a comprehensive framework for security co-operation couldn't have been built by the major powers alone.

Indeed the ASEAN's initiative, the utilization of the existing ASEAN-PMC, and the diffusion of what is called « ASEAN Way » to the broader region of Asia-Pacific, are the most prominent features of ARF. The fact that should be recognised because of ASEAN such diverse having members from China to the European Union agreeing to participate. No other country (or even group of countries) in the world could have done in the same manner as the ASEAN could do. It is, therefore crucial to the future success of ARF as well as the ASEAN itself to what extent ASEAN keeps its cohesiveness and consistency in its plans and actions, as the core organization of ARF. In this sense it is quite meaningful to examine formation of ASEAN and its enlargement in the next section.

PARTIE 111

THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

« Today, ASEAN is not only a well-functioning, indispensable reality in the region. It is a real force to be reckoned with far beyond the region. It is also a trusted partner of the United Nations in the field of the development..... »²³

Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
6 February 2000

3.1 Historical Background

A change of government in Indonesia in 1965 that ended hostilities with Malaysia and a sense of external security threats to the region from China and the Vietnam War combined to allow the creation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 8 August 1967 through the Bangkok Declaration²⁴. The original members, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, were joined by Brunei on its independence in January 1984. The founders of the association of southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) envisioned it as eventually bringing together all the countries of Southeast Asia and getting them to cooperate in securing the region's peace, stability and development

Thirty-two years later on 30 April 1999-ASEAN encompassed all ten countries of Southeast Asia by admitting Cambodia. Vietnam had been admitted in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997. Not only has the association achieved the inclusion of all of Southeast Asia within its fold, a goal that it had set for itself at its birth. It has also evolved into one of the most influential regional associations in the world²⁵.

As the 21st century dawns, ASEAN is embracing a new vision of itself as « a concert of Southeast Asian nations, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in the community of caring societies ».

ASEAN's success is all the more remarkable because it began at a time of poverty and conflict, and because as recently as four years ago, the region was deep in financial crisis. The crisis, which began in July 1997, threatened to reverse the region's economic and social gains of two decades. That the ASEAN economies have bounced back after two years of crisis vividly shows their fundamental strength and resilience.

²³ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, [http://www.aseansec.org/history :overview.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/history%20overview.htm).

²⁴ Donald K. Crone, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World, p.56.

ASEAN is probably best known globally for its leading role, both within and outside UN(United Nations), in efforts to end the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, which lasted from 1979 until 1989. But the aspect most valued by the members is coordination of economic diplomacy with Japan, the United States, Europe and other partners. ASEAN's annual meetings have become central focus of Pacific economic discussions. As the only intergovernmental economic organization in the Pacific Basin until the formation of Asia-Pacific economic Cooperation in late 1989, ASEAN played critical role in the evolution of Pacific economic cooperation. ASEAN is considered the most successful regional organization among Third World states²⁶.

Today, the ASEAN region stretches across three time zones and incorporates a key part of Asia's continental landmass and several archipelagos. Economically, it belongs to the developing world, but some of its member countries have joined the world's top 20 most competitive economies. Its population of about 500 million constitutes a huge, increasingly middle-class market, half the size of China's. One of every ten persons in the world today is a Southeast Asian.

Besides its economic importance and the natural resources its marine territories are believed to hold, Southeast Asia is also of global strategic importance. It is the bridge between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It straddles some of the busiest sea-lanes in the world. The oil tankers and freighters that pass daily through these sea-lanes buttress Japan's status as an industrial power²⁷.

3.2 The Enlargement of ASEAN

The ASEAN's expansion to include Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia would automatically increase the clout that the ASEAN would enjoy in the ARF, thereby maintaining the centrality of the ASEAN's position in the ARF. And also make it imperative for the ASEAN to remain in the forefront of the ARF's development.

In general, an enlarged or politically integrated Southeast Asia under « ASEAN-10 » will surely provide even broader Asia-Pacific with more opportunities and possibilities and enhance security in the region. The possibilities of conflict to arise between the member states of ASEAN have already been reduced almost dramatically. The norms and codes of conduct shared among the original members plus Brunei have now been permeated into the new

²⁵ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, <http://www.aseansec.org/history:overview.htm>.

²⁶ Donald K. Crone, *op.cit.*, pp.56-57.

²⁷ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, *op.cit.*

members. In this sense especially important is the membership of Vietnam and Myanmar, is the often in the fact used to have problem with some of the member countries, especially Thailand. While Vietnam and Myanmar are expected to get along with the other member countries, the significance of these two countries entry into ASEAN seems to lie in another realm.

The common characteristics of these two newcomers of ASEAN are :

- Initiation of major economic reforms from the socialist to the market economy in late 1980s
- Record almost double-digit economic growth in recent years after the economic transition,²⁸ . The four year plan ending March 1996 saw an average annual GNP growth of 8.25 per cent²⁹ .
- Having a common border, and unique relationship with China in term of geography, history and strategic interests.

The future success in the economic intergration's of Southeast Asia will however, depend upon whether these two countries can truly succeed in running the market economy efficiently and without any challenge from the vested interest.

The third point, Vietnam's and Myanmar's relation with China which are quite different in nature, is worthwhile to examine here.

For Vietnam, China still remains a potential adversary (enemy), although the two socialist states normalized their diplomatic relations after signing the Paris Peace Accord in October 1991 and China decided to suspend military aid to the Khmer Rouge³⁰. Meanwhile China has been a de facto guardian to Yangon's military regime, which recently renamed itself the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) from the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

Vietnam's entry into ASEAN can be interpreted in two ways. One is the economic motivation, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, an important ally on whom it had relied substantially for aid to built its economy in the past, disappeared suddenly in the early 1990s³¹. Suddenly Hanoi was forced to diversify its supplies of resources to sustain its economic renovation program. For the communist leaders in Hanoi, for the first time in the

²⁸ Udai Bhanu Singh, Vietnam's Security Perspectives, <http://www.idsa.india.org/an-dec9-5.html>.

²⁹ I.P. Khosla, Myanmar :Cohension and Liberalism, <http://www.idsa-india.org/an-feb-5.html>

³⁰ Udai Bhanu Singh, op.cit

history of The Socialist Republic, the neighbouring non-communist countries in fact have become the friends in need. In other words, the entry into ASEAN opened a path for Hanoi to its real participation in the International society. Vietnam normalized its relationship with the US almost at the same time.

The other interpretation is Hanoi's security or strategic motivations. With the termination of financial assistance, all the Soviet forces and facilities that were station at the naval base in Cam Ranh Bay withdrew. This prompted Hanoi to take some kind of measures to countervail the threat pose by China, especially around the sovereignty dispute over the Spratlys and the Paracels. This motive was of course implicit when Vietnam joined ASEAN. Even some of the member states of ASEAN also understood quite well that Hanoi needed their sympathies to cope with the giant in the north, which was considered to be potential threat for them as well.

Thus Vietnam was welcomed in ASEAN, but its entry resulted in drawing a latent Sino-Vietnamese conflict inside the association. Not only over the South China Sea, but other disputes over land borders as well still remain a concern between the two Communist regimes. It seems difficult for them to come to terms with each other on what are the issues to be resolved. But it is remarkable that they seem to have achieved the mutual understanding as to the measures and procedures on solving problems not by force but political and peaceful means.

3.3 ASEAN-Europe Contrasts

There are certainly three notable contrasts between Western Europe and EastAsia, especially ASEAN³².

- Different sources of insecurity
- Historical experiences
- Ways of life

The first concerns contrasting expectations about the sources of insecurity. Until 1989 Western Europe was dominated by direct external military threats. It could be seen as inherent insecurity in a system in sovereign states. Inter-state rivalry posed a most destructive problem

³¹ *ibid*

³² Trevor Taylor, Security and Interdependence in the Asia-Pacific, *Journal of Strategic Studies and International Relations*, Vol. 7 August 1999.

for Europeans in the first half of the twentieth century. After 1945 deterrence rather than destruction prevailed, although the economic cost was considerable.

In ASEAN, states have been much more conscious that poverty is a threat to peaceful political relations and have worked very hard and successfully to ameliorate it. Internal security, the use of armed forces within states, has been the normal source of security concern in ASEAN. However Europe has not been immune to civil war with the worst occurring in the former Yugoslavia and inter state rivalries with a military dimension are not unknown in East-Asia as a whole.

Second, Western Europe and ASEAN have very different historical experiences and memories covering the pre 1945 period. In crude terms, Europeans were the colonisers and East Asians the colonised.

Finally there are cultural contrasts between Asian and European ways of life although neither ASEAN nor Europe are culturally homogeneous.

3.4 ASEAN-Europe Parallels

However, there are also parallels particularly between ASEAN countries and those of Western Europe³³.

- Sharing a sense of common destiny
- Mixes of larger and smaller states
- Having one state larger than the others

Most West Europeans share a sense of common destiny – a sense that what happens to one of them will have a profound effect on the others. Would it be appropriate to assert that such a sense of common destiny can be found also among at least the founding ASEAN states ?

Both the ASEAN and Europe are mixes of a larger and smaller states concerned to take the threat and use of force out of their own international relations . The ASEAN and EU groupings seek to build and reinforce pluralistic security community where the threat and use of force plays no part in politics. They are both , hesitantly, looking to built a community of societies that understand each other's problems and emphathise with each other. This process has much further to go in ASEAN than in Western Europe.

³³ Ibid

Structurally, ASEAN and the Europe each has one state which is larger than the others and a source of some concern, either because of its potential strength or its weakness.

Germany has wealthy western area and an eastern zone that is far from having recovered from the damage of its communist years. As a consequence, extremist right wing movements are powerful in the poorer parts of Germany. Indonesian's population of 200 million, its raw material wealth, its ethnic diversity, and its geografic character inevitably give it a prominent place in ASEAN.

The ASEAN and Europe each also have a major external state that is a potential threat. What does Europe do about Russia ? How are ASEAN states respond to China's growing strength and occasional charm ?

PARTIE IV

CHINA FACTOR :THREAT OF BALANCE ?

4.1 Sino –Vietnamese Relations

As we saw in the previous section, the relations between Vietnam and China may still produce tensions in the entire region, if not direct military confrontation. Their geographical proximity, historical experiences, and rivalry in inviting foreign direct investments from outside as well as inside the region are such factors that might trigger a conflict between the two.

It is misleading, however, to see their relations only in the adversarial context. They have restored their relations not only at the government but at the party level as well. Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji broke traditional protocol by visiting Ho Chi Minh City first from 1-4 December 1999 where he encouraged economic relations with China's southern provinces and cities. Zhu and Phan Van Khai further pledged to conclude their talks on the delineation of the Gulf of Tonkin during the year 2000. Zhu also held substantive discussions with party Secretary General Le Kha Phieu and a former party Secretary General Do Muoi. Zhu's visit implied an exceptionally low posture in the part of Beijing and show a keenness to normalize relations with her neighbours³⁴.

There were very positive developments in Sino-Vietnamese relations in the last few years. The two sides signed the Treaty of Land Border on December 31, 1999 and, a Joint Statement on All-round Cooperation in the New Century and the Agreement on the Delimitation of the Beibu Bay Territorial Sea, the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelves, and on Fishing Cooperation in the Beibu Bay by the end of 2000. In the Joint Statement both sides indicated that they « will not take actions to complicate or aggravate disputes. Nor will they resort to force or threat of force. They will consult each other in time in case of disputes and adopt a cool and constructive attitude to handle them properly ». This is of great significance for maintaining peace and tranquility in the South China Sea area on a long term basis, as the major parties in dispute are China and Vietnam³⁵.

³⁴ Carlyle A. Thayer, Comparative Connections :China Consolidates Long-Term Regional Relations, http://www.csis.org/pacfor/cc/994Qchina_asean.html

³⁵ Ye Ru'an, Security Environment in Pacific-Asia : Oportunities and Challenges for China, <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific200/ruanpaper.htm>.

4.2 Sino - Burmese Relations

On the other hand, Myanmar, a de facto Chinese client state, has fostered the relations with its perceived guardian in almost all aspects ; overseas and border trade, investment internal and external security. Yangon has also been isolated internationally after the massacre of the students and the regime's abrupt invalidation of general election.

For years China-Myanmar relations had two tracks. The Chinese developed friendly, but not close relations at government level, which dipped in the 1967-78 period ; and party to party relations with the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), to which military and financial aid was given. When Ne Win went to China in November 1975, this policy was made clear to him ; at the party level the CPB, not the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), would receive support. In the mid-1980s, however, China was more responsive to the overtures from Myanmar. Party to party relations were established with the BSPP ; aids to the CPB diminished and then dried up. And when, after the 1988 crisis, China was the first to recognise the new The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) government, giving an early and one of the few signs of approval for what the military had done, relations improved more rapidly³⁶.

Indeed the relations between the two countries are now quite strong in almost every aspect. Especially remarkable (and worrisome to the neighbouring countries) in the security dimension. One of China's motives for arming Myanmar was to help safeguard the new trade routes through its potentially volatile neighbour.

Intelligence sources estimate the total value of Chinese arms delivery to Myanmar in the 1990s at US\$1-2 billion, with most of them acquired at a discount or through barter deals or interest-free loans³⁷. China has assisted the construction and upgrading of military facilities in Myanmar, most notably that naval and radar facilities these include at least four electronic listening posts along the Bay of Bengal and in the Andaman Sea : Man-aung, Hainggyi, Zadetkyi island and the strategically important Coco Islands just north of the Andaman Islands. Chinese technicians have been spotted at the naval bases at Monkey Point, near Yangon and Kyaikkami, south of the port city of Moulmein. There is also a Chinese built radar station on Saganthit island near Mergui in south-eastern Myanmar.

³⁶ I.P. Khosla, Myanmar : Cohesion and Liberation, <http://www.idsa-india.org/an-feb-5.html>.

³⁷ IISS-Strategic Comments sample-China's ambitions in Myanmar, <http://www.iiss.org/pub/myanmar.asp>.

Although China's presence in the Bay of Bengal is currently limited to instructors and technicians, the new radar equipment is Chinese-made and probably operated at least in part, by Chinese technicians, enabling Beijing's intelligence agencies to monitor this sensitive maritime region. China and Myanmar have pledged to share intelligence of potential use to both countries³⁸. It reportedly stipulated that China would provide Myanmar with military training (especially of naval and air force), financial assistance which meant selling arms to Myanmar in « friendly price », and the exchange of information on their « mutual threat », and so on³⁹.

Considering all the above mentioned development in the Sino-Myanmar relations it looks apparently the intention behind China's wooing Myanmar is focused on in its geographical accessibility to the Indian Ocean. Of course it is still unrealistic to assume that the Chinese navy will be soon equipped with such long range vessels (of whatever the type) to enable it control the sea lanes which connect between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. It is broadly perceived that the Chinese navy still lacks in power projection capabilities to secure even the command of entire the South China Sea, much less down southwestwards beyond the Straits of Malacca, Lombok or Sunda.

Some experts argue that ARF was devised primarily to solve peacefully the South China Sea disputes. If that is so, then all the states involved, including China, are to restrain themselves in their behavior in the dispute area, the ASEAN's so-called « constructive engagement » approach seemed to have achieved moderate success so far. Beijing has surely taken into account such as constraint, thereby, chosen to cooperate with the association. It is almost impossible for Beijing to take direct military actions in the South China Sea, because it certainly destabilize the regional environment crucial sustainable economic and social development ; much less at this time of economic hardship. China would lose its friends and entente in what considers a « united front » to cope with the human rights preachers of the west.

However, on the other hand, or rather because of the constrains in the South China Sea, China has now found a way out to the Indian Ocean. Of course Beijing's approach to Yangon already started well before the establishment of ARF, or even before the Workshop on the South China Sea in 1990. But the potential Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean is quite a new factor to which « few governments have formulated consistent and clearly

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ see FEER 30 January 1997, p. 12

articulated responses ». It should be noted that Myanmar now occupies a position similar to what Pakistan is for China in South Asia because of its own proximity. Myanmar itself may also raise security concerns to India, another giant in Asia. For ASEAN, which has engaged constructively with Myanmar as well as with China, it is a formidable task to domesticate the former inside the organization, while keeping itself at a certain distance, so as not to be domesticated by the latter.

Having said that, it does not necessarily mean that China forms a potential common threat to its neighbours. It may be too optimistic, but it can be said that China has now come to terms with its neighbours and shares the ideas and concepts on how states should behave in the region especially on the need to keep the regional environment benign, for driving forward its economic reform and liberalization programme is vital to securing a super power status in the next century and beyond. At least the new leaders in Beijing perceive and comprehend that any unilateral military offensive in the region would expose them folly to the world.

Indeed, after the death of Deng Xiaoping in February 1997, Beijing's new leadership led by the party secretary-general Jian Zemin has shown a continuity in its policy of economic reform and liberalization that Deng had laid down in the late 1970s. It was well articulated in the 15th Communist Party Congress held in mid-September when for the first time in its history « The Deng Xiaoping Theory » was stipulated in the revised party platform as what should be followed by the successors to the Architect of reform. In addition, Jiang's decision in March 1998 to pick up Zhu Rongji as Prime Minister after Li Peng, will surely accelerate the reform in all aspects, considering many people's hope that « Zhu will steer China towards economic stability and greater personal freedoms »⁴⁰. With the emergence of Premier Zhu, a former Shanghai mayor, in the scene, it is naturally expected that China will pursue for the time being a policy line which itself needs a peaceful international environment as its backdrop.

4.3 China's Development Strategy

While a new technological revolution was sweeping across the world and a number of New Industrial economies (so called « Asian dragons ») were taking off in giant strides, China fell into economic dire straits and political turmoil during the chaotic « Cultural Revolution » from the mid-1960s through the late 1970s. Beginning in 1979 things took a fundamental turn for the better, the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping laid down new guidelines and policies of reform and opening up to the world and formulated a three-phase

development strategy for national economy by summing up historical experiences and correcting past mistakes and erroneous policies. The central idea of this strategy is ⁴¹:

- Unswervingly persisting in economic development as the nation top priority ;
- Making unremitting efforts for the modernization of industry, agriculture, science and technology and national defense ;
- Setting a long-term goal for China's per capita GNP reaching the current medium-level developed countries by the middle of the 21st century ;
- And steadily improving the standard of living of all people.

One can conclude from the above that China wants peace and development and opposes war and arms race and that China needs a long-term peaceful and stable regional and international environment and wants to maintain and develop friendly, cooperative and mutually beneficial relations with all countries.

4.4 China's Foreign Policy

Ever since the founding of the People's Republic, the Chinese government has been steadfastly following an independent foreign policy and a defensive national defense policy for peace. In the 1950's, China joined India and Burma (Myanmar) in initiating the Famous Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which were to become fundamental norms, guiding international relations. China always stands for equality among all nations, big or small, and for peaceful settlement of disputes between states. China's land borders total more than 22,000 km and its coastline stretches about 18,000 km. There were boundary disputes between China and many of its neighbouring countries left over from history. To ensure a long-term, stable peaceful environment of its periphery, China has made unremitting efforts in solving boundary issues and maritime demarcation issues through negotiations and in a spirit of good neighbourliness. As early as the 1960s, China settled border issues with North Korea (DPRK), Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal and Myanmar. In recent years, China has signed new borders treaties and agreements with Laos, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Vietnam. Progress has been made in Sino-Indian boundary talks⁴².

⁴⁰ « Who's the Boss ? » FEER, March 5, 1998, p.11.

⁴¹ Ye Ru'an, op.cit

⁴² ibid

4.5 China's Security Concept

International arms control and disarmament plays a very important role in safeguarding world peace and security. China opposes any arms race and refuses to join any military bloc or form security alliances against third countries. Since China participated in the Second UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1982, China has been proactive in the international arms control process in general and disarmament negotiations at Geneva in particular. China acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1992 and worked conscientiously with other CD (Conference of Disarmament) members in negotiating on the Convention on Banning Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and is one of the first countries that signed the two instruments. China unilaterally cut back its armed forces by one million in mid-1980s and additional 500,000 during 1997-99⁴³.

In China's view, the core of new security concepts should be based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. The five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence and other universally accepted norms governing international relations make up the political foundation and mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity constitute the economic guarantee for world peace and security. Dialogues, consultations and negotiations by parties concerned on an equal footing are the only way to resolving disputes between states, promoting healthy development of the disarmament process and ensure for world peace and security. Such a new security concept means that all countries, big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, should have an equal right to security. No country should unilaterally seek absolute security by persisting in strengthening its both offensive and defensive military capabilities at the expense of the security of other countries.

4.6 China's National Security Goals

After more than twenty years of reform and open policy, it is clear that domestic economic development is the overarching focus of the Chinese government. Promoting economic development and enhancing people's standard of living are the principle tasks of Chinese government. In order to implement economic growth and social progress, China needs a peaceful international environment and domestic social stability.

These two goals - maintaining domestic social stability and pursuit of a peaceful international environment reflect both China's national interest and form the basis of China's national security policy. As China's former leader Deng Xiaoping said in 1980, it is in China's interest to have a peaceful environment in order to achieve the four economic modernizations⁴⁴. In 1982, Deng emphasized this point again when he met the former general secretary of UN. He said that China hoped that would be a period of at least 50 to 70 years of peace. Maintaining worldwide peace is based on China's needs ; of course, it also meet the needs of people the entire world, especially meet the need of the people of the third world⁴⁵. Deng emphasized once more that China need at least a 70 years peaceful period. These are sincere words, not just empty rhetoric. The national security goal of a peaceful international environment will allow China to trade and develop.

Another goal of China's national security policy is preserving domestic social stability, union and development. China is great power with a huge population. It is also a developing country. Domestic stability and prosperity in China influences the world , especially the stability and progress in the Asia-Pacific region. When he met with Brent Scowcroft, former US security adviser to President Bush in 1989, Deng Xiaoping said that China has a special importance in international society. Domestic instability in China would affect the world, which would not be to the advantage of either China or United States⁴⁶. It is difficult to completely separate domestic stability and world peace in an era of globalization ; thus maintaining China's domestic stability contributes to worldwide peace. The goals of maintaining domestic social stability and pursuing a peaceful international environment form the basis of China's national security policy.

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ Rethinking Education, national Security and social Stability in China, Xiong Yonggen, http://www.apcss.org/Publications/paper_Ocsnl_Xiong.pdf.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

PARTIE V

EUROPEAN UNION'S ROLE IN THE REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

Such a reform or development-orientated China is also quite welcome to EU. For, if « reconciling China with international order represents the biggest political challenge that the world is facing today », engaging China with the regional as well as international affairs in a peaceful and evolutionary (not revolutionary) manner benefits EU enormously as the economic partner in the region. And it should be EU's role and task to take the lead in engaging China with the international society, thereby laying the foundation for a stable and constructive relationship not only between the two powers, but also among the broader Asia-Pacific nations. Put in another way ; China should no longer necessarily be regarded as certain countries' object of foreign policy. It has now been well intergrated as a crucial part in the structure of the East, or Asia-Pacific security and interdependence. Without Chinese participation in the regional affairs, no major decision could be made on the future course of events. In this sense, although the China issue in itself is indeed quite important to EU in the bilateral context, the present author would suggest that the China issue as well as the role of EU be dealt with rather in the overall structure of Asia-Pacific in the last section of this paper.

As indicated at the beginning of this paper concerning the entire Asia-Pacific region, EU itself certainly faced with important internal challenges. These challenges include enlargement, improvement in its decision-making process, the development of a European security and defence policy and the completion of economic and monetry union(EMU). So far European has rather intentionally adopted low-key or reserved attitudes in the international affairs, now it is almost forced not to do so. With the economic termoil becoming serious in many countries and while in some countries more resources for economic take off, her assistance are badly needed. It is EU that is always expected to extend substantial assistance to them but EU itself has been preoccupied with bringing down high unemployment rate, 22% in Spain, 15% in Finland, and over 12% in France, Belgium and Italy⁴⁷.

However, we should not be so pessimistic as to conclude that EU can no longer play a certain role in the affairs of the region. Rather contribution to the region's stability and prosperity is a due responsibility of EU. Having taken that as given, we need to examine the

⁴⁷ The EU's evolving Foreign Policy dimension – the CESDP after Helsinki, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/news/patten/speech_00_51.htm.

form content and the manner in which EU can contribute in the context of the ongoing and possible developments in the region.

5.1 Multilateral Security Cooperation

The first appears to be building and consolidating the framework of multilateral security cooperation in the region. Unless a major war occurs in the world, the security dialogue or consultation formula developed by the initiative of ASEAN seems quite desirable to prevent any inter-state dispute from deteriorating into armed conflicts. Preventive Diplomacy, despite all the shortcomings and defects yet to be overcome, will certainly win over such diverse members of ARF to develop mutual understanding on how regional security should be improved. And so far it actually does. EU with its vast experiences can contribute to this both in concept and conduct a successful formulation of Preventive Diplomacy.

The ARF is seen from France as a means to nurture security dialogue and to develop confidence among nations interested in Asian security. Participation of UK and France, who are permanent members of the UN Security Council can contribute to better regional understanding, would involve the EU more directly concerned in the security of Asia-Pacific.

In case of crisis in Asia-Pacific, France and UK might contribute as honest brokers to diffuse tensions and participate in some form of preventive diplomacy. UK is already involved in the Five Powers Defence Arrangement (FPDA)⁴⁸ and remains committed to Brunei's external security under a confidential separate agreement in 1994. UK is keen on deploying rather regularly military forces into the region. The French navy contributed indirectly to the security of ASEAN oil supply when it had deployed on several occasions during the last decade a 'Carrier Battle Group' or a 'Mine Warfare Group' in the trouble waters of Middle East. French frigates either stationed in the Indian Ocean or in the Pacific are regularly making port of calls in ASEAN harbours⁴⁹. France and UK are maintaining, rather modest when compared to the US forces, but still significant power and force projection capabilities with aircraft carriers and amphibious ships. Besides, Western European Union (WEU), which is for the time being is the defence arm of EU, could intervene in peace keeping, peace enforcement missions and rescue of nationals.

⁴⁸ The FPDA are composed of UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore.

⁴⁹ Adm (Rtd) J. Betermier, Southeast Asia and Europe Toward Greater Interdependence, *Journal of Strategic Studies and International Relations*, vol. 7, August 1999.

5.2 Constructive Engagement

The second point comes the question of a continued « constructive engagement » with certain states in the region, namely Myanmar and Cambodia. As for Myanmar, European Union will follow the ASEAN's decision that the country will be kept off controversial issue areas for the time being, such as attending, Asian European Meeting (ASEM). As Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said at the time : « We're shooting ourselves in the foot by linking the ASEAN dialogue with the question of Myanmar »⁵⁰. Consequently, the EU now continue to explore avenues for encouraging a move toward democracy and a better respect for human rights, including the possibility of engaging in direct discussions with the government of Myanmar on these issues.

As for Cambodia, during the last UN sponsored peace keeping operation in Southeast Asia, French played a major role in brokering along with Indonesia the peace agreement and then with Australia paving the way for the « UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia » (UNTAC). French is engaged furthermore in the reconstruction process of Cambodia and it has contributed to the engagement in the reconstruction process , it has contributed in the training of Army Officers and of a new national police. EU backed French efforts and provided financial support to the organization of free and fair elections in Cambodia in July 1998⁵¹.

On top of that the EU Member States and the Commission has contributed close to US\$ 789 million, which represented 28.5% of total aid for the period 1992 – 1998. European support from 1992 – 2000 amounts to more than 250 million euro. In addition, the Commission contributed 10.75 million euro to the electoral process in 1998⁵².

Recently EC has initialled a « Textile Trade agreement with the Royal Government of Cambodia ». This agreement provides Cambodia with unlimited access to the EU market for Cambodian textiles exports, until the expiry of the agreement at the end of the year 2002. Moreover, Cambodia is eligible to benefit from the EC Preferential Rules of Origin for ASEAN members as it became a member of the regional grouping in April 1999⁵³. European will certainly engage with Cambodia constructively in cooperation with all those concerned, especially with ASEAN.

⁵⁰ Fred Thurlow, Asia Times : Myanmar just one side of the EU-Asean coin, <http://www.atimes.com/reports/BL09Ai01.html>.

⁵¹ Adm (Rtd.) J.Betermier, op.cit, p. 78

⁵² EU Relation with Cambodia – Overview, file://A:\EU%20Relations%20with%20Cambodia%20-%20Overview.htm.

The economic turmoil that has swept Southeast Asia and South Korea since in July 1997 has shattered western stock markets. Indeed, as for the economy, Europe has substantial economic interest at stake in East Asia ; its investment by 1994 were valued at \$US75 billions, representing a little more than one quarter of the investments of the US, Japan and Europe in the region. According to the Bank for International Settlements, by June 1997, with a total of \$US317 billions of loans to Asian companies, the European banking sector was way ahead of Japanese and American financial institutions in regional investments. French bank loans to East Asia are equivalent to 2.5% of France's GDP. When looking at the situation in Indonesia, one can see that with \$US21 billion loans, European banks are no less exposed than the Japanese are. Moreover through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Europe is participating in financial rescue plans in Thailand, Indonesia and south Korea. The fact that the four European members of the G7 are all together the main contributors to the IMF (30% share to be compared to US 18%) and that 15 members of EU are in the same position vis-à-vis the World Bank (26.7% share)⁵⁴.

Through the framework of ASEM⁵⁵ (Asian-Europe Meeting), which Asian and European governments decided to hold biannual summits, gave the EU the occasion to reaffirm their support to the far East Asia and their confidence in its recovery of the economic turmoil. As Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister said « We in Europe cannot afford to turn our backs.....we are not fair weather friends ». On the French side underlining the reality of interdependence, President Jacques Chirac warned « If Asia is suffering today, Europe will suffer tomorrow »⁵⁶.

An ASEM Trust Fund created under World Bank guidance has been in charge of financing of technical assistance and advice on how to combine EU and Asian experiences to help in restructuring the financial sector and redressing poverty.

5.3 Engaging China

The third issue concerns the relation with China and the ASEAN in the context of stabilising the regional stability environment. European Union in this sense, it is quite significant while European Union should continuously strengthen ties with the ASEAN, both

⁵³ *ibid*

⁵⁴ Adm (Rtd) J. Betermier, *op.cit*, p. 74

⁵⁵ ASEM comprised of 10 Asian and 15 European countries.

⁵⁶ Adm (Rtd) J. Betermier, *op.cit*, p. 74

in economic and security realms, it should also be careful so that the European Union-ASEAN relationship are not perceived by Beijing as a conspiracy against China.

EU should continue engaging China through building economic ties and encouraging its to see the benefits of the rule of the law and other features of good governance. With regard to the Soviet Union after 1994, the West pursued a normally coherent and eventually successful approach of both balancing and engaging Moscow.

In the contemporary world, there is strong support for engaging rather than isolating China and the ASEAN states with the Regional Forum have taken a lead in this regard. However there is little coherence regionally or globally about the extent to which China should be balanced. Is it unreasonable to conclude that the states on China's border are content to leave this matter up to the United States ?

On the other hand, it has been plausibly argued that it is the US presence and its security treaty with Japan that has enabled the entire Asia-Pacific to enjoy relatively peaceful and stable security environment in the post-war period. Some people even argued that the success of a multilateral security cooperation like ARF will depend upon how effectively this treaty works. But as broadly recognized, the scope of this treaty also includes the Taiwan Straits as well as the Korean Peninsula, the reinforcement of it will inevitably raise much concern, or distrust, or even hostility in Beijing ? And now that the concept of « human security » rather than national security is being advocated, stationing a huge foreign military force in the soil of sovereign state will be questioned ; whether it will benefit the security of the people within.

CONCLUSION

To draw a concrete and clear cut conclusion from the above discussion is a formidable task ; so many and various issues have been dealt within at a short time. This paper tried to elaborate on the on going changes and trends in the security environment in Asia-Pacific, and observed a transition from the immediate post-Cold War chaotic situation to a emerging order arranged and costructed by the regional states themselves. As we have pointed out the concerted efforts by the external powers, premised on the amicable relations among them however are indispensable for maintaining and enhancing such an order.

It has been a quite a positive trend that China, once perceived as a possible threat to the regional security, now act as an integral part of the region. Of course it still remains a potential threat, considering the growing defense expenditures and modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), including development and acquisition of advanced fighter aircraft, programs to develop mobile ballistic missile systems, land attack and anti-ship cruise missile systems, and advanced surface-to-air missiles and also recent movement on the part of China to have excess to the Indian Ocean via Myanmar. The latter may raise concern to India, as well as to ASEAN, but this development may induce India to take due responsibility for the security of Asia-Pacific.

What is needed is the incremental approach to the regional security, through consultation and confidence and trust-building, together with such measures as enhancing the transparency in arms procurement exchange of information or convening seminars and study sessions among the participating countries within and outside the framework of the ARF. ARF has to go a long way to fully develop its second stage i.e preventive diplomacy not to talk of the third namely Conflict Resolution. But the concept and the approach to the regional security that ASEAN has envisaged upon its own experience for over last thirty years, are certainly being rooted deep into the region and promoting mutual understanding with the extra member states through their participation in the forum.

In this sense European Union, a supposedly one of the important player in the regional affairs, has well understood these idea and behavior pattern. The « ASEAN Way » has to some extent won over China and even the US despite defections and shortcomings. Such a statement may sound too optimistic, but it is undeniable that the possibility of a major armed conflict has been remarkably reduced (again, except for the Korean Paninsula). We should accept this reality and take a positive step forward in enhancing regional security which is basically premised upon the prosperity and social cohesiveness in each nation.

If any approach under the auspices of ARF to even North Korea brought about a positive change in the improvised Socialist nation, and if it were constructively engaged by ARF, would ARF prove itself as a meaningful formula for security of the entire Asia-Pacific ? Hopefully it can work effectively, although it may take a long time. If that works the half-century old conflict in East Asia, actually quite outmoded, may unexpectedly find a way out of its deadlock through a different approach by the neighbors from the southwards.

ANNEXE A

MAP OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS



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