



**Competing Institutions in East Asian Regionalism:
ASEAN and the Regional Powers**

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Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	iv
Executive Summary	v
Introduction	1
The Evolution of Dual Security Layers in East Asia	2
The Configuration of the East Asian Institutional Structure	4
Political Motivations for ASEAN-led “East Asian Regionalism”	8
ASEAN as Quasi-Political Power Vacuum	12
Expectations toward ASEAN: Regional Powers’ Views	16
<i>The United States</i>	16
<i>China</i>	18
<i>US Allies: Japan and South Korea</i>	19
<i>Latecomers: Australia and India</i>	21
Policy Recommendations for ASEAN	24
<i>Vision Statement</i>	25
<i>Release Joint Statement in Asia-Pacific Cooperation in 2011 through EAS...</i>	25
<i>External Relations</i>	25
<i>Institutionalize the East Asia Summit</i>	25
<i>Ensure that China Continues Engaging EAS</i>	26
<i>Internal Consolidation</i>	26
<i>Consolidate ASEAN’s Centrality for East Asian Regionalism</i>	26
<i>Modify the “ASEAN Way” in 2010</i>	27
<i>Strengthen Linkage with Global Norms</i>	27
<i>Expand the ASEAN Secretariat</i>	27
About the Author	29

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Executive Summary

This paper attempts to answer: what are the primary objectives of ASEAN in promoting East Asian regionalism? Why do other regional powers engage ASEAN? How do other regional powers see ASEAN's role in this project? What are the implications for future regional cooperation or regional architecture in East Asia?

Argument

While ASEAN is one element of the regional architecture in East Asia, it risks losing its centrality in forging East Asian regionalism, which it has enjoyed by virtue of being in the "driver's seat." If this happens, the region would become institutionally pluralistic; leadership is likely to diffuse on a field-by-field basis, and the regional security architecture will become a more dynamic institutional nexus. Furthermore, if ASEAN loses its central role in East Asian regionalism, it would heighten competition among regional great powers, which may result in political division in the region. To avoid such a scenario, ASEAN needs to manage external relations cohesively and pursue internal consolidation.

Policy Recommendations

1) Vision Statement

1. Release a Joint Statement on Asia-Pacific Cooperation in 2011 through the EAS

The year 2011 is the year when the United States and Russia are expected to join the East Asia Summit, and this can help make the EAS a foundation of an Asia-Pacific community and the ASEAN+3 as a foundation of an East Asian community. In this way, ASEAN should aim at creating institutional "lock-in" for China and the US so that they will not lose interest in the ASEAN frameworks.

2) External Relations

1. Institutionalize the East Asia Summit

ASEAN should 1) set up the EAS unit in the ASEAN Secretariat; 2) expand its agenda for security and strategic issues by linking with the ADMM-plus; and 3) create a co-chair system that includes one ASEAN and one non-ASEAN member to give all members "ownership."

2. Persuade China to Keep Engaging with EAS

ASEAN should keep engaging China through ASEAN-led institutions, especially the EAS. China lost much of its enthusiasm for the EAS when the decision was made to extend its membership outside ASEAN+3 member states and Beijing lost the chance to be a chair. Being a co-chair in the EAS would increase China's incentive to participate since it would be able to set agendas. While ASEAN+3 can promote functional cooperation among member states due to its limited membership, the EAS would be a suitable forum for China to socialize with other regional powers and shape regional perceptions.

3) Internal Consolidation

1. Consolidate ASEAN's Centrality in East Asian Regionalism

ASEAN should scrutinize the concept of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) and develop a future vision for this community. The current concept is merely a description of ASEAN as it is, and does not provide a vision that ASEAN member states can aim toward. Here, Track II needs to be utilized: research institutions under ASEAN, (e.g., ASEAN-ISIS), should develop a vision statement for the APSC at ASEAN meetings, especially the newly established ASEAN Political-Security Community Council. At the same time, ASEAN-ISIS should pursue joint research with the +8 states – Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, China, Russia and the United States – by utilizing and expanding the framework of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) to make the most of its influence.

2. Modify the ASEAN Way in 2013

ASEAN should reform its decision-making system by building a “Consensus-Minus-One” process and establish the “New ASEAN Way.” ASEAN should create a two-layered decision-making system. First, ASEAN should follow the consensus decision-making process. Second, if consensus is not achieved, ASEAN would use a “Consensus-Minus-One” process. Article 20 of Chapter VII in the ASEAN Charter stipulates that “where consensus cannot be achieved, the ASEAN Summit may decide how a specific decision can be made.” Because the process is not explicitly stated, ASEAN has room to create a new norm for decision-making. This two-layered decision-making system will not seriously disrupt the tradition of the ASEAN Way.

3. Link with Global Norms

ASEAN should establish a human rights organization that cooperates with the United Nations and has the authority to produce recommendations to the ASEAN Summit. As political pressure from the West, such as the European Union and the United States, mounts, human rights violations committed by ASEAN member states are likely to not only result in a deterioration in relations, but also damage ASEAN's international credibility. To reduce that risk, ASEAN needs to link the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) with the United Nations to acquire sufficient information and to have the authority to inform its assessment of situations and submit policy recommendations to the ASEAN Summit. Since human rights are critical to relations with the international community as well as Western states that have security links with ASEAN member states, neglecting these issues is counter-productive.

4. Expand the ASEAN Secretariat

ASEAN should coordinate and, where possible, consolidate the number of Track I and Track II conferences to increase their efficiency. While the numerous conferences promote socialization among state officials and policy elites and nurture a sense of community and identity among them, an excessive number of conferences leads to “conference fatigue” and reduces productivity. Moreover, the ASEAN Secretariat has only about 130 professional staff to support over 1,000 ASEAN meetings annually, which exhausts human resources and hinders the effectiveness of the Secretariat. Thus, ASEAN should coordinate and restructure its committee and conferences, with the aim of not only increasing efficiency and reducing the the cost of conferences, but also expanding the number of staff in the ASEAN Secretariat, especially the ASEAN Political Security Department.

Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been in the “driver’s seat” for East Asian regionalism since the end of the Cold War. Its membership has been expanding and the association has been at the center of numerous multilateral institutions that have been created in East Asia. The recent US and Russian willingness to commit to the East Asian Summit (EAS) illustrates that ASEAN is likely to continue to be at the core of East Asian regionalism. However, progress has been slow due to an institutional norm referred to as the “ASEAN Way,” which is characterized as “discussion only about non-sensitive issues,” “non-interference,” and “consensus decision-making,” and has led many to question ASEAN’s ability to continue in its leadership role in East Asian regionalism. Given the difficulties that ASEAN faces in dealing with Myanmar’s elections, which are expected to be held later in 2010, and the sinking of the South Korean Navy corvette *Cheonan*, this long-standing criticism of ASEAN is unlikely to abate.

In the meantime, regional institutions in both political and security fields that are not led by ASEAN have been evolving: US bilateral alliances are becoming increasingly networked, and the Japan-China-ROK trilateral cooperation framework has been institutionalized. In addition, there has been a desire to establish new frameworks, such as the US-Japan-China policy framework. The evolution of these other regional institutions may marginalize ASEAN and it may lose its status as the “core” of East Asian regionalism. In this context, one may ask: what are the primary objectives of ASEAN in promoting East Asian regionalism? Why do other regional powers engage ASEAN? How do other regional powers see ASEAN’s role in its project? What are the implications for future regional cooperation or regional architecture in East Asia?

This paper focuses on the political and security aspects of ASEAN’s role in East Asian regionalism, and I conclude that while ASEAN remains one element of the security architecture in East Asia, the association will lose its centrality in forging East Asian regionalism that has been enjoyed by virtue of its being in the “driver’s seat.” If this happens, the region would become institutionally pluralistic; leadership is likely to diffuse on a field-by-field basis; and the regional security architecture will become a more dynamic institutional nexus. Moreover, if ASEAN loses its central role in forging East Asian regionalism, this will heighten competition among regional powers, which may result in political division in the region. To avoid such a scenario, ASEAN needs to manage external relations cohesively and pursue internal consolidation.

This paper consists of six sections: first, I analyze the development of the security structure in East Asia; second, I explore current East Asian institutional structure; the third section examines ASEAN’s political motivation for East Asian regionalism; the fourth assesses ASEAN’s political attractiveness as a leader; the fifth looks at regional powers’ views of ASEAN; and the sixth provides policy recommendations for ASEAN.

The Evolution of Dual Security Layers in East Asia

The East Asian security system has evolved in three phases since the Cold War. First, East Asia created a two-layer security system.¹ One layer consists of the US-led alliance system, which is based on US bilateral alliances with Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the Philippines, Thailand, and Australia. During the Cold War, this “hub-and-spoke” system was seen as a provider of deterrence in underdeveloped East Asia that filled the military and political power vacuum created by the superpower struggle. Northeast Asia, which contains regional flashpoints such as the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait, has been contained. The second layer is the ASEAN-led security arrangement. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 and consisted of five member states, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (Brunei became a member after it gained independence in 1984). Rather than focusing on external security management, the association functioned as a tool to contain conflicts among members. Although there were military conflicts in East Asian “power-vacuum” areas such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and the influence of the United States, China, and the Soviet Union lingered in Southeast Asia, each of these layers contributed to the maintenance of political and military stability in the region. Consequently, the region enjoyed a long peace after the 1979 Sino-Vietnam War.

A second phase began at the end of the Cold War as a new security link between Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia developed. With the demise of the Soviet Union, there was uncertainty as to whether the US-led security layer would be maintained. For the United States, although there were remnants of the Cold War (the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait), and the potential rise of China and Japan posed threats, they were not as “intense” as the Soviet threat.² Nevertheless, other East Asian states, especially Southeast Asian states, feared that regional powers, either Japan or China, would exert political and economic influence to shape regional institutions in their favor. Because East Asia did not have an overarching security framework linking Northeast and Southeast Asia, ASEAN, along with several countries including Japan, Canada, Australia, and Singapore, created the ASEAN Regional Forum to reduce uncertainty and to maintain the military balance.³ These member states meet and discuss security issues and work to maintain the US commitment to the region. At the same time, ASEAN has attempted to consolidate the region and build institutional solidarity: it has expanded its membership to include Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia during the 1990s, and it turned the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), created in 1971, into the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) in 1995.⁴ Although the association still lacks enforcement capability, it has attempted to eliminate the Southeast Asian “power vacuum.”

¹ “East Asia” here refers to combinations of Northeast Asia, which consists of Japan, China, South Korea, and to a lesser extent Russia, and Southeast Asia, which consists of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The area also includes Taiwan and North Korea.

² Khong Yuen Foong, “Coping With Strategic Uncertainty: The Role of Institutions and Soft Balancing in Southeast Asia’s Post Cold War Strategy,” in J.J. Suh, Peter Katzenstein, and Allen Carlson (eds.), *Rethinking Security in East Asia, Identity, Power and Efficiency*, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), pp. 172-208.

³ Rodolfo Severino, *ASEAN Regional Forum*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), pp. 5-14.

⁴ ASEAN Secretariat, “Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone,” Dec. 15, 1995, Bangkok, Thailand, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/2082.htm>>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

Third, both the ASEAN-led and the US-led security layers evolved after 1997. The 1997/1998 East Asian financial crisis created political momentum to transform the ASEAN-led security layer. The financial crisis revealed that existing regional mechanisms, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and ASEAN, were ineffective in dealing with the situation. East Asian states realized the need for other mechanisms and ASEAN undertook further institutional consolidation and institutional *spin-off*. Through the development of its “*ASEAN Vision 2020*” in 1997,⁵ ASEAN fostered the establishment of three separate ASEAN communities: ASEAN political-security community (it was the “ASEAN security community” at an earlier stage), ASEAN economic community, and ASEAN socio-cultural community, all laid out in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (the so-called “Bali Concord II”) in 2003.⁶ It also codified institutional norms in the ASEAN Charter agreed to in 2008, which is based on the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.⁷ As a form of institutional *spin-off*, it established comprehensive regional frameworks, including the ASEAN+3 in 1997 and the East Asian Summit (EAS) in 2005. These established ASEAN as a *de facto* inducer of cooperation in East Asia, which provided it the political qualifications needed to claim the “driver’s seat” for East Asian regionalism.

The US-led security layer also evolved through the redefinition of bilateral alliances. After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 revealed the threat posed by nonstate actors, the United States was eager to expand the functions of its alliances to deal with these threats.

Since 1996, the US-Japan alliance, when both governments agreed on a new joint security declaration on security, has expanded its scope to regional and global issues, including terrorism, which was evident in the 2005 Joint Statement by the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee.⁸

The US-ROK alliance expanded its functions to meet global challenges, including “terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy, organized crime and narcotics, climate change, poverty, infringement on human rights, energy security, and epidemic disease.”⁹ US-Australia bilateral security relations have expanded to include trilateral cooperation with Japan as laid out in the 2006 joint declaration of “the US-Japan-Australia Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD).”¹⁰ Also, ad-hoc institutions such as the Six-Party Talks and the Proliferation Security Initiative have been created to tackle specific issues, such as maintaining non-nuclear status (or denuclearization) of the Korean Peninsula and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Using these frameworks, the United States could reach out not only to allies but to other states. In other

⁵ ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN Vision 2020,” Dec. 17, 1997, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/1814.htm>>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

⁶ ASEAN Secretariat, “Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II),” Oct. 7, 2003, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/15159.htm>>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

⁷ ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN Charter,” at <<http://www.aseansec.org/21861.htm>>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Joint Statement U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee,” Feb. 19, 2005, at <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint0502.html>>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

⁹ White House, “Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea,” June 16, 2009, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-vision-for-the-alliance-of-the-United-States-of-America-and-the-Republic-of-Korea/>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

¹⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Trilateral Strategic Dialogue Joint Statement: Australia-Japan-United States,” Mar. 18, 2006, at <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/joint0603-2.html>>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

words, the US-led security layer is becoming increasingly networked, and thus creating a “web” of Asia-Pacific security arrangements.¹¹

These two security layers are linked through two institutions: the APEC forum and ARF. APEC expanded its traditional agenda of trade and economic cooperation to address nontraditional security fields, such as installing the Counter-Terrorism Task Force (CTTF),¹² and the ARF has focused on counter-terrorism and transnational crimes.¹³ However, these frameworks have been generally regarded as functionally insignificant as they lack enforcement mechanisms. Consequently, the United States, which values results rather than processes, has attempted to form a new alliance network that would be functionally capable of dealing with both traditional and nontraditional security issues. ASEAN, on the other hand, has focused on political processes in an attempt to forge confidence among member states.

In this context, both security layers have been complementary and have contributed to East Asian security. While the US-led security layer is more capable of managing traditional and nontraditional security issues, it could be seen as a “containment” policy toward non-US allies, such as China. The ASEAN-led security layer, as a cooperative security framework, attempts to prevent escalation of misperceptions by promoting confidence building measures (CBMs) and increasing military and political transparency. In short, both frameworks are constitutive, not exclusionary.¹⁴

The Configuration of the East Asian Institutional Structure:

These evolutions have expanded the US-led and ASEAN-led security layers and made them more complex. Table 1 and Table 2 illustrate existing summit-level and minister-level multilateral frameworks in the Asia-Pacific region. Predominantly, the core of these multilateral frameworks is ASEAN. The institutionalized multilateral summit meeting in East Asia was established within ASEAN in 1976; ASEAN+3 was established in 1997 and the EAS in 2005. These frameworks focus not on particular issues, but on comprehensive topics, such as political, economic, and social cooperation. Created in 1989, APEC is the only institution encompassing the wider Asia-Pacific region and was established through initiatives taken by non-ASEAN states, namely Australia and Japan;¹⁵ its first meeting was held in Australia in 1989. Its primary focus is facilitating economic growth, cooperation, trade, and investment in the region though its agenda has included nontraditional security

¹¹ Dennis Blair and John Hanley, “From Wheels to Webs: Reconstructing Asia-Pacific Security Arrangements,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (Winter 2001), pp. 7-17.

¹² Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, “Counter Terrorism,” at <http://www.apec.org/apec_groups/som_committee_on_economic/som_special_task_groups/counter_terrorism.html>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

¹³ ASEAN Secretariat, “Chairman’s Statement: The Ninth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum,” July 31, 2002, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/12003.htm>>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

¹⁴ Most argue that multilateral frameworks are “complementary” to bilateralism due to the weak multilateralism in East Asia. For example, see Joseph Nye, “The Case for Deep Engagement,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 4 (Jul.-Aug., 1995), pp. 90-102; Nobuo Okawara and Peter Katzenstein, “Japan and Asian-Pacific security: regionalization, entrenched bilateralism and incipient multilateralism,” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2, (2001), pp. 165-194; Ralf Emmers, “Security Relations and Institutionalism in Southeast Asia,” in *BASC (Berkeley APEC Study Center) Working Paper Series* (2006/07).

¹⁵ Takeshi Terada, “The origins of Japan’s APEC policy: Foreign Minister Takeo Miki’s Asia-Pacific policy and current implications,” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3, (1998), pp. 337-363.

issues such as counter-terrorism and WMDs. APEC does not include all ASEAN member states (Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar are not included) but does include East Asian “areas” such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. The membership of ASEAN-led institutions is strictly state-based because of institutional principles that rely on “non-interference.”

Table 1: East Asia and Asia-Pacific Multilateral Frameworks (Summit Level)¹⁶



ASEAN-led summit meetings are routinely held in ASEAN member states hosted in alphabetical order, and they are held back-to-back, so that heads of state only attend one set of meetings. The location of the APEC meeting is decided by an offer from a member state and needs to be endorsed by all members.¹⁷ So, if the APEC host is an ASEAN member, non-Asian heads of state need to make two trips to Asia in one year. This is one of the reasons that the United States during the Bush administration hesitated to participate in the EAS.¹⁸

Ministerial and working-level frameworks promote functional cooperation among member states. As shown in Table 2, this level of dialogues is also predominantly managed by ASEAN. The ARF, which was established in 1994, is the first multilateral framework that focuses on security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. It aims at elevating its functions from

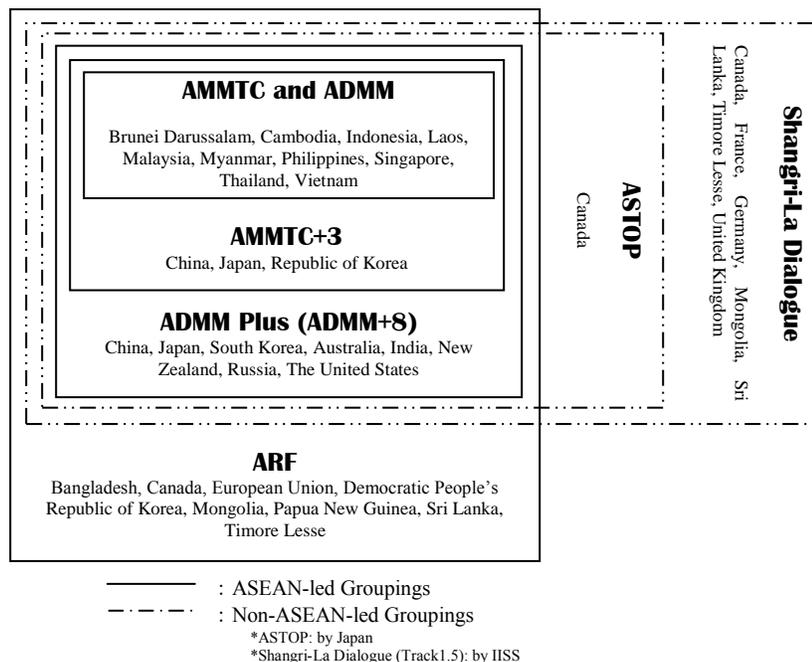
¹⁶ As of July 2010. Referred to and modified “Multilateral Institutions in Asia” Michael Green and Bates Gill, (Eds.), *Asia's New Multilateralism: Cooperation, Competition, and the Search for Community*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 2. Note: ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations, EAS: East Asian Summit, APEC: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

¹⁷ The APEC Secretariat, *Guidebook on APEC Procedures and Practices*, (Singapore: APEC Secretariat, 2005), p.9.

¹⁸ Cossa cautiously argues that two trips to Asia for APEC and EAS would be difficult for the US president partly because those meetings are usually held close together and partly because these meetings include leaders from countries that Washington does not recognize as legitimate, such as Myanmar. See Ralph Cossa, “Evolving U.S. Views on Asia’s Future Institutional Architecture,” in Green and Gill, p. 37.

confidence-building measures to preventive diplomacy mechanisms to conflict-resolution mechanisms,¹⁹ although the ARF struggles to make progress and remains at the stage of confidence-building measures. More specific functional security frameworks are the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), which was created in 1997 to coordinate policies against “terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, arms smuggling, money laundering, traffic in persons and piracy.”²⁰ This framework was expanded in 2004 to include China, Japan, and South Korea in the so-called AMMTC+3. The ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM) was established in 2006, and aims at promoting mil-mil diplomacy and confidence building, enhancing transparency and openness, leading to the establishment of an ASEAN Security Community (now the ASEAN Political-Security Community).²¹ It currently focuses on strengthening humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and is planning to expand and become the ADMM *Plus*, which will include the United States and Russia in October 2010.²²

Table 2: East Asia and Asia-Pacific Multilateral Security Frameworks (Ministerial and Working Level)²³



¹⁹ ARF Unit, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper,” at <<http://www.aseanregionalforum.org/AboutUs/tabid/57/Default.aspx>>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

²⁰ ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN Declaration on Transnational Crime,” Dec. 20, 1997, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/5640.htm>>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

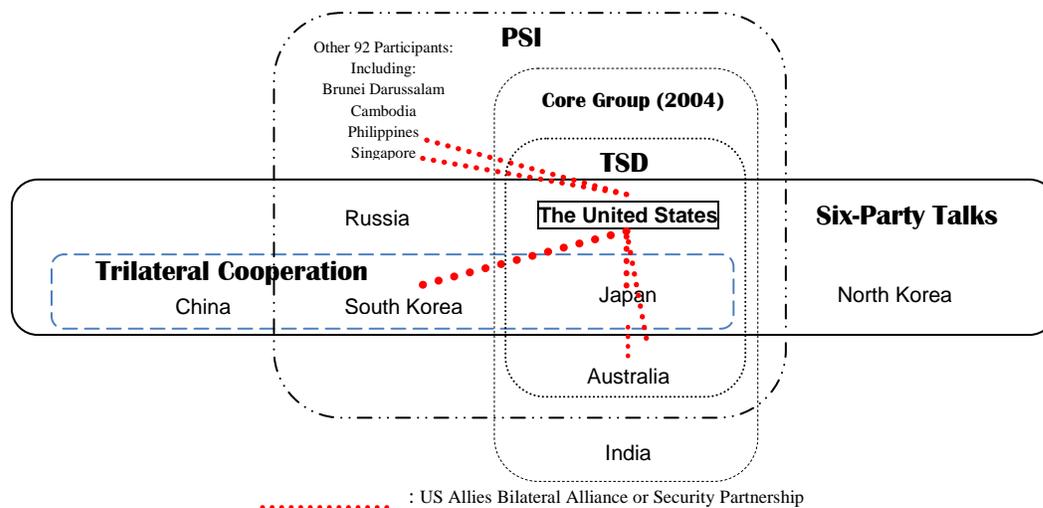
²¹ ASEAN Secretariat, “Joint Press Release of the Inaugural ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting,” Kuala Lumpur, May 9, 2006, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/19893.htm>>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

²² ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus): Principles for Membership,” at <<http://www.aseansec.org/18471-e.pdf>>. Accessed Aug. 6, 2010; ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus): Concept Paper,” at <<http://www.aseansec.org/21216.pdf>>. Accessed Aug. 6, 2010.

²³ Note: As of July 2010. AMMTC: ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, ADMM: ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting, ASTOP: Asian Senior-level Talks on Non-Proliferation, ARF: ASEAN Regional Forum

There are other non-ASEAN-led multilateral frameworks, such as the Asian Senior-level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) and the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD). ASTOP was created in 2003.²⁴ Each year, the Japanese government invites government officials in East Asia, including ASEAN states, China, South Korea, the United States and Canada, to discuss nonproliferation issues as well as to link with them to the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).²⁵ The SLD was established by the Director-General and Chief Executive of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), John Chipman, in 2002, and brought defense ministers together from the Asia-Pacific and beyond for the first time.²⁶

Table 3: US-led and Non-ASEAN Security Frameworks in Asia²⁷



Non-ASEAN-led security frameworks in East Asia are predominantly led by the United States. They are based on the bilateral alliances and ad-hoc groupings, as Table 3 illustrates. These are all recent phenomena: the Six-Party Talks were created in 2003, the Proliferation Security Initiative in 2003, the Core Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, and the Trilateral Security Dialogue (TSD) in 2006. While the Six-Party Talks have not been successful (North Korea’s nuclear program and tests continue), other frameworks do coordinate their security policies, especially in the area of nontraditional security. For example, the PSI, which aims at countering proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, has conducted 35 joint training exercises, though not all participants joined the exercises.²⁸ The core group of the United States, Australia, India, and Japan, which was

²⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Ajia Fukakusan Kyogi (ASTOP),” at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/fukaku_j/astop_index.html>. Accessed July 26, 2010. Also, see Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Ajia Fukakusan Kyogi (ASTOP) (Gaiyo to Hyoka),” Nov. 13, 2003, at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/fukaku_j/astop_0311gh.html>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

²⁵ Since East Asian member states of PSI included only a small number of countries at its inception, Japan created a dialogue for nonproliferation specifically for Asian states as PSI outreach.

²⁶ David Capie and Brendan Taylor, “The Shangri-La Dialogue and the institutionalization of defence diplomacy in Asia,” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (July 2010), pp. 359-376.

²⁷ Note: As of July 2010. PSI: Proliferation Security Initiative, TSD: Trilateral Security Dialogue. Department of State, “Proliferation Security Initiative Participants, June 8, 2010, at <<http://www.state.gov/t/isn/c27732.htm>>. Accessed July 26, 2010. Thailand participated in PSI joint exercise before, yet not signed it.

²⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Kakusan ni taisuru anzenhosho koso (Proliferation Security Initiative: PSI), May 25, 2010, at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/fukaku_j/psi/psi.html>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

formed to respond to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, is one example of flexible networking for disaster relief. TSD, which discusses both traditional and nontraditional security concerns, such as North Korea and Myanmar issues, nonproliferation and international terrorism, among the United States, Japan, and Australia, filled the missing link between Japan and Australia, and resulted in the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in 2007.²⁹

There is one regional framework that is neither ASEAN- nor US-led: Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Cooperation. This is an institutional *spin-off* of the “+3” cooperation within ASEAN+3 and it was formally created in 2007. Although this framework has limited scope when it comes to security issues, such as search and rescue and disaster management, it includes a defense dialogue among defense officials and military officers.³⁰ Despite its institutional immaturity, this framework has the potential to create another security layer in East Asia.

In general, while the ASEAN-led security layer is of the *box-type*, which first creates multilateral institutions by deciding membership, the US-led security layer is *linkage-type*, which utilizes the US bilateral alliances and emphasizes functions.

Political Motivations for ASEAN-led “East Asian Regionalism”

There is both implicit and explicit political competition for influence on the ASEAN-led security layer, especially among China, Japan, and, to a lesser extent, the United States. This is illustrated by debates and political maneuvers regarding the establishment of the East Asian Summit in 2005 between Japan and China and the 2009 US approach to ASEAN through accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). Despite its smaller political status, ASEAN did not passively respond to these great powers’ initiatives. ASEAN has four explicit and implicit motivations for East Asian regionalism: China’s rise, US involvement, regional resiliency, and ASEAN centrality.

First, ASEAN-led regionalism attempts to check China’s rise and to integrate China into the international system. Policy experts in Southeast Asia argue that East Asian regionalism aims to manage a “rise of China” (or “to help manage the unpredictable consequences of a fully risen China”) by creating a stable regional order.³¹ China’s growing power projection capabilities and economic growth are likely to alter the distribution of power in East Asia. Nonetheless, East Asian states also benefit from China’s market and, to hedge against China’s rise, US allies in the region have pursued comprehensive engagement

²⁹ Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Joint Statement Australia-Japan-United States,” March 18, 2006, at <http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2006/joint_statement-aus-japan_usa_180306.html>. Accessed July 26, 2010; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation,” Tokyo, Mar. 13, 2007, at <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/joint0703.html>>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

³⁰ Although security agendas have been already put in the trilateral framework, their cooperative action is still under consideration. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Summit,” at <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/jck/summit1005/vision2020.html>>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

³¹ Interview with senior members of Southeast Asian think-tanks and governments, including senior officials from Malaysian government, Rizal Sukma Executive Director at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta and Dr. Carolina Hernandez, Emeritus Professor, University of the Philippines Diliman June 10, 2010.

with China as well as kept strong ties to the United States.³² But, ASEAN states lack the economic and military capability to “hedge” against China, and their policy options are limited because not all ASEAN member states have security ties with the United States. Instead, ASEAN uses “soft hedging” toward China: while engaging China comprehensively, ASEAN attempts to constrain China’s behavior by using multilateral frameworks, especially on territorial disputes over the South China Sea. However, ASEAN has yet to be successful in improving China’s military transparency and/or to get Beijing to clarify its military doctrine so it can better understand its long-term intention to follow international rules.

Second, regionalism ensures US involvement in the region. Since 1994, when the ARF was established, ASEAN states have attempted to keep the United States engaged in East Asia.³³ Given East Asian dependence on the United States for its military security and economic prosperity, the United States is plainly the most pivotal player in the region: while many in the region recognize that the US forward deployment has provided regional stability, the United States is also the most important trade partner for East Asia as a whole since its imports from Asian states drive regional economic growth. However, US rhetoric notwithstanding, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice skipped the ARF meetings in 2005 and 2007 and President Obama was twice forced to cancel trips to Indonesia in 2010. As a result, an apprehension exists regarding Asian perceptions of the US commitment to East Asia.

Third, regionalism attempts to increase resiliency to deal with regional problems. During the 1997/1998 Asian financial crisis, regional organizations, including ASEAN and APEC, could not stop the spread of financial contagion in East Asia. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had the ability to do so, but it proposed aid that was conditioned on structural changes to Asian economies by arguing that Asia was dominated by “crony capitalism.”³⁴ When the United States provided a quick bailout of Latin America and Russia in 1998, Asian states became more skeptical about US intentions and decided it would be necessary to enhance regional mechanisms to manage their problems.³⁵ Indeed, this is well illustrated by the fact that in the first ASEAN+3 meeting in 1997, ASEAN countries asked for Japan’s economic assistance and some questioned IMF conditionality, arguing that it

³² US President Obama said that “[w]e welcome a China that takes on a responsible leadership role in working with the United States and the international community to advance priorities like economic recovery, confronting climate change, and nonproliferation. We will monitor China’s military modernization program and prepare accordingly to ensure that U.S. interests and allies, regionally and globally, are not negatively affected.” Japanese Prime Minister Kan said that Japan would deepen “mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests” with China, which aims to enhance political, military, economic, and social cooperation. ROK President Lee Myung-bak said that South Korea would forge a “strategic cooperative partnership” with China, which strengthens economic cooperation and cooperation over the Korean Peninsula. Australia concluded “Australia-China joint statement,” which aimed at enhancing political, economic and social cooperation in the international arena. See White House, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010, p. 43; Naoto Kan, “Policy Speech by Prime Minister Naoto Kan at the 174th Session of the Diet,” June 11, 2010, at <http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/kan/statement/201006/11syosin_e.html>. Accessed July 22, 2010; Office of the President, the Republic of Korea, *Global Korea: The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Korea*, June 2009, pp. 22-23; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, “Australia-China joint statement,” Oct. 30, 2009, at <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/china/joint_statement_091030.html>. Accessed July 22, 2010.

³³ Noel Morada, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: Origins and evolution,” in Jurgen Haacke and Noel Morada, (eds.), *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific: The ASEAN Regional Forum*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 14-15.

³⁴ See Alice Ba, “China and ASEAN: Renavigating Relations for a 21st-Century Asia,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 43, No. 4, (2003), pp. 634-636.

³⁵ Chang Li Lin and Ramkishan S. Rajan, “Regional Responses to the Southeast Asian Financial Crisis,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 3, (1999), p. 273.

would have a negative effect on economic activity.³⁶ In addition, ASEAN held three summits with Japan, China, and South Korea, respectively, and each declaration emphasized economic cooperation in such fields as industrial modernization, technological transfer, and support for small and medium enterprises.³⁷

Fourth, ASEAN attempts to maintain its “centrality” in regional community building to exercise political influence over regional powers.³⁸ Since its military and economic capabilities are much smaller than powers such as the United States, Japan, China, and South Korea, ASEAN did not have influence over issues in East Asia during the Cold War; this has changed, however. Due to its ability to establish multilateral institutions, ASEAN has begun to lead regional cooperation and become a diplomatic hub in East Asia. While not denying the role of other regional organizations such as APEC,³⁹ many official documents regarding the ARF, ASEAN+3, and EAS emphasize ASEAN’s “centrality.”⁴⁰ Centrality is not attained by political or economic capability, but by “strategic convenience” as regional major powers could not form a concert arrangement by themselves.⁴¹ ASEAN has attempted to maintain its political status to enhance its influence over regional great powers, especially from the 2000s when East Asian regional cooperation intensified.

ASEAN’s preference order of these four objectives changes over time, yet these objectives are crucial because lacking even one of them endangers member states’ political, economic, and security interests. Moreover, two objectives, management of China’s rise and increase in regional resiliency, are extremely difficult for ASEAN to achieve by itself because of its limited capability, so it is necessary for other regional powers to participate.

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Hashimoto sori no ASEAN tonu shuno kaigi (Prime Minister Hashimoto’s Summit with ASEAN),” Dec. 17, 1997, at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kaidan/kiroku/s_hashi/arc_97/asean97/kaigi.html>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

³⁷ ASEAN Secretariat, “Joint Statement of the Meeting of Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN and the Prime Minister of Japan,” Dec. 16, 1997, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/5475.htm>>. Accessed July 26, 2010; ASEAN Secretariat, “Joint Statement of the Meeting of Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea,” Dec. 16, 1997, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/5474.htm>>. Accessed July 26, 2010; ASEAN Secretariat, “Joint Statement of the Meeting of Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN and the President of the People’s Republic of China,” Dec. 16, 1997, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/5476.htm>>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

³⁸ See Seng Tan and Ralf Emmers, “Security Architecture and Institutionalism in the Asia Pacific,” in Desmond Ball and Kwa Chong Guan (eds.), *Assessing Track 2 Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region*, (Singapore: Strategic & Defence Studies Centre and S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2010), p. 193.

³⁹ Acharya asserts that ASEAN has traditionally been concerned about “US dominance of APEC,” and the trade liberalization that is defined by Washington, and potentially overshadowing ASEAN. See Amitav Acharya, “The Strong in the World of the Weak: Southeast Asia in Asia’s Regional Architecture,” in Green and Gill, p. 179.

⁴⁰ The ARF concept paper in 1995 says that “ASEAN has undertaken the obligation to be the *primary driving force* of the ARF.” The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN+3 in 2005 says that “the ASEAN Plus Three process will continue to be the main vehicle in achieving that goal [an East Asian community], with *ASEAN as the driving force*.” The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asia Summit in 2005 says that the East Asia Summit will be an open, inclusive, transparent and outward-looking forum...with *ASEAN as the driving force*.”[emphasis added] See ARF Unit, ASEAN Secretariat, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper,” at <<http://www.aseanregionalforum.org/PublicLibrary/ARFChairmansStatementsandReports/TheASEANRegionalForumACoceptPaper/tabid/200/Default.aspx>>. Accessed July 26, 2010; ASEAN Secretariat, “Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the ASEAN Plus Three Summit,” Dec. 12, 2005, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/18036.htm>>. Accessed July 26, 2010; ASEAN Secretariat, “Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asia Summit,” Dec. 14, 2005, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/23298.htm>>. Accessed July 26, 2010.

⁴¹ Rizal Sukma, “The accidental driver: ASEAN in the ASEAN Regional Forum,” in Haacke and Morada; Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum: Extending ASEAN’s Modle of Regional Security*, (London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996), p.30.

Accordingly, to achieve all these objectives, ASEAN needs to walk a fine line to ensure all its objectives remain within its institutional scope. As Table 4 illustrates, the best way, and probably the only way, to maintain and pursue the four objectives is conditional: both the United States and China maintain engagement with ASEAN. If only one great power, either the United States or China, engages ASEAN, ASEAN could be politically overwhelmed. Yet, if neither the United States nor China engages ASEAN, the organization would become politically irrelevant. Therefore, it becomes vital for ASEAN to create conditions to entice engagement. Even though this may produce political competition among regional powers, such as the United States, China, and to a lesser extent Japan, it would be better for ASEAN to keep them engaged.

Table 4: ASEAN’s Political Dilemma in East Asian Regionalism

	<i>US: Engagement with ASEAN</i>	<i>US: Neglecting ASEAN</i>
<i>China: Engagement with ASEAN</i>	<p>◆ Benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) ASEAN is valued. 2) The region gains relevance by including great powers. <p>◆ Cost:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Intense Strategic Competition over ASEAN among the US, China, and Japan. 	<p>◆ Benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gaining greater East Asian autonomy. 2) ASEAN framework can be utilized. <p>◆ Cost:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fear of Increasing Regional Uncertainty (Competition between Japan and China). 2) Fear of Increasing China's Influence. 3) ASEAN can be politically marginalized.
<i>China: Neglecting ASEAN</i>	<p>◆ Benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gaining Regional Economic and Security Stability. 2) Greater Institutional Relevance for ASEAN. <p>◆ Cost:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fear of Domination of and Dependence on the United States. 2) ASEAN can be politically marginalized. 	<p>◆ Benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gaining Southeast Asian Autonomy. <p>◆ Cost:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) ASEAN can be politically marginalized significantly. 2) ASEAN frameworks lose institutional relevance.

This condition is not too difficult to be realized because moderate regional tension between the United States and China means that political value is put on ASEAN. The Northeast Asian regional powers – Japan, China, and South Korea – have yet to achieve sufficient confidence-building to reach the point at which they can allow one country to lead any effort. Therefore, ASEAN leads East Asian community-building “by default.”⁴²

However, East Asian regionalism has become increasingly dynamic since 2000, as shown by the creation of ADMM *Plus* (+8), institutionalization of Japan-ROK-China Trilateral Cooperation, and potential US and Russian participation in the EAS from 2011. It is possible that rather than engaging ASEAN, the United States could concentrate on linking its bilateral alliances or bilateral relations with ASEAN countries, bypassing ASEAN; China can similarly use a “divide-and-rule” policy toward ASEAN member states by targeting Myanmar or Malaysia. Thus, to sustain US and Chinese engagement and maintain its institutional centrality, ASEAN needs to show institutional viability while preventing those powers from dominating ASEAN-led institutional mechanisms by maintaining institutional solidarity. In this sense, achieving institutional viability to attract regional states is the most important factor in ASEAN’s regional project.

⁴² Tan and Emmers argue that ASEAN will likely continue playing a leading role in the emerging institutional architecture in the absence of an alternative acceptable to all participants, though its capacity is increasingly in doubt. See Seng Tan and Ralf Emmers, “Security Architecture and Institutionalism in the Asia Pacific,” in Ball and Kwa, p. 191; Sukma, “The accidental driver.”

ASEAN as a Quasi-Political Power Vacuum

Despite these requirements, ASEAN constantly faces a political dilemma because its institutional strength is inherently linked to its weakness. ASEAN has created a plethora of institutions and in the post-Cold War era, its role is increasingly connected to external actors, both regional organizations and states, via regional institutions. While maintaining its chairmanship and the agenda-setting authority, ASEAN-led institutions embrace ASEAN's norms and principles, the so-called "ASEAN Way." This institutional norm is a useful tool to invite other states into ASEAN's multilateral frameworks. In addition, it is focusing on nontraditional security issues, such as disaster relief, refugee problems, search and rescue, and the environment, which are transnational in nature, so the institutions draw more international attention.

Yet, the "ASEAN Way" hinders discussion of traditional security issues due to the noninterference principle and rapid institutional progress is blocked by the consensus decision-making principle. If these principles are changed, it would be more difficult to maintain institutional solidarity, which appeals to international society and protects ASEAN from external influence, one of the *raison d'être* of ASEAN. Also, nontraditional security cooperation notwithstanding, its institutional capabilities are limited because the institutions consist of small- and middle-powers that lack resources, compared to great-power coalitions, such as the TSD, within the US-led security layer.

Nevertheless, these limitations also add to institutional attractiveness. Because ASEAN has included external actors by creating new institutions, it inevitably faces outside influences. Although these influences do not have a significant impact on the institutions themselves, they have gradual effects on the long term, and external actors could expect to have political impact and shape institutional features. In fact, both the "ASEAN Way" and its nontraditional security function have evolved, although its slowness and limitations on capabilities persist from a short-term perspective.

First, change occurs within ASEAN's institutional norm. Traditionally, its principles emphasize informality, noninterference, *musyarawah* (consultation) and *muafakah* (consensus-building).⁴³ These principles provide both strength and weakness for institutions.⁴⁴ While the strict consensus decision-making process and noninterference principle provide opportunities for all member states to find common agendas, they limit the scope of cooperation in traditional security agendas, such as the Korean Peninsula, the Taiwan Strait, and other territorial disputes. In addition, since there are few alternatives to ASEAN's leading role in East Asian regionalism, these principles provide ASEAN

⁴³ See Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 26.

⁴⁴ There are many discussions of the ASEAN Way. See Shaun Narine, "ASEAN and the ARF: The Limits of the 'ASEAN Way'", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 10 (Oct. 1997), pp. 961-978; Hiro Katsumata, "Why Is ASEAN Diplomacy Changing? From 'Non-Interference' to 'Open and Frank Discussion'", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (March/April, 2004): 237-254; Donald E. Weatherbee, *International Relations in Southeast Asia: The Struggle for Autonomy*, (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), pp 121-123; David Martin Jones and Michael L.R. Smith, "Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Summer 2007), pp. 148-184; Kei Koga, "The Normative Power of The "ASEAN Way": Potentials, Limitations and Implications for East Asian Regionalism," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (Winter 2010), pp. 80-95.

opportunities to create institutions in East Asia, which are accepted by other regional powers. These function as forums, which increase the interaction between states and promote confidence-building. Nonetheless, since these forums proceed at a very slow pace and have agenda restrictions, proliferation of institutions is likely to create “conference fatigue,” and participation in those forums has a high cost in diplomatic resources.

This feature of the ASEAN Way has been challenged internally and externally. Several ASEAN member states have attempted to change the ASEAN Way. Thailand proposed that the “flexible engagement” be adopted instead of strict adherence to the “noninterference” principle.⁴⁵ Also, the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) in 2006 recommended the relaxation of principles of noninterference and consensus decision-making process in the ASEAN Charter.⁴⁶ Indonesia’s proposal for an ASEAN Security Community explicitly emphasized democracy and human rights.⁴⁷ Externally, the United States and European Union have put political pressure on ASEAN to prevent human rights violations in Myanmar by going beyond the noninterference principle. Although internal and external pressure *per se* were watered down each time and did not produce significant changes, the system has changed. One example is shown in ASEAN’s official documents. ASEAN officially begun using the term, “democratic,” in the 2003 Bali Concord II, and it has used the term ever since.⁴⁸ The ASEAN Charter stipulated the creation of an “ASEAN Human Rights Body” (AHRB), which evolved into the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in 2009 though it does not have any “teeth.” In this sense, ASEAN is moving to alter the “ASEAN Way”; its slow progress still affects institutional effectiveness.

Second, ASEAN’s nontraditional security cooperation has been strengthened.⁴⁹ Admittedly, ASEAN member states historically struggle with these issues as they consolidate governance and strive for domestic stability. However, with the rapid increase of people-to-people exchanges and the development of communications technology, these issues have become more salient. Consequently, since the end of the Cold War, ASEAN created numerous committees to deal with nontraditional security issues with member states as well as other regional powers, such as the AMMTC and AMMTC+3. These frameworks attempt to undertake comprehensive security cooperation, ranging from the exchange of information

⁴⁵ Ruukun Katanyuu, “Beyond Non-Interference in ASEAN: The Association’s Role in Myanmar’s National Reconciliation and Democratization,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 46, No. 6, (Dec. 2006), p.830.

⁴⁶ “One (very) small step forward for ASEAN,” *The Japan Times*, Nov. 26, 2007; “Asean needs strong charter to be effective, say observers,” *The Straits Times*, Jan. 12, 2007.

⁴⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia, “Towards an ASEAN Security Community,” paper presented at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, June 16-18, 2003. Cited in Acharya. p. 178.

⁴⁸ ASEAN Secretariat, “Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II).”; Mie Oba, “Globalization and the Transformation of Asian Regionalism,” *International Relations (Kokusai Seiji)*, Vol. 158 (Dec. 2009), p.80. For example, the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint stipulates that ASEAN pursues “political development in adherence to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, respect for and promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms as inscribed in the ASEAN Charter.” See ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint” (Jakarta: The ASEAN Secretariat, June 2009).

⁴⁹ According to Caballero-Anthony, non-traditional security (NTS) is defined as “challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that arise primarily out of nonmilitary sources, such as climate change, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, smuggling of persons, drug trafficking, and other forms of transnational crime. Mely Caballero-Anthony, “Nontraditional Security and Multilateralism in Asia: Reshaping the Contours of Regional Security Architecture,” in Green and Gill, p. 306.

and law enforcement to training. These fields go beyond the “usual process-oriented, confidence-building measure,” and are more focused on problem solving.⁵⁰

Indeed, ASEAN has launched several initiatives and practices to manage nontraditional security issues and makes efforts to strengthen capacity to deal with issues, such as disaster management, counter-terrorism, drug trafficking, piracy, and infectious diseases. For example, ASEAN created the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) in 2003,⁵¹ and after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, ASEAN decided to enhance cooperation in disaster relief by expanding ACDM activities.⁵² ASEAN concluded the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) in 2005, which aimed at increasing capabilities for early warning, crisis management, and consequent management.⁵³ Since then, it has held the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise, known as ARDEX.⁵⁴ Moreover, the ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Teams (ERAT) was created in 2008 and deployed in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis.⁵⁵

At the 14th ASEAN Regional Forum, which was held in Manila on Aug. 2, 2007, the ministers stated their concern over natural disasters in the region and highlighted the importance of enhancing cooperation in disaster relief, mitigation, and management. The ministers adopted the “ARF General Guidelines on Disaster Relief Cooperation” and decided that the first desktop exercise on disaster relief, which was initiated by Australia and Indonesia, would be held in August 2008 to strengthen military-to-military cooperation.⁵⁶ The first disaster relief exercise, Voluntary Demonstration of Response (VDR), was held in the Philippines in April 2009.⁵⁷ The ARF will hold a civilian-led Disaster Relief Exercise in March 2011 to further enhance operational coordination.⁵⁸

Another example of nontraditional security cooperation is counter-terrorism efforts. After the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, ASEAN issued the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, the 2002 Agreement on Information

⁵⁰ The means for problem solving include sharing information; developing early-warning surveillance systems to prepare for the onset of infectious diseases and natural disasters; providing disaster relief training, rehabilitation, and reconstruction; and, more significant, working toward coordinated procedures and even attempts at harmonizing legal frameworks to prosecute transnational crimes. *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁵¹ United Nations, “Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN),” *United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response*, at <<http://www.un-spider.org/guide-en/3224/association-south-east-asian-nations-asean>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.

⁵² ASEAN Secretariat, “Special ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting on Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami,” Jan. 6, 2005, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/17066.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.

⁵³ ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response,” July 26, 2005, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/17579.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.

⁵⁴ ARDEX-05 in Malaysia, ARDEX-06 in Cambodia, ARDEX-07 in Singapore, ARDEX-08 in Thailand, ARDEX-09 in the Philippines, and ARDEX-10 in Indonesia, were held.

⁵⁵ Adelina Kamal, “AADMER and ASEAN’s Cooperation with the Civil Society in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance,” Powerpoint Presentation in “2nd Workshop on ASEAN Defense Establishments and CSOs Cooperation on Disaster Management, Bangkok, Thailand, 28-29 June 2010.”

⁵⁶ ASEAN has the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR). ASEAN Secretariat, “Chairman’s Statement: 14th ASEAN Regional Forum,” at <<http://www.aseansec.org/20807.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.

⁵⁷ Department of State, “ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to Hold First Disaster Relief Exercise in the Philippines,” Apr. 6, 2009, at <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/04/121338.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.

⁵⁸ ASEAN Secretariat, “43rd AMM/PMC/17th ARF Vietnam 2010 Chairman’s Statement 17th ASEAN Regional Forum,” July 23, 2010, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/24929.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.

Exchange and Establishment of Communication Procedures, and the 2002 the US-ASEAN Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism. These declarations aimed at strengthening information exchange, cooperation in legal matters, cooperation in law enforcement matters, institutional capacity building, training, and extra-regional cooperation.⁵⁹ The establishment of the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) in 2003, the 2004 Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, and the 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism are part of ASEAN's counter-terrorism efforts.⁶⁰

The ARF created an Inter-Sessional Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crimes (ISM on CT-TC) in 2002 following recommendations provided by ARF senior officials for the future direction of the ARF. As an effective regional counter-terrorism strategy requires comprehensive cooperative policy among states, including not only law enforcement but also development policies and civil-military cooperation, the 2007 ISM on CT-TC expanded the agenda for possible cooperation among states,⁶¹ and now includes bio-terrorism, bio-security, cyber-crime and cyber-terrorism.⁶²

Admittedly, institutional progress has been limited. Compared with the regional network led by the United States, ASEAN's capabilities are still weak, as shown in the case of the 2004 core group activities after the Indian Ocean tsunami. Joint operations such as the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) and *Cobra Gold*, environmental protection partnership of "the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate," and US PACOM's program of "Pacific Partnership" for humanitarian and civic assistance illustrate clear differences in capabilities. Furthermore, due to its noninterference principle, it is difficult for ASEAN member states to enhance cooperation even in nontraditional security fields. For example, the Myanmar government did not accept medical staff from developed countries, such as the United States and Japan, after Cyclone Nargis, which delayed relief operations. Also, despite ASEAN's effort to improve counter-terrorism cooperation, it is mainly on a bilateral basis.⁶³ Since terrorist activities by groups such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines, Islamic separatist movements, including the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) in southern Thailand, and Jemma Islamiya (JI) in Indonesia, which used to be active at regional level, are at the national level, it is difficult to develop a common perception of terrorist groups.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ ASEAN Secretariat, "ASEAN Efforts to Counter Terrorism," at <<http://www.aseansec.org/14396.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.

⁶⁰ ASEAN Secretariat, "Joint Communiqué of the 36th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting," June 16-17, 2003, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/14880.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010; ASEAN Secretariat, *Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters*, Nov. 29, 2004; ASEAN Secretariat, "ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism," Jan. 13, 2007, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/19250.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.

⁶¹ Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, "ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)," at <http://www.globalct.org/resources_factSheets_arf.php>. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010/

⁶² ARF Unit, "Co-Chairs' Summary Report of the Seventh ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime," May 4-7, 2009; ASEAN Secretariat, "Chairman's Statement 17th ASEAN Regional Forum,"

⁶³ David Martin Jones and Michael Smith, "Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Summer 2007), pp. 172-174.

⁶⁴ In Thailand, there has been political struggle of minority Muslims in the southern, which aims at gaining independence from Thailand. In Malaysia, Islam is the official religion and its political emphasis is on economic development, so that Malaysia has created a moderate Islam majority (although *Jemma Islamiya* (JI: regional terrorist groups which used to have a strong strategic connection with *al Qaeda*) was in Malaysia to plan attacks in Indonesia), and it is not willing to provoke

These weaknesses notwithstanding, ASEAN is a useful framework to promote capacity building for managing nontraditional security issues, and it could provide opportunities for strategic cooperation in Southeast Asia and beyond. Also, as the ASEAN ERAT in 2008 illustrates, ASEAN could provide assistance to member states that are too sensitive of sovereignty infringement to cooperate with other actors. Furthermore, ASEAN member states' functional capabilities are evolving, as shown by Indonesia's counter-terrorism operations conducted by the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) and Densus-88 with the help of Australia and the United States. In this sense, limited capacity and development creates the expectation among regional powers that there is room to influence ASEAN member states.

Regardless of which factor has contributed the most to change in the ASEAN Way or which country has contributed the most to increasing ASEAN's ability to manage nontraditional security issues, external actors sense that there is room to influence ASEAN so they become involved in ASEAN's activities. ASEAN is not very susceptible to external influence, however. One of the reasons that its decision-making process remains slow is that member states regard institutional solidarity as a way of attaining international status that cannot be gained individually. Diverse political systems and different level of economic development oblige ASEAN to maintain noninterference and consensus decision-making principles to promote solidarity. Yet, if ASEAN sticks to those principles, it becomes more difficult for regional powers, especially the United States and China, because they also need to consider the amount of diplomatic resources they can provide to ASEAN. Therefore, with its role of leading East Asian regionalism, ASEAN needs to be seen as a "*quasi-political power vacuum*," and thus regional powers compete for political influence in ASEAN.

Expectations toward ASEAN: Regional Powers' Views

Given ASEAN's political attractiveness, the question is: which state is focusing on which ASEAN framework to increase its influence with what resources? This section examines views of ASEAN and institutional preferences of the United States, China, US allies (Japan and South Korea), and latecomers (India and Australia).

The United States

The fundamental view of the East Asian security system in the US continues to be that of the Cold War: US bilateral alliances prevail. Since the 1995 East Asian Strategic Report (EASR) was published, the United States has taken a position that its bilateral alliances and multilateral frameworks are complementary on the assumption that bilateral

its Muslim society by a strong counter-terrorism policy. In Indonesia, the government faces a political dilemma: fighting Muslim extremism is difficult because a majority of people belong to Islam. In Singapore, the government has been very sensitive to terrorist attacks and is eager to openly cooperate with the United States because such attacks are highly likely to create economic devastation in a small-sized country. Due to these differing national interests, it is difficult for Southeast Asian countries to cooperate with each other in counter-terrorism. And while China has a terrorist threat from the ETIM (East Turkestan Islamic Movement), its objective is not to overturn the Chinese government, but to gain independence from China. Therefore, Northeast Asian counter-terrorism perceptions differ from those in Southeast Asian. Interview and research conducted in July 2008 by author.

alliance systems are the foundation of East Asian security and stability.⁶⁵ As the 2010 *National Security Strategy* shows, the United States constantly updates its alliances to manage global security issues such as regional security, proliferation of WMDs, terrorism, climate change, and cybersecurity. Moreover, to tackle a particular issue, the United States utilizes ad hoc arrangements, such as the Six-Party Talks for the Korean Peninsula and PSI for nonproliferation, rather than institutionalized forums.⁶⁶

This is the basis upon which the United States engages regional multilateral institutions.⁶⁷ The principle of its engagement is that East Asia maintains “open” regionalism. Historically, the United States has blocked multilateral frameworks that excluded the United States, as in the case of the East Asian Economic Caucus in 1990 and the Asian Monetary Fund in 1997. Considering China’s increasing influence, multilateralism in East Asia that excludes the US has the potential to create a stronger regional bloc to reduce US influence in the region. Yet, it did not block ASEAN+3 in 1997 or the EAS in 2005 as their political intentions are unclear, but not necessarily hostile to the United States, and their functional capabilities are still low.⁶⁸ Thus, as Cossa argues, while closely watching the development of East Asian regionalism, the United States does not oppose Asian regionalism as long as it remains open.⁶⁹

During the Bush administration, the United States attempted to institutionalize the Six-Party Talks as a Northeast Asian security mechanism. Condoleezza Rice argued that five parties agreed on a Chapter VII resolution in the UN Security Council against the 2006 North Korean nuclear test, and the Six-Party Talks intended to “institutionalize [these] habits of cooperation through the establishment of a Northeast Asian Peace and Security Mechanism.”⁷⁰ Although it is doubtful that the Six-Party Talks created a “habit of cooperation” among five members and Rice did not play a pivotal role in foreign policy decision-making in the second term of the Bush administration, this intention was reflected in the creation of the working group on a Northeast Asian Peace and Security Mechanism within the Six-Party Talks in 2007. However, political momentum for this initiative diminished when the talks stalled due to the deteriorating situation, including the second North Korean nuclear test in 2009.⁷¹

Currently, the United States pursues an institutional hedging policy in East Asia. On the one hand, the United States shows commitment to ASEAN-led institutions by focusing

⁶⁵ Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, (Feb. 1995), p. 3. pp. 12-13; The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, (Dec. 1999), pp. 34-37; The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Sept. 2002), pp. 26-28; The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Mar. 2006), pp.40-42; The White House, *National Security Strategy* (May, 2010), p. 40 and pp. 43-44.

⁶⁶ Ralph Cossa, “Evolving U.S. Views on Asia’s Future Institutional Architecture,” in Green and Gill, p. 34.

⁶⁷ Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks on Regional Architecture in Asia: Principles and Priorities,” Honolulu, Jan. 12, 2010, at <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/135090.htm>>. Accessed July 27, 2010; Ralph Cossa, “Evolving U.S. Views on Asia’s Future Institutional Architecture,” in Green and Gill, p. 34.

⁶⁸ The EAS insists it will be an open institution. See, the 2005 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asian Summit.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁷⁰ Condoleezza Rice, “Rethinking the National Interest: American Realism for a New World,” *Foreign Affairs*, (July/Aug. 2008).

⁷¹ Sheila Smith said that it was not clear if there is “anyone in policy circles who would advocate a Northeast Asian formal mechanism.” See Jaysree Bajoria, “Interview with Sheila Smith: Security in Northeast Asia,” Council on Foreign Relations, Feb. 1, 2010, at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/21342/security_in_northeast_asia.html>. Accessed July 27, 2010.

on two institutions: ARF and EAS.⁷² Despite restrictions on ARF membership (and the absence of Taiwan), its slow process of consensus decision-making, and the difficulties with discussions of traditional security issues, the United States has supported this initiative and appreciated its institutional emphasis on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, including civil-military disaster relief exercises.⁷³ Considering that the United States cannot enter the ASEAN+3 process, where China is said to set the agenda in its favor,⁷⁴ the EAS is the only venue where the United States can directly influence the process managed by ASEAN. Indeed, after signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 2009, which was the last requirement for the United States to join the EAS, the United States was invited to join the summit from 2011 and Secretary Clinton is planning to attend the EAS as an observer in 2010.⁷⁵ Moreover, it encourages the EAS to move toward a “foundational security and political institution.”⁷⁶ On the other hand, the United States makes continuous efforts to revitalize APEC, in which it has a leading role in agenda shaping, and it will host the 2011 meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii. According to Clinton, APEC is vital in the “economic front.”⁷⁷ In this sense, the United States now attempts to use two institutions as a core of political-security and economic cooperation in East Asia. Although it is unclear how the United States contributes to each process, the United States aims at widening policy options by showing commitments and it is evaluating whether ASEAN can continue to be a “driving force” and which should be “defining regional institutions” in the future.⁷⁸

China

China’s position on ASEAN’s role in regional political and security frameworks shifted from opposition in the early 1990s to support in the late 1990s to disappointment in the mid-2000s. In 1994, when the ARF was established, China was concerned about the possibility of ASEAN’s use of multilateralism to constrain China’s behavior and the internationalization of territorial disputes in the South China Sea.⁷⁹ Given its preference for a bilateral approach to the security issues, China was skeptical about the ARF’s intentions.

However, its attitude changed during the 1997/1998 Asian financial crisis. While currencies of Southeast Asian countries were significantly devalued, China, which competed with ASEAN states over exports and foreign direct investment, did not devalue its currency in an effort to increase its competitiveness.⁸⁰ Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand

⁷² Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks on Regional Architecture in Asia: Principles and Priorities,” Jan. 12, 2010, at <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/135090.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 3, 2010.

⁷³ Cossa, p. 41; ASEAN Secretariat, “Chairman’s Statement: The First Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum,” July 25, 1994; Clinton, “Remarks on Regional Architecture in Asia.”

⁷⁴ Interview with Ernest Bower, Senior Adviser and Director, Southeast Asia Program at Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 8, 2010.

⁷⁵ Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks at Press Availability,” July 23, 2010, at <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/07/145095.htm>>. Accessed July 27, 2010; Hillary Clinton, “Remarks on United States Foreign Policy,” Sept. 8, 2010, at <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/09/146917.htm>>. Accessed Sept. 17, 2010.

⁷⁶ Clinton, “Remarks on United States Foreign Policy.”

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Clinton, “Remarks on Regional Architecture in Asia.”

⁷⁹ Wu Xinbo, “Chinese Perspectives on Building an East Asian Community in the Twenty-first Century,” in Green and Gill, p. 56.

⁸⁰ Catherine Ong, “Yuan devaluation seen as Asia’s biggest threat,” *Business Times*, May 9, 1998; “China: Devaluation not an Option to Stimulate Growth, Official Says,” *Xinhua News Agency*, Sept. 29, 1998.

and Singapore, appreciated China's restraint in dealing with the crisis.⁸¹ From 1997 until 2005, China actively supported ASEAN's multilateralism, especially ASEAN+3.

Nonetheless, when the EAS was established, China's political enthusiasm about ASEAN began to diminish. Although China saw the establishment of the EAS as a way to upgrade ASEAN+3 as the main vehicle for an East Asian community, the EAS membership expanded to include Australia, India, and New Zealand, and its host was limited to ASEAN member states.⁸² China understands the US position on East Asian regionalism and that exclusion of the United States and an increase in China's influence in multilateral institutional frameworks in East Asia would heighten political tensions between East Asian states and the United States.⁸³ Since China recognized that the United States was militarily and economically indispensable to the region, it saw open regionalism as being best for the region. When Japanese Prime Minister Hatoyama introduced his idea of an "East Asian community," China assured the United States that such a community would not exclude the United States.⁸⁴ However, including regional great powers in the EAS reduces China's influence in the forum, and increasing the number of participants makes agenda-setting more difficult. As ASEAN contemplates expansion of the EAS to include the United States and Russia, China said that it respects the ASEAN consensus on the EAS,⁸⁵ which suggests a relative loss of enthusiasm in comparison with 2005. Thus, the deflating of Beijing's institutional design for the EAS made China focus instead on ASEAN+3.

China is increasingly frustrated at ASEAN's slowness, while not denying the utility of ASEAN-led multilateral frameworks. According to US and Chinese scholars, China is "losing interest in community building in East Asia."⁸⁶ One scholar argues that while China endorses ASEAN's leadership in East Asian community building, ASEAN should not be the *only* driving force for such an effort.⁸⁷ China's agreement to institutionalize Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Cooperation in 2007 illustrates this point. Still, Chinese scholars point out that ASEAN frameworks are still useful for China to shape ASEAN perceptions and check fears of China's rise. Thus, China's strategy toward ASEAN has shifted: it has lowered expectations of ASEAN and now attempts to strengthen other frameworks.

US Allies: Japan and South Korea

Japan and South Korea currently have the same stance toward ASEAN-led institutions: while their security priority is to strengthen their bilateral alliances with the

⁸¹ "Chuan urged China to be active in Asia," *NATION*, Apr. 29, 1999; Barry Porter, "Anson Chan tells Singapore yuan, HK dollar will not be cut," *South China Morning Post*, Aug. 15, 1998; Xinbo, p. 57.

⁸² Xinbo, p. 59.

⁸³ Xinbo, p. 64.

⁸⁴ Interview with Bonnie Glaser, Senior Fellow, Freeman Chair in China Studies, and Senior Associate, Pacific Forum at Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 27, 2010.

⁸⁵ Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Expanded East Asia Summit: US-China rivalry in ASEAN," *The Brunei Times*, July 27, 2010.

⁸⁶ Although explanations for why China has lost enthusiasm for the EAS vary (e.g., disappointment with the EAS, ASEAN's slow decision-making process, and the EU economic crisis caused by Greece), there is a consensus supporting the institution. Interview with Bonnie Glaser, Senior Fellow at Center for Strategic and International Studies, and professors from Chinese universities, on May 27, 2010.

⁸⁷ Emphasis added. Interview with Wu Xinbo, Professor at Fudan University on May 27, 2010.

United States, they are willing to engage ASEAN-led institutions, especially the EAS, although their position toward ASEAN has evolved.

As Japan's attempts to establish the Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) in 1997 indicate, Tokyo welcomed regional mechanisms that could respond to economic uncertainty. After the AMF was opposed by the United States and China, Japan has tried to create other mechanisms such as the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI) on the basis of the Miyazawa Initiative, which allows bilateral swaps among ASEAN+3 member states. However, as China's enthusiasm toward ASEAN+3 grew, Japan became more cautious about the framework and attempted to link its principles with universal values, including democracy and human rights, despite its acknowledgement of the difficulty involved.⁸⁸ The turning point for Japan's diplomacy was the establishment of the EAS in 2005. Since the East Asian Summit was a long-term objective of the ASEAN+3 according to reports from the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) and the East Asia Study Group (EASG),⁸⁹ establishing the EAS in addition to ASEAN+3 even though they have the same membership was difficult to understand given the fact that the modality, agenda, and division of labor were unclear and that such a framework would raise concerns from the United States. Thus, Japan supported inclusion of Australia, New Zealand, and India as democratic members of the EAS.⁹⁰ Japan has since focused on development of the EAS rather than ASEAN+3, which was indicated by the *Nikai* initiatives in 2006 to foster the Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA) and establishment of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA).⁹¹ In 2010, Japan endorsed US and Russian membership in EAS. In short, since its security is embedded in the US-Japan alliance, Japan focuses on fostering economic cooperation and creation of common values, such as human rights and democracy, in ASEAN-led frameworks, especially the EAS. Despite its low expectations of ASEAN, ASEAN-led frameworks can be a useful tool to check China, and Tokyo regards ASEAN as a driving force for East Asian community building efforts because there is no alternative.

For South Korea, expectations of ASEAN-led frameworks fluctuate significantly since Seoul's strategic focus is to maintain or strengthen the US-ROK alliance due to its preoccupation with the Korean Peninsula issues. Although there has yet to be a national consensus on East Asian regionalism led by ASEAN,⁹² South Korea also sees a combination of alliances and ASEAN-led multilateralism as the best way to assure regional stability. Yet, this is still conditional: as long as multilateral frameworks do not constrain the alliance, South Korea is eager to cooperate with other states. If the United States is politically concerned about a regional framework, South Korea tends to remain silent. Accordingly,

⁸⁸ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, "Issue Papers prepared by the Government of Japan," June 25, 2004, at <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/issue.pdf>>. Accessed July 29, 2010.

⁸⁹ According to the EAVG, "The Vision Group calls for the evolution of the annual summit meetings of ASEAN+3 into the East Asian Summit." According to EASG, "An EAS is desirable long-term objective, but it must be part of an evolutionary process that builds on the substantive comfort levels of the existing ASEAN+3 framework." See East Asia Vision Group, "Towards an East Asia Community: Region of Peace, Prosperity and Progress," *East Asian Vision Group Report*, (Oct. 2001), p.17, at <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/report2001.pdf>>. Accessed July 29, 2010; East Asia Study Group, *Final Report of the East Asia Study Group*, (Nov. 2002), p. 59, at <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/pmv0211/report.pdf>>. Accessed July 29, 2010.

⁹⁰ Interview with Rizal Sukma, Executive Director at CSIS, Jakarta.

⁹¹ Fukushima Akiko, "Japan's Perspective on Asian Regionalism," in Green and Gill, p.109.

⁹² Lim Wonhyuk, "Regional Multilateralism in Asia and the Korean Question," in Green and Gill, p. 90.

South Korean attitudes toward ASEAN are reactive, and its relationship with ASEAN is characterized as social and economic cooperation in such fields as trade, finance, development, and people exchanges.

In the early 1990s, South Korea attempted to improve relations with neighboring countries by normalizing relations with Russia in 1991 and China in 1992 as well as by concluding the 1991 Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation (ARNE). Though South Korea had the first ASEAN-ROK dialogue in 1993 after the ROK became a full ASEAN Dialogue Partner in 1991, its relationship was defined almost exclusively by economic and social cooperation, such as trade and financial cooperation and technological transfer.⁹³

A real shift came after the 1997/1998 Asian financial crisis. When ASEAN formed ASEAN+3 in response to the crisis, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung took the initiative in 1998 to form a study group, which became the East Asia Vision Group, to expand cooperation among ASEAN+3 states. Although the range of cooperation within ASEAN+3 was limited, South Korea showed a willingness to create a regional mechanism to foster cooperation. Even before the EAVG final report came out, South Korea agreed to strengthen a regional framework, ASEAN+3, to undertake the “Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation” in 1999.⁹⁴ During the 2000s, South Korea increased trade with ASEAN states and signed the TAC in 2004 to become a member of EAS. Yet, since its focus was economic cooperation and development, South Korea preferred to use ASEAN+3 to foster regional cooperation.

Even after the Lee Myung-bak administration came to power and articulated the concept of “Global Korea” to define its role in East Asia and beyond, its focus remains economic and development cooperation. Nonetheless, South Korea is considering shifting its focus from ASEAN+3 to EAS. One senior official from South Korean government argued that “East Asia” was not ASEAN and given the roles Australia and India play, South Korea would pay more attention to the EAS but not at the expense of other regional forums. He also added that the EAS should include more members, such as the United States and Russia.⁹⁵ Although South Korea has not made a decision, its posture is tilting toward the EAS, which corresponds to the US focus for East Asian regional frameworks.

Latecomers: Australia and India

In contrast to Japan and South Korea, whose geographical proximity and strong economic ties have meant that they have been involved in East Asian community building from an early stage, Australia and India are relative newcomers to this political movement. Both tend to see their involvement in East Asian regionalism more as connections with other regional powers, such as China, Japan, South Korea, and the United States.

⁹³ ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN-Republic of Korea”, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/11405.htm>>. Accessed July 29, 2010.

⁹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, “Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation,” Nov. 28, 1999, at <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/pmv9911/joint.html>>. Accessed July 29, 2010.

⁹⁵ Interview with Choi Jong Moon, Director General for ASEAN, South Asian and Pacific Affairs at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, South Korea, May 30, 2010.

Australia is not much concerned about the role of ASEAN, but it closely watches US behavior toward East Asia. It was closely linked to the United Kingdom prior to World War II and the United States afterward, and was never identified as an Asian state. Even though Australia joined the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954, the organization was never recognized as a regional organization. Because of the lack of institutions in East Asia during the Cold War, Australia did not have strong political ties with Asian states. Consequently, Australia has emphasized ties with the United States and trans-Pacific community building rather than East Asian regionalism. This is illustrated by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's concept of the "Asia-Pacific Community," which emphasized the trans-Pacific nature of community building rather than the narrower nature of an East Asian community.⁹⁶

Establishment of APEC in 1989 was the turning point for Australia's approach to East Asia. It was the first multilateral Track-1 forum where Asia-Pacific states held dialogues on economic cooperation, and due to its contribution to the establishment of APEC, Australian prime ministers during the 1990s, including Hawke, Keating, and Howard, all supported APEC activities, while opposing the 1997 ASEAN+3 framework.⁹⁷ However, while APEC contributed to economic cooperation, such as the 1994 Bogor Declaration, its inability to effectively respond to the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the expansion of agendas to include security objectives, such as counter-terrorism and nonproliferation, reduced institutional focus, resulting in member states' loss of interest in the forum.

This trend is gradually changing after establishment of the EAS and Australia's attainment of membership. Admittedly, Australia did not consider the EAS a significant framework at first since the EAS does not yet include the United States.⁹⁸ Australia does not want "growth in the EAS to be at the expense of the APEC Leaders' Meetings, but in addition to them."⁹⁹ At the same time, Australia began to focus on China's and India's rise,¹⁰⁰ and Prime Minister Rudd started to focus on regional multilateralism by proposing the "Asia-Pacific Community." Although new Prime Minister Julia Gillard's regional policy has not been formulated,¹⁰¹ the US is expected to participate in EAS from 2011. If this happens, then EAS members would consist of ASEAN, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, and the United States, which is what Rudd envisioned in his Asia-Pacific Community, and might alter Australia's institutional preference regarding APEC.

⁹⁶ According to Kevin Rudd, the concept of an Asia-Pacific Community has two characteristics: first, a transpacific nature—a community includes the entire Asia-Pacific region, which includes the United States, Japan, China, India, Indonesia, and the other states in the region; and second, a comprehensive nature—it can "engage in the full spectrum of dialogue, cooperation and action on economic political matters and future challenges related to security." Rudd did not deny that a new regional institution would be created for an Asia-Pacific Community. "Full text of Kevin Rudd's speech to the Asia Society," *The Australian*, June 5, 2008, at <<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/full-text-of-kevin-rudds-speech/story-e6frgczf-111116541962>>. Accessed July 29, 2010.

⁹⁷ Greg Sheridan, "Australia's Pragmatic Approach to Asian Regionalism," in Green and Gill, pp. 159-162.

⁹⁸ Go Ito and Joel Rathus, "Australia's 'Middle Power' Strategy toward Asian Regionalism," *International Relations (Kokusai Seiji)*, Vol. 158, (Dec. 2009), p. 128.

⁹⁹ Sheridan, p. 166;

¹⁰⁰ Department of Defense, Australia, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, (2009), pp. 32-33.

¹⁰¹ While Prime Minister Gillard had no plan to significantly alter Australia's foreign policy, she mentioned that it was unlikely to see the movement for an Asia Pacific Community. See Peter Hartcher, "Gillard rejects Rudd's Asia vision," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 5, 2010, at <<http://www.smh.com.au/national/gillard-rejects-rudds-asia-vision-20100704-zvzk.html>>. Accessed July 29, 2010.

India's political enthusiasm for East Asian regionalism is embedded in the strategic calculation to balance China, which began in the 2000s. Previously, its political sensitivity about territorial integrity, especially Kashmir, and the rise of a potential regional competitor in South Asia, obliged India to consider that joining multilateral frameworks might weaken its position by undermining its leadership in the region and lead to the internationalization of territorial disputes.¹⁰² Therefore, the only regional framework that India joined was the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), established in 1985 by Bangladesh and whose charter excluded political and security issues. Aligned with the Soviet Union, India's reactive attitude to multilateral institutions lasted until the end of the Cold War.

In the post-Cold War era, China's rising status created incentives for India to engage East Asia both militarily and economically. Although India does not hold membership in APEC or ASEM, it attempted to strengthen SAARC to pursue negotiations for a free-trade agreement, while strengthening economic ties with ASEAN.¹⁰³ In the 2000s, this trend became stronger. While concluding an FTA with Thailand in 2003 and the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement with Singapore in 2005, India attempted to establish military and security linkages with Asian states as endorsed by the 2003 bilateral defense cooperation agreement with Singapore, the 2003 ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, India's 2006 decision on procurement of *USS Trenton* and C-130s from the United States, and the 2007 US-Japan-India trilateral naval exercise. India also joined the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) as a founding member in 2002.

These efforts culminated in India's status as a founding member of EAS in 2005. India "embarked on a purposeful diplomatic campaign within ASEAN to secure an invitation" and gained support from Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore for its membership despite China's intention to exclude India.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, from India's perspective, ASEAN is a useful tool to balance China, even though its institutional power is limited and it is necessary to have linkages with other regional powers, especially the United States.

Table 5: Regional Powers' Preference toward Regional Institutions (1990-2010)

Year	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
US	APEC	APEC	APEC	APEC/ 6PT	APEC/EAS
China	<i>Bilateral</i>	<i>Bilateral</i>	APT	APT	APT/ Trilateral
Japan	APEC	ARF	APT	APT/ EAS	EAS
South Korea	-	-	APT	APT	EAS
Australia	APEC	APEC	APEC	APEC	APEC/EAS
India	<i>Bilateral</i>	SAARC	SAARC	EAS	EAS

¹⁰² C. Raja Mohan, "India and the Asian Security Architecture," in Green and Gill, p. 130.

¹⁰³ India became ASEAN's full dialogue partner in 1992. ASEAN Secretariat, "ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations," at <<http://www.aseansec.org/14802.htm>>. Accessed July 30, 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Mohan, p. 132.

In sum, as Table 5 shows, regional powers' views of ASEAN and their strategic preferences regarding ASEAN-led institutions change. And while their fundamental reasons differ, South Korea, Australia, and India consistently focus on ties with the United States and they closely monitor the US posture toward ASEAN-led institutions. While Japan holds a similar position, Tokyo is more willing to shape ASEAN-led institutions by taking initiatives to link its principles to international institutions, such as the United Nations. Also, while US involvement in ASEAN-led institutions depends on the administration's preference and the global situation, China's eagerness to shape ASEAN-led institutions is waning, and it looks set to shift focus to the Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Framework.

Given these trends, regional powers' expectations of ASEAN are relatively low because of its limited capability to produce results, and a belief that the key regional player is still the United States. The reason that many regional powers prefer the EAS to other ASEAN-led institutions and see potential for its future is the recent US willingness to commit to East Asian community building efforts as well as its potential membership. In this sense, ASEAN as a "driving force" or sitting in the "driver's seat" may be a misnomer. It is becoming a regional "structure" that provides rules and principles to constrain actors' behavior rather than a regional "actor" that sits in the "driver's seat," and actors are regional powers that have a free will in such a structure.

Policy Recommendations for ASEAN

ASEAN has drawn regional powers to engage its frameworks. Problems, however, stem from its slow decision-making process and lack of effectiveness, which leads regional powers to spend fewer diplomatic resources on ASEAN activities. As a result, regional powers have begun to lower expectations for ASEAN. Although new mechanisms, such as an expanded EAS and ADMM *plus*, could focus regional powers' attention on ASEAN in the short-term, regional powers are likely to be reluctant to spend diplomatic resources on ASEAN unless it produces outcomes.

Indeed, even if ASEAN loses its centrality to regional institutions, there are other ways to achieve its other three objectives – ensuring US involvement in East Asia, hedging China's rise, and increasing regional resiliency. US involvement can be ensured by strengthening bilateral ties with allies, including Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, and to lesser extent Singapore and Indonesia. Hedging China's rise can be achieved by US bilateral alliances and trilateral frameworks, such as the Japan-China-ROK and potential US-Japan-China trilateral frameworks. Likewise, regional resiliency can also be promoted and led by Japan-China-ROK trilateral cooperation as this group possesses more material capabilities.

Nevertheless, relations among regional powers remain uncertain. US-China relations are more negatively perceived due to differing perceptions of issues, such as environmental protection and nuclear strategies, although US expectations for improving relations with China were high in 2009 before the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue. Also, US relations with its allies are not static. While relations between the United States and Japan were relatively stable before a DPJ government assumed power in September 2009, those

relations became less certain because of the debate over the *Futenma* issue. It should not be assumed that the US-led security layer is immutable, and this is why regional powers cannot entirely rely on the United States for every aspect of regional security and politics.

In this regard, ASEAN's centrality is desirable for regional stability because it creates another layer of political and security engagement that regional powers can use to hedge against instability. Its existence provides regional powers with more diplomatic options in times of crisis. From a regional power perspective, supporting ASEAN's centrality also provides opportunities to show "benign" political intentions, which may reduce tensions. From an ASEAN member's perspective, it can shape regional politics collectively better than an individual state can. Therefore, ASEAN will likely continue to play a role in East Asian regionalism.

It is unclear whether ASEAN can continue playing a central role in East Asia, however. ASEAN serves as the most useful diplomatic tool when both the United States and China engage it, but since the establishment of Japan-China-ROK trilateral cooperation and increasingly networked US bilateral alliances, it has become more difficult for ASEAN to keep its current role. This is well illustrated by the fluctuation in diplomatic attention that regional powers pay to ASEAN over the past two decades. To overcome these obstacles, ASEAN needs to strengthen its external relations and undertake internal consolidation in order to maintain institutional viability.

1) Vision Statement

1. Release Joint Statement in Asia-Pacific Cooperation in 2011 through EAS

The year 2011 is the year in which the United States and Russia are expected to join the East Asia Summit. Although this does not reduce the importance of the ASEAN+3 framework, the EAS will have potential to become a comprehensive framework for East Asia. Since ASEAN is a driving force for this forum, the association should produce a vision statement for East Asian regional architecture, which is similar to the 2007 Second Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation.¹⁰⁵ Since the demarcation of the EAS and ASEAN+3 is not yet clear, it can make the EAS a foundation of an Asia-Pacific community and the ASEAN+3 a foundation of an East Asian community. In this way, ASEAN should aim at creating institutional "lock-in" of China and the US to prevent them from losing interest in ASEAN frameworks, which may water down both frameworks.

2) External Relations

1. Institutionalize the East Asia Summit

ASEAN should 1) set up an EAS unit in the ASEAN Secretariat; 2) expand its agenda for security and strategic issues by linking with the ADMM-plus; and 3) create a co-chair system that includes one ASEAN and one non-ASEAN member to give all members "ownership."

¹⁰⁵ The joint declaration comprehends political-security, economic, and social cooperation among ASEAN+3 states. See ASEAN Secretariat, "Second Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation: Building on the Foundations of ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation," Nov. 20, 2007, at <<http://www.aseansec.org/21099.htm>>. Accessed Aug. 25, 2010.

No matter how “East Asia” is defined, the decision to expand EAS membership to include the United States and Russia means that regional powers, except China, are focusing on the EAS as the regional framework; ASEAN should utilize this opportunity to institutionalize the summit. This has three benefits: first, institutionalization can ensure US involvement in East Asia in the longer term, which can bring more resources together to enhance functional cooperation and check China’s rise; second, it can bring together almost all East Asian states, all regional powers, and ASEAN member states, which increases institutional legitimacy by including such Asian states as India and Myanmar; and third, the size of the forum is smaller than ARF and APEC, which reduces the collective action problem. Moreover, the *ADMM Plus*, which will be held in Hanoi in 2010, includes the same membership as the EAS. In this sense, the EAS can maintain ASEAN’s centrality in East Asian regionalism.

Unfortunately, the EAS has been politically marginalized since its inception because its institutional objectives, modality, and agendas are unclear. The agendas are likely to change yearly, and there is little follow-up as the secretariat has not been set up. However, ASEAN should take the above-mentioned three steps to consolidate EAS institutionalization.

2. Ensure China Continues Engaging EAS

ASEAN should keep engaging China through ASEAN-led institutions, especially the EAS. China lost its enthusiasm for the EAS when its membership included states from outside the ASEAN+3 and Beijing lost the chance to be a chair. However, co-chairpersonship for the EAS would increase China’s incentive to participate since it could have authority for agenda-setting. While ASEAN+3 can promote more functional cooperation among member states due to its limited membership, the EAS would be a suitable forum for China to socialize with other regional powers and shape regional perceptions. Thus, ASEAN should encourage China to be active in the EAS.

ASEAN should also persuade China that EAS membership is a good idea for political reasons, too. China would be seen as benign power if it complies with ASEAN-led institutions. This is because the power relationship between China and ASEAN has been asymmetric due to China’s increasing capabilities and it would be easy for other powers to assume that China would use its capability to coerce ASEAN to adopt its positions. This could help build trust among neighboring states, which has a positive effect on Beijing’s international image. ASEAN should keep engaging China by informing it of the benefits of participating in ASEAN-led institutions.

3) Internal Consolidation

1. Consolidate ASEAN’s Centrality for East Asian Regionalism

ASEAN should scrutinize the concept of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) and develop a future vision of this community. The current concept is merely a description of ASEAN as it is, and does not provide any future vision that ASEAN member states can aim toward. In this sense, Track II needs to be utilized: research institutions under ASEAN, ASEAN-ISIS, should provide a future vision of the APSC at ASEAN meetings,

especially the newly established ASEAN Political-Security Community Council.¹⁰⁶ ASEAN-ISIS should pursue joint research with +8 states – Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, China, Russia and the United States – by utilizing and expanding the framework of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) to make the most of their influence.

2. Modify the “ASEAN Way” in 2013

ASEAN should reform its decision-making system by building a “Consensus-Minus-One” process by establishing the “New ASEAN Way.” The current decision-making process has been based on the ASEAN Way, which nurtured the ASEAN identity. Reforming this method is likely to create political division among ASEAN member states. ASEAN may also face attempts by member states to withdraw from membership. In the case of human rights issues, Myanmar is likely to be the main problem. To hedge this risk, ASEAN should create a two-layered decision-making system. First, ASEAN should follow the consensus decision-making process. Second, if consensus is not achieved, ASEAN would take a “Consensus-Minus-One” process.¹⁰⁷ Article 20 of Chapter VII in the ASEAN Charter stipulates, “where consensus cannot be achieved, the ASEAN Summit may decide how a specific decision can be made.” Because the decision-making process is not explicitly stated, ASEAN has room to create a new norm for decision-making. This two-layered decision-making system will not seriously disrupt the tradition of the ASEAN Way. Thus, ASEAN should take the step to reform the “New ASEAN Way” of decision-making in 2013.¹⁰⁸

3. Strengthen Linkage with Global Norms

ASEAN should establish a human rights organization that cooperates with the United Nations and has authority to send recommendations to the ASEAN Summit. While ASEAN has attempted to follow the principles of the UN since its establishment in 1967, human rights issues are great political obstacles for ASEAN. Establishment of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) needs to be positively evaluated. As political pressure from Western states, such as the European Union and the United States, mounts, human rights violations committed by the ASEAN member states are likely to not only deteriorate relations between them, but also damage ASEAN’s international political credibility. To reduce that risk, ASEAN needs to link the AICHR with the United Nations to gain information and to have the authority to inform its assessment of situations and submit policy recommendations to the ASEAN Summit. Since human rights are critical to relations with the international community as well as Western states that have security links with ASEAN member states, neglecting these issues is counter-productive.

4. Expand the ASEAN Secretariat

ASEAN should coordinate and, where possible, consolidate the number of Track I and Track II conferences to increase their efficiency. While the numerous conferences promote socialization among state officials and policy elites and nurtures a sense of

¹⁰⁶ ASEAN created three ASEAN Community Councils: ASEAN Political-Security Council, ASEAN Economic Community Council, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council. These organs have the authority to submit reports and recommendations to the ASEAN Summit “on matters under its purview.” ASEAN, *ASEAN Charter*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷ ASEAN, *ASEAN Charter*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁸ Article 50 of ASEAN Charter says that it will review ASEAN Charter in 5 years after its entry into force, which is 2013. ASEAN Charter was fully ratified by member states in Oct. 2008.

community and identity among them, an excessive number of conferences would lead to “conference fatigue” and reduce productivity. Moreover, the ASEAN Secretariat has only about 130 professional staff to support over 1,000 ASEAN meetings annually, which exhausts human resources and hinders the effectiveness of the Secretariat.¹⁰⁹ Thus, ASEAN should coordinate and restructure its committee and conferences, which would not only increase its efficiency as well as save the cost of conferences, but also expanding the number of staff in the ASEAN Secretariat, especially the ASEAN Political-Security Department.

These recommendations are not comprehensive, and there are plenty of reforms ASEAN needs to take to maintain its centrality to East Asian regionalism. Given that ASEAN’s reform is likely to be incremental, it is necessary for ASEAN to fully utilize its evolutionary characteristics. Whenever reforms are possible, ASEAN should improve institutional functions while continuing to nurture East Asian regionalism. In order to contribute to a more stable environment in East Asia, ASEAN must keep moving forward.

¹⁰⁹ Currently, the ASEAN Secretariat has around 270 staff, yet not all organize ASEAN conferences. Conferences, such as ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus, ASEAN+3, and the East Asian Summit, are coordinate under the Political and Security Division, yet each division does not have enough staff.

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