



Nontraditional Security and Multilateralism in Asia: Reshaping the Contours of Regional Security Architecture?

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Over the last decade, the dynamics that define the regional security environment in Southeast Asia have changed dramatically. The hope of a more stable and peaceful Asia after the end of the Cold War, premised on the expectations that the geopolitical and security tensions brought on by the Cold War overlay would finally come to pass, were short-lived. Instead, the region is confronted with both traditional and new security challenges emerging from a host of transnational threats. Of late, there is growing recognition that new security challenges are proving to be more severe and more likely to inflict more harm to a greater number of people than conventional threats of interstate wars and conflicts.

These newly emerging threats are referred to as nontraditional security (NTS) threats, and they are defined as challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that arise primarily out of nonmilitary sources, such as climate change, cross-border environmental degradation and resource depletion, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking, and other forms of transnational crime.¹

Moreover, these NTS threats have common characteristics. They are mainly nonmilitary in nature, transnational in scope—neither domestic nor purely interstate, come with very short notice, and are transmitted rapidly due to globalization and communication revolution. As such, national solutions are rendered inadequate and would

require comprehensive (political, economic, and social) responses, as well as humanitarian use of military force.²

To be sure, NTS issues have direct implications on the overall security of states and societies in the region. The gravity of the problem can be seen in the way these transnational threats are now increasingly discussed not only in academic circles but also among policymakers in East Asia. These issues are also portrayed by officials as posing threats to the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, as well as to the well-being of their respective societies. As a consequence, policymakers in the region have had to rethink their security agendas and find new and innovative ways to address these new security challenges. These, in turn, have had profound implications for regional security cooperation among states in the region.

Against this new security environment, it is therefore timely to examine how Asia—particularly the East Asian region—is addressing the emerging security challenges through its various regional institutions, mechanisms, and relevant security arrangements. More importantly, it is crucial to analyze how these NTS threats are (re)shaping the institutional architecture in East Asia.

Changing Regional Institutional Landscape

We note that over the last decade, perceptible trends can be observed in East Asia, particularly in the way regional institutions like the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN + 3 (APT), and even the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) have responded to new security challenges. These significant developments can be briefly described as follows:

First, despite the perceived inertia of regional institutions in responding to security challenges, particularly during the period of the Asian financial crisis (1997-99), the picture has drastically changed, given that institutions like ASEAN Draft have since embarked on a number of ad hoc mechanisms to address a host of transnational threats that have confronted the region, post the 1997 crisis. These include regional mechanisms that address the threats of infectious diseases, transnational crimes and terrorism, natural disasters, and environmental pollution or haze.

Second, the varieties of regional mechanisms that have been established have resulted in creeping institutionalism within ASEAN, which has led to the creation of new institutional configurations such as the APT and, more recently, the East Asia Summit (EAS). These new institutional configurations have also generated different layers of regional efforts going beyond bilateral and plurilateral arrangements which had, until quite recently, been largely subregional in nature. This has significantly altered the contours of regional institutional architecture in Asia.

Third, while these regional efforts are aimed at building regional capacity to address different security challenges, the kinds of measures being adopted have gone beyond the usual process-oriented, confidence-building measures. Instead, many of the regional measures adopted are now geared toward problem-solving mechanisms to address NTS threats.

Thus, despite the perceived lack of institutional capacity of these regional institutions, the plethora of regional cooperative arrangements that have emerged appear to support the idea that regionalism in East Asia is robust as member states have responded to a wide range of new security threats.

As we take a closer look at how the regional institutional architecture is being changed, the key questions that we need to address are: (1) whether the current regional arrangements—now being

referred to as akin to new, second-generation types of regionalism that are characteristically more robust and involve closer and wider forms of cooperation—are indeed able to mitigate the new attendant instabilities and security challenges facing the region and (2) whether these new forms or layers of institutional arrangements allow for shifts in patterns of inter- and intrastate relations that bring with them new elite consensus on market regulation and dissemination of norms.

While many of these regional processes are of course still at an inchoate stage, one could nonetheless suggest that as NTS issues start to dominate the security agenda of states in the region, the robustness in regional processes, as seen in the evolving regional mechanisms and arrangements, would inevitably lead to a recalibration of existing institutions in order to ensure more effective responses to these challenges. This in turn could push regional actors toward deeper institutional commitments where member states are compelled to adopt more rules-based regimes in order to effect compliance and successful implementation of regional measures to enhance security cooperation in the region.

One can also argue that as regional mechanisms open spaces for other actors (nongovernmental organizations/civil society organizations, international organizations, and other external actors) to be involved in building and enhancing regional capacity to cope with NTS challenges, the nature of regional security cooperation is being redefined to pay more attention to issues of human security. These will inevitably create new tensions within and among states as they attempt to strike a tenuous balance between protecting state and regime security while promoting human security.

New Regionalism and the Emerging Security Challenges in East Asia

At the outset, it is important to note that despite growing concerns and doubts about the effectiveness of multilateralism in responding effectively to global and regional problems, one could argue that multilateralism does matter for states in East Asia. As demonstrated by East Asian states' support for the United Nations, there remains a shared and strong interest among states in the region to maintain and strengthen global institutions. With the emergence of NTS threats, the impetus for effective multilateralism has become

more urgent. Nowhere is this more salient than in the current trends to strengthen cooperation and deepen integration processes in East Asia through the existing regional frameworks.

For instance, since the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, ASEAN has undertaken a number of institutional “innovations” to better respond to a host of regional challenges. The latest is the 2003 Bali Concord II that announced the establishment of an ASEAN Community based on three pillars: the ASEAN Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Some observers have posited that this ongoing development is ASEAN’s attempt at moving beyond being a “nascent” security community to a “soft” security community. Similarly, the APT had formalized the framework for forging closer economic linkages between ASEAN and its three East Asian neighbors—China, Japan, and South Korea. This can be seen in its development of a regional financial mechanism—the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), which is a liquidity support facility designed to prevent another financial crisis and includes initiatives to develop a regional bond market. APT is also currently studying the possibility of adopting a common currency over the medium to long term. Beyond East Asia, the ARF and APEC have also introduced a number of measures to respond to different security challenges. This can be seen in the number of cooperative measures initiated to fight transnational crimes and terrorism, pandemics, and other threats. In the case of APEC, this has resulted in extending its mandate beyond economic cooperation to security cooperation.

These initiatives are driven by the broader objectives of building more capacity and coherence in regional efforts to address new regional challenges and, in the process, complement the global efforts of the United Nations and other international organizations to promote peace, human rights, and development. Indeed, if one were to go by the core definition of *multilateralism* to mean coordinated relations among three or more states “on the basis of certain principles of ordering relations among states,”³ then these emerging trends toward crafting new regional institutions are instructive in understanding attitudes toward multilateralism in East Asia and the evolving regional security architecture.

These emerging patterns of regional processes are now increasingly characterized as second-generation or “new” regionalism. They are new in that these institutional arrangements reveal expanded and *multidimensional* forms of interstate cooperation and integration, covering a wide range of areas from economic, political, security, to social and cultural aspects. A recent study on “new” regionalism describes it as a route that states could take to “[be able to] mediate the range of economic and social pressures generated by globalization.”⁴

The following analysis of four recent case studies will enable us to assess whether these new configurations of (regional) multilateral arrangements are adequate to address the new and emerging security challenges facing the region.

Infectious Diseases

Since the Asia-wide outbreak of the SARS virus in 2003, the threats from infectious diseases appear to have become more severe. As the SARS experience has shown in this era of globalization and regionalization, such types of infectious diseases have the capacity to detrimentally affect the security and well-being of all members of society and all aspects of the economy.⁵ This point was well-highlighted at the 2006 World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, with the release of the *Global Risks 2006* report. The report ranked pandemics and natural disasters among the highest in the list of risks currently confronting the international community. The study also concluded that despite the interplay of these multiple global risks and their combined ripple effects, which can be potentially devastating, “disaster planning and crisis management suffer from a number of shortcomings.”

Given that Asia has had a history of being the breeding ground for flu pandemics, the WEF report has therefore come at a critical time when an abundance of policy statements, studies, and other reports have been written, amidst a flurry of official and nonofficial meetings, which have altogether raised the urgency within and outside the region to finding a common approach to prevent the outbreak of a new and devastating pandemic. To be sure, the threat of infectious diseases is not a local problem, but a global concern. I argue therefore that for many developing states in the region, particularly in Southeast Asia, the burden of infectious diseases has reached a critical stage where innovation is needed to strengthen the capacity of public health management in the region.

In East Asia much of the information about pandemic preparedness, response, and capability of countries in the region is sketchy.⁶ As shown in recent experience with the SARS crisis, while Singapore and Hong Kong were able to deal with the health crisis in a reasonably effective manner, other countries like China and Vietnam experienced a range of challenges in coping with the problem. Aside from the complex problems faced by states at the national level, such as the lack of contingency planning and coordination among state agencies, there has also been very little institutionalized regional cooperation in the area of public health policy. It was really only after the SARS outbreak that some regional cooperative initiatives and mechanisms were proposed. At the ASEAN and APT level, these key initiatives include:

- the ASEAN Expert Group on Communicable Diseases
- the ASEAN Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Task Force
- the ASEAN + 3 Emerging Infectious Diseases Programme
- the Regional Framework for Control and Eradication of HPAI

Many of these collaborative programs focus on strengthening the national and regional capacity for disease surveillance and early response and strengthening the capacity to prepare for any pandemic. There are also other collaborative programs organized under the framework of the wider forums in the region—APEC and the EAS. Most of the measures outlined in these collaborative programs focus on, among others, strengthening of institutional capacities at national and regional levels to ensure effective and efficient implementation of avian influenza prevention, putting in place disease control programs and pandemic preparedness and response plans, and enhancing capacity-building in coping with a pandemic influenza. Other measures also include establishing information-sharing protocols among countries and multilateral organizations and effective, timely, and meaningful communication before or during a pandemic influenza outbreak.⁷

The nature of pandemic threats, however, has compelled ASEAN and other countries within and outside the region to get involved in order to effectively address the complexities of the problem. Hence, outside the East Asian regional framework, other dialogue partners of ASEAN

have been encouraged to provide more assistance in preventing the possibility of a pandemic outbreak. The United States, for instance, has been one of the major external actors that has taken a keen interest in this issue. It was one of the largest donors to the global avian flu fund that was set up at the 2006 Beijing conference, having pledged a total of US\$392 million to the total fund of US\$1.9 billion. Much of these funds had been allocated to the development of stockpiles of health supplies and international research.⁸ Moreover, through the APEC framework, the United States has initiated the establishment of a Regional Emerging Diseases Intervention (REDI) Center, in partnership with Singapore. Formally launched in 2003 after the SARS outbreak, REDI would assist Asian countries in “tracking, controlling, and researching emerging infections with appropriate resources and expertise.”⁹ It is envisaged that the REDI Center would be open to participation by other countries in the Asia-Pacific.

Despite the keen interest on pandemics in the region, one should note however that many of these proposed measures from ASEAN, APT, EAS, and APEC still need to be implemented. Hence it would be premature to give a detailed assessment of the effectiveness of these new regional mechanisms to address this NTS threat. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight some of the challenges faced by countries in the region in responding to a regional/global problem. Among the most obvious is the lack of resources allocated to improving public health systems at the domestic level. Given the prevalent condition of poor health infrastructure in many parts of the region, the national and regional capacities to respond to transnational health crises remain inadequate. In this regard, the region needs to consider a broader and more comprehensive strategy to prevent and contain the outbreak of infectious diseases. These would include, among others, focusing on key issues such as building credible and effective regional surveillance systems for monitoring infectious diseases, improving the poor state of health infrastructure in less-developed countries, and addressing the politics of crisis health management in the region.¹⁰

Take the first issue of building regional surveillance and disease control. It has been noted that since national capacities are still quite weak, more efforts should be made to improve national

and regional preparedness in containing pandemic outbreaks. A critical step in this direction is creating mechanisms for effective production and distribution of vaccines and other medicines. In this regard, it is worth noting that within ASEAN steps to develop a regionwide mechanism in rapid diseases control has begun with the first exercise held in Cambodia in late March 2007. The exercise, Panstop 2007, was coordinated by the ASEAN Secretariat with the help of the World Health Organization, together with the Japanese government and the Japan International Cooperation System. This simulation exercise, which involved test procedures to rush antiviral drugs and equipment to infected areas within a short time, was to be the first in the series of tests to be conducted in the Asia-Pacific region.¹¹

What this latest exercise has shown is that while there are several regional initiatives from different regional frameworks to address a pressing NTS issue like infectious diseases, it is often more effective if implementation starts at the subregional level. Where the bigger regional frameworks can work better is when efforts are streamlined and where complementarities can be built with other regional bodies in order for gaps to be identified and more interregional coordination can be undertaken.

Natural Disasters

Asia is a region where major natural disasters often occur. The December 2004 massive earthquake and tsunami illustrated the kind of devastation that natural disasters cause and the immensity of the tasks involved in undertaking disaster relief operations and in providing humanitarian assistance and post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation. Natural disasters generate complex emergencies that require urgent and coordinated responses from a broad range of state and nonstate actors.

Unfortunately, many states in Asia are least prepared to cope with these complex humanitarian emergencies. This gap was vividly revealed in the region's experience with the 2004 tsunami. The disaster certainly reflected the lack of any regional capacity to respond to disasters and to provide emergency relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Were it not for the humanitarian assistance provided by external partners like the United States, European Union, Australia, and Japan, plus a number of international aid agencies, the

impact of the humanitarian emergency could have been far more catastrophic.

Hence, in the aftermath of the tsunami, Southeast Asian countries held a number of meetings and agreed to enhance cooperation in disaster relief, including prevention and mitigation.¹² Specifically, ASEAN members agreed to mobilize additional resources to meet the emergency needs of tsunami victims. They also called upon the international community through the United Nations to convene an international pledging conference for sustainable humanitarian relief efforts and to explore the establishment of "standby arrangements" for other humanitarian relief efforts. ASEAN also called on donor countries—the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other financial institutions—to provide the necessary funds to support the rehabilitation and reconstruction programs in disaster-stricken areas.

But, post-tsunami, is the region doing enough to protect the security of its people? Aside from these demonstrations of regional solidarity, one could argue that the region needs to do more in the areas of prevention and mitigation by developing a more effective regional early warning system. It also needs to examine whether there is a shift in thinking in institutionalizing regional cooperation in disaster management. So far, there is the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX-05), which commenced in 2005.¹³ The simulation exercise is envisioned to be an annual exercise, bringing together several personnel and mobilizing light-to-medium equipment geared toward providing immediate humanitarian assistance to affected countries in times of natural disaster.

Beyond ASEAN, there are also other ad hoc exercises in disaster management being undertaken within the ARF framework. After the tsunami disaster in December 2004, the ARF ministers have decided to work together in emergency relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction, as well as prevention and mitigation efforts in addressing natural disasters.¹⁴ More significantly, at the July 2006 ARF Ministerial Meeting, officials from ARF countries, which includes the big powers like the United States, China, and Russia, have discussed the possibility of developing guidelines in improving civilian and military cooperation in humanitarian operations—i.e., natural disasters. This would involve developing standard operating procedures

on civilian-military cooperation in disaster relief operations and drawing up a database of military assets of ARF members for disaster relief.¹⁵ APEC, on the other hand, has established a Virtual Task Force (VTF) on Emergency Preparedness in 2005 to deal with disasters. The VTF is intended to strengthen coordination efforts in disaster relief and improve regional emergency and natural disaster management capability.¹⁶

As with other new measures that are being adopted to address new threats, it remains to be seen if and when many of these new regional mechanisms can be implemented; whether the existing ad hoc arrangements can indeed be sustained; and whether other preventive measures, especially at the domestic level, can be included. One could argue for instance that states in the region need not wait for calamity to strike before national and regional responses are switched to emergency mode. As images of natural disasters unfold, most recently in the case of the series of devastating floods in Indonesia and Malaysia in early 2007, the unfortunate lag in response time often results in unnecessary loss of lives and human misery. Hence, while regional efforts are being considered to improve disaster management, attention also needs to be focused on improving capacity at the national level. One could suggest therefore that countries in the region would need to examine their own capacity and perhaps rethink their own national strategies for disaster mitigation or risk reduction.¹⁷

Transnational Crime and Terrorism

The problem of transnational crime in East Asia is severe and consists primarily of the illicit trafficking of drugs, money laundering, piracy, arms smuggling, cyber crimes, and others. These types of crimes not only constitute threats to state security by undermining national authorities and the rule of law, they also threaten the security and well-being of individuals and societies. Addressing these complex problems therefore requires a transnational response. Yet regional cooperation in this area is often complicated by sensitive issues that impinge on domestic jurisdictions, such as the need to share information, extradition laws, and problems of corruption.¹⁸

Nevertheless, regional efforts in fighting transnational crime can already be seen on several fronts. At the ASEAN level, the regional mechanisms that have been established to handle this problem

include the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), ASEAN Chiefs of National Police (ASEANAPOL), and the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD). Their activities focus on the exchange of information, enhancing legal and law enforcement cooperation, training, institution-building, and collaboration with extramural actors.

ASEAN has also worked with its regional partners to enhance international cooperation in fighting transnational crime. One of the more significant regional arrangements in this area is the ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD). The ACCORD outlines work plans toward a drug-free region and identifies priority projects and other cooperative measures including the sharing of information and best practices (mutual learning). Communication networks have also been set up among specialized agencies to facilitate better regional coordination in combating the drug problem.¹⁹ In short, beyond the exhortatory injunctions about transnational crime, the ACCORD tries to complement domestic efforts against the illicit trafficking and abuse of drugs by establishing an institutional framework for cooperation. Its success, however, will of course depend on the actual implementation of its central pillars and action lines.

Against the “war on terrorism,” ASEAN members agreed to a Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, adopted at the 7th ASEAN Summit in 2001, which outlined several measures to fight terrorism. These included deepening cooperation among front-line law enforcement agencies in combating terrorism and sharing “best practices; enhancing information/intelligence exchange to facilitate the flow of information, in particular, on terrorists and terrorist organizations, their movement and funding, and any other information needed to protect lives, property, and the security of all modes of travel, and others.”²⁰ Moreover, under the framework of the ASEAN-US Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism on August 1, 2002, the ten members of the association, together with the United States, have committed themselves to improve intelligence-gathering efforts, strengthen capacity-building measures, and enhance mutual cooperation.²¹

As part of the continuing efforts to build capacity in fighting terrorism, three complementary institutions have also been established in Southeast Asia:

the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC); and the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok.²²

In response to this growing threat of piracy, particularly in the Straits of Malacca, which according to the International Maritime Bureau is the most piracy-infested channel in the world,²³ a trilateral arrangement among ASEAN's littoral states of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore (MALSINDO) was formed to conduct joint coordinated patrols along the Straits to beef up maritime security in the region. Since then, other ASEAN countries like Thailand and the Philippines, together with Japan, have joined in many of MALSINDO's training activities in antipiracy, antiterrorism, and coast guard patrols.

There is also the recently launched Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), which is the first government-to-government agreement to enhance the security of regional waters beyond Southeast Asia. The initiative, which was originally proposed by the Japanese prime minister in October 2001, aims to enhance multilateral cooperation among 16 regional countries—namely the ASEAN, plus Japan, China, Korea, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh—to combat sea piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region. The ReCAAP Agreement was finalized in November 2004 in Tokyo, and Singapore is the depository of the Agreement.²⁴

Poverty and Human Security

Unlike the other three NTS issues whose linkages to security threats are easier to fathom, the threats and insecurities brought on by poverty as a result of sudden economic downturn (e.g., the impact of the Asian financial crisis) are more difficult to capture. But the onslaught of the Asian financial crisis and its economic impact on many affected states were very devastating. It also brought on a host of problems across many facets of the security of states and societies, including ethnic conflict and violence.

Despite the discourse at the official level about building a regional community—be it an East Asian Community or ASEAN Community—there is a lot that needs to be done in translating these into more concrete terms in order to “promote

more inclusive and caring communities.”²⁵ One of these is to bridge the developing gaps among states in the region. It is ironic that in a region where one finds some of the world's fastest-growing economies, there are 700 million people who live on less than US\$1 a day. Thus the picture of a dynamic economic region is blighted by the fact that a majority of the world's poor is found in East Asia.

This is most visible when one compares the richer states (Japan, South Korea, and Singapore) with ASEAN's CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam). Indeed, within the ASEAN region, concerns have already been raised about the emergence of a “two-tiered ASEAN.” Similarly, wide economic gaps exist among the more developed states in Southeast Asia.²⁶

Regional efforts to address poverty and economic development have received more attention within the context of the ASEAN Community and through the Vientiane Plan of Action. For instance, ASEAN has adopted the Vientiane Integration Agenda that outlines specific areas and measures to narrow the development gap between the old and new members, albeit mainly in the economic sphere. These measures include both the strengthening of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration that explores modalities for more resource mobilization and social development programs that will support the national poverty reduction with regional advocacy efforts.²⁷ Resource mobilization under the AIA program is an important agenda here since the quantum of resources committed under this program, especially those coming from the “richer” countries in ASEAN, are relatively smaller compared with other ODA received by CLMV countries.

Moreover, an important agenda in the Bali Concord II is to provide effective safety nets for marginalized groups especially in times of economic downturn. This is also an issue that many nongovernmental organizations and civil society groups are advocating in the region through a social charter for ASEAN. This is a significant development especially in light of ASEAN's fledgling efforts at adopting an ASEAN Charter. So far, civil society groups like the ASEAN Trade Union Council have kept in step with official efforts in drafting the charter by also preparing their own draft of an ASEAN Social Charter that it presented to the ASEAN officials in December 2005. The Social Charter aims to promote common labor

standards in ASEAN that will include employment stability, promotion of health and safety, and just wages.²⁸

As far as the APT mechanisms are concerned, one should note the current developments of its liquidity support facilities under the CMI. On May 4, 2005, the APT finance ministers agreed to further strengthen the CMI by making it a more effective and disciplined framework for regional financial cooperation through a number of measures, including the integration and enhancement of APT economic surveillance mechanisms to enable early detection of financial irregularities and swift remedial policy actions, increasing the size of the available bilateral swap arrangement (BSAs) by up to 100 percent,²⁹ and improving the drawdown mechanism where the size of the swaps that could be withdrawn without the International Monetary Fund-supported program can be increased from the current 10 percent to 20 percent.³⁰ The measures outlined to enhance the CMI are important steps toward multilateralizing the CMI to enable all countries to pool their financial resources. What this means is that an enhanced CMI could eventually create a regional mechanism such as the Asian Monetary Fund that can then be used in the event of a financial crisis.

Looking Ahead

The preceding discussion set out to examine how regional institutions in East Asia have dealt with emerging regional security challenges, referred to as NTS issues. As discussed, these innovative institutional responses have led to an evolving regional architecture that presents significant characteristics. These are summarized as follows:

- First, the variety of regional mechanisms that were established to address a number of transnational NTS threats, albeit ad hoc in some cases, have resulted in creeping institutionalism within ASEAN and has led to the creation of new institutional configurations such as the APT and, more recently, the EAS.
- Second, the nature of this creeping institutionalism has generated different layers of regional efforts going beyond bilateral and plurilateral arrangements which had, until quite recently, been largely subregional in nature. Whether conceived within ASEAN or ASEAN-initiated arrangements like the APT and the EAS, the robustness of these multilayer/multilevel initia-

tives can be seen in the plethora of cooperative efforts that have emerged—mostly geared toward addressing different NTS threats such as infectious diseases, financial crisis, piracy, terrorism, and others. These subregional or minilateral arrangements have added new layers of regional institution and, in the process, have significantly altered the contours of the regional institutional architecture in Asia.

The extent to which these new regional structures fit, complement, or compete with one another remains to be seen, although it should be noted that in some areas, subregional responses either by ASEAN or the APT may be more effective in terms of response time to address specific challenges. This is largely due to the fact that, when compared with bigger regional frameworks like the ARF and APEC, these subregional bodies are also more institutionalized. For instance, it was much easier to galvanize regional efforts in responding to maritime threats through the initiative of coordinated maritime patrols at the subregional level through ASEAN rather than through the ARF. The same is true with regard to initiating coordinated efforts in monitoring the spread of infectious diseases, which was led by the APT process, and in addressing different types of transnational crimes like drug trafficking and human smuggling.

- Third, while these regional efforts are aimed at building regional capacity to address different security challenges, the kinds of measures being adopted have gone beyond the usual process-oriented, confidence-building measures. Instead, many of the regional measures adopted are now geared toward problem-solving, involving sharing of information; developing certain types of regional surveillance systems for early warning on infectious diseases and natural disasters; providing relief in disaster management, rehabilitation, and reconstruction; and, more significantly, working toward coordinated procedures and attempts at harmonizing legal frameworks in addressing transnational crimes. Although these problem-solving efforts are at an inchoate stage and would require some time before any definite assessment can be made as to whether these new regional modalities are able to show concrete results, the fact is that these institutions are being built in response to new challenges.

In sum, the institutional developments in East Asia, particularly at the ASEAN and the APT, reflect a more qualitative change in interstate cooperation. These are not only seen in the widening of areas of functional cooperation but also in deepening the nature of existing regional modalities. Against these trends, what does it mean for the future of regionalism in Asia?

Looking ahead, there are a number of significant developments that could define not just the shape but more importantly the substance of regionalism in Asia as different actors—both state and nonstate—respond to new security challenges.

One of these challenges is the development of new norms. As states cooperate in many dimensions, the nature of interstate relations is bound to effect changes in state practices and pave the way for the development of norms such as the observance of a more rules-based regional framework. We note, for instance, that among the objectives of drafting an ASEAN Charter were the objectives of creating an international legal personality for ASEAN and providing the legal framework for incorporating ASEAN decisions, treaties, and conventions into the national legislation of member countries. Whether the ASEAN Charter will have a binding effect might well depend on what sort of issues it is designed to cover. To be sure, in promoting deeper economic integration, much has already been done to facilitate the legal and institutional status of ASEAN's Free Trade Area, and the APT's CMI.

With this type of legal framework also comes the potential for more intrusive types of regional modalities. In the case of instituting a financial surveillance mechanism within the CMI framework, it appears that ASEAN member states, as well as China, South Korea, and Japan, are prepared to adopt more intrusive arrangements when certain issues threaten their economic survival. This can be seen in the way regional arrangements with potentially intrusive institutional modalities have been adopted by regional states to respond to transnational crimes (e.g., terrorism, drug trafficking, and human smuggling). This is a significant development, albeit limited, given that the regional norm, at least until the emergence of new transnational security threats, has always been for nonintrusive forms of regional arrangements that allowed member states to cooperate while being able to protect

domestic interests and maintain regime legitimacy. We can thus observe that with the onset of NTS threats, ASEAN—and to some extent the ARF and APEC—have been prepared to adopt some form of intrusive regional cooperative mechanisms if the issues at stake threaten regional security and when certain problems remain intractable. Despite the perceived lack of institutional capacity, as member states respond to a wide range of new security threats, current institutional developments geared toward capacity-building support robust regionalism in East Asia.

On the other hand, against the exuberance brought on by robust regionalism is the salient issue of efficacy, especially when viewed against the multiple layers of institutional arrangements that have emerged. For example, in the previous discussions on the number of regional efforts that have been established to respond to threats of pandemics and natural disasters, we note that the various ministerial and other meetings of officials at the ASEAN, ARF, and APEC levels revealed striking similarities or even duplication of initiatives. Unless progress is made by these regional bodies in coordinating their efforts, much within their respective initiatives could be superfluous. Thus, to ensure that these different pieces of regional efforts are not consigned to drawing boards and annual declarations, the importance of subsidiarity may need to be emphasised if only to achieve more coherence and focused implementation of many of these initiatives.

Nevertheless, while an East Asian or Asian initiative may prove to be a logical approach in addressing some NTS issues, the importance of maintaining a more inclusive regionalism remains critical. This means that when and where external help and expertise are required, this has allowed the participation and involvement of other countries outside the region. As the preceding discussion has shown, grave security threats like pandemics, terrorism, natural disasters, etc., require multilateral approaches which inevitably brings in the involvement of extra-regional powers like the United States and the European Union that not only have the resources, but whose security interests are compatible with the region. Given that many NTS issues are transnational and transregional, regional efforts in addressing NTS issues would need to be complemented with multidimensional, multilevel, and multisectoral initiatives. The involvement of different actors

would, in turn, have significant repercussions on regional governance. And to the extent that some notion of task-sharing arrangements would be required, these are bound to affect the dynamics of regional cooperation and coherence as not only big powers but also new actors like international organizations and civil society groups engage with member states of regional institutions—be it at the ASEAN, the APT, or the wider regional frameworks.

Finally, with the growing emphasis on NTS challenges, one could argue that the new, robust regionalism in East Asia has raised the human and comprehensive security agenda right in the heart of each member's national policies. This could give rise to competing national priorities since addressing certain types of NTS challenges also demand a certain level of (elite) consensus on certain values and norms, which could potentially raise tensions among members of regional institutions as the push for new normative frameworks gains momentum. With ASEAN's adoption of an ASEAN Security Community, and specifically its plans to have a charter by the end of 2007, this would be an opportune time for members to debate and review their norms and principles. Similarly, the charter would also require its members to adopt common procedures to achieve the goals of an ASEAN Community and/or to provide the building blocks for the realization of an East Asian security community. Asia's new regionalism has reached a critical point where new security challenges require collective will. As such, declarations of intents and soft commitments have to give way to more common action in solving common problems. This would also mean more binding commitments and credible enforcement by member countries of the regional agreements or modalities that have been adopted to address different types of NTS challenges.

It needs to be stressed that creating an East Asian or Asian security community can only be realized when states and societies share a common security agenda. Regional actors therefore are compelled to cross many hurdles, including having to navigate through the possible tensions between maintaining, to the extent possible, the traditions of conservatism and noninterference and the evolving necessity for flexibility for the sake of collective and effective (regional) governance. Against obvious institutional limitations and domestic constraints, the future of regional secu-

rity architecture in East Asia would be contingent on how regional actors can strike a delicate balance between the push and pull factors for greater regional cohesion.

Endnotes

- ¹ This definition of *nontraditional security* (NTS) has been adopted as the working definition by the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia, otherwise known as NTS-Asia. For more details, see the NTS-Asia Web site at www.rsis-nts.org.
- ² See, for example, Mely Caballero-Anthony, Ralf Emmers, and Amitav Acharya (eds.), *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Dilemmas in Securitisation* (London: Ashgate, 2006).
- ³ See John Gerard Ruggie (ed.), *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
- ⁴ See Jean Grugel, "New Regionalism and Modes of Governance—Comparing US and EU Strategies in Latin America," *European Journal of International Relations*, 2004, Vol. 10, pp. 603-626.
- ⁵ For more on SARS and its security impact, see for example, Mely Caballero-Anthony, "SARS in Asia: Crisis, Vulnerabilities, and Regional Responses," *Asian Survey*, 2005, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 475-495; Melissa Curley and Nicholas Thomas, "Human Security and Public Health in Southeast Asia: The SARS Outbreak," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 2004, Vol. 58, No. 1, pp. 17-32; Elizabeth Prescott, "SARS: A Warning," *Survival*, 2003, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 162-177.
- ⁶ In June 2005, the Singapore government put into place its avian flu plan. See "Influenza Pandemic Readiness and Response Plan," Singapore Ministry of Health, June 29, 2005, <http://www.moh.gov.sg/corp/hottopics/influenza/index.do#32112653> (accessed September 15, 2005). Since February 2004, it has also established tight surveillance and control over local poultry population.
- ⁷ See for example, *APEC Action Plan on the Prevention and Response to Avian and Influenza Pandemics*, 2006/AIPMM/014; and *East Asia Summit Declaration on Avian Influenza Prevention, Control and Response*, at <http://www.aseansec.org/18101.htm>.
- ⁸ "United States International Engagement on Avian and Pandemic Influenza," US Department of Health, Bureau of Public Affairs, September 22, 2006.
- ⁹ See "Regional Emerging Diseases Intervention (REDI) Center," remarks by Claude Allen, Deputy

- Secretary of Health and Human Resources, May 24, 2004, <http://singapore.usembassy.gov/utills/eprint-page.html> (accessed March 19, 2007).
- ¹⁰ For more on this, see Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Combating Infectious Diseases in East Asia: Securitisation and Global Public Goods for Health and Human Security," *Journal of International Affairs* (New York: Columbia University Press), Spring/Summer 2006, pp. 105-127.
- ¹¹ See "WHO, Asian partners to simulate bird flu outbreak to test readiness to contain pandemic," *International Herald Tribune*, March 27, 2007.
- ¹² See Statement from the Special ASEAN Leader's Meeting on Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami, Jakarta, January 6, 2005, <http://www.aseansec.org/17067.htm>.
- ¹³ ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, Vientiane, July 26, 2005, <http://www.aseansec.org/17587.htm>.
- ¹⁴ See *Chairman's Statement of the Twelfth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)*, Vientiane, July 29, 2005.
- ¹⁵ "Asia to Strengthen Civilian-Military Disaster Cooperation," Agence France-Presses, July 28, 2006.
- ¹⁶ See Stocktake Outcomes of the APEC Virtual Task Force on Emergency Preparedness (VTFEP), May 2-3, 2005, available at <http://www.apec.org>.
- ¹⁷ For more on this, see Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Will Asia Heed Warning of Jakarta's Katrina," *Today*, February 7, 2007, at <http://www.todayonline.com/articles/170454>.
- ¹⁸ See for example, Alan Dupont, *East Asia Imperilled: Transnational Challenges to Security*, (Cambridge Asia-Pacific Studies, 2001).
- ¹⁹ For more on ACCORD and its plan of action, see <http://www.undoc.un.or.th/accord/default.htm>.
- ²⁰ See the *2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism*, Bandar Seri Begawan, November 5, 2001.
- ²¹ See ASEAN-US Joint Declaration on Counter-Terrorism, at www.aseansec.org/7424.htm.
- ²² See Cochairs' Statement on Bali Regional Ministerial Meeting on Counter-Terrorism, Bali, February 5, 2004, accessed from <http://www.aseansec.org/16001.htm>.
- ²³ For a recent study in this area, see Sam Bateman, Catherine Zara Raymond, and Joshua Ho, *Safety and Security in the Malacca and Singapore Straits: An Agenda for Action*, (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Policy Paper, Nanyang Technological University, May 2006).
- ²⁴ For more on ReCAAP, see <http://www.recaap.org/html/>.
- ²⁵ See ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community in the *ASEAN Bali Concord II*, <http://www.aseansec.org>.
- ²⁶ See Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Bridging Development Gaps in ASEAN: Towards an ASEAN Community," *UNISCI Journal No. 11* (Madrid: Complutensi University, May 2006).
- ²⁷ See *Vientiane Plan of Action, 2004*, <http://www.aseansec.org>.
- ²⁸ See "Charter to protect workers in ASEAN," *The STAR*, December 5, 2005.
- ²⁹ BSA is a swap currency arrangement in which each party can request the other to enter into a swap transaction to provide liquidity support to overcome balance of payment difficulties in the specified currency up to a specified amount. As of November 10, 2004, the total size of the BSAs was US\$36.5 billion.
- ³⁰ The Joint Ministerial Meeting of the 8th ASEAN + 3 Finance Ministers' Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey, May 4, 2005, <http://www.aseansec.org/17448.htm>.

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