

RSIS-MACARTHUR CONFERENCE ON
REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL
COHERENCE IN ASIA'S SECURITY
ARCHITECTURE:
THE ROLE OF ASEAN

24 – 25 NOVEMBER 2009
SINGAPORE



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CONFERENCE REPORT

ORGANIZED BY:

THE MULTILATERALISM & REGIONALISM PROGRAMME AT THE
S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (RSIS)
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, SINGAPORE

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S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
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This report summarizes the proceedings of the conference as interpreted by the assigned rapporteurs and editor of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this report.

The conference adheres to a variation of the Chatham House rules. Accordingly, beyond the points expressed in the prepared papers, no attributions have been included in this conference report.

Opening Remarks



Ambassador Barry Desker

The “RSIS-MacArthur Conference on Regional Security Cooperation” was opened by **Dr. Ralf Emmers**, Coordinator of the Multilateralism and Regionalism Programme for the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, who introduced keynote speaker **Ambassador Barry Desker**, Dean of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

Ambassador Barry Desker welcomed the attendees to the conference by observing that the current multilateral architecture emerging in Asia Pacific consisted of three interesting trends. First, Asia’s security architecture is characterized by sub-regional dynamics, especially in Southeast Asia, where a four decade-long experiment in regionalism has been undertaken in the form of the

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The sub-regional element in multilateral security cannot be ignored, given ASEAN’s perceived role as the “driver” of pan-Asian regional institutions.

Second, advocates of multilateralism claim the relevance of ASEAN to Asia’s stability and security, and see its cooperative initiatives as an essential contribution to regional community formation. On the other hand, as regionalism in Asia has historically been process-driven rather than product-oriented, critics see little institutional change in the region. To overcome the tension between these propositions, progress in security cooperation can arguably be ensured through collaboration in functional areas.

Finally, Ambassador Desker felt that no study of the regional institutional framework would be complete without considering the impact of the great powers as well as the influence of their interactions upon the nature of those institutions. He noted that Asia is host to four Great Powers—the United States, China, Japan, and India. A core driver of Asian regionalism is, therefore, the institutionalization of ties between these powers through and with the support of the ASEAN-led arrangements. This ostensibly helps to secure the commitment of the Great Powers to the promotion of regional peace and security.

From left to right:

Front row: Associate Professor Joseph Liow, Dr. Chin Kin Wah, Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee, Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Ambassador Barry Desker, Professor William Tow, Associate Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony, Professor Cai Penghong, Mr. Kwa Chong Guan

Back row: Dr. Ian Storey, Associate Professor Alan Chong, Dr. Takeshi Yuzawa, Professor Herman Joseph Kraft, Dr. David Capie, Dr. Alan Collins, Dr. Christopher Roberts, Associate Professor Tan See Seng, Associate Professor Alice Ba, Dr. Evelyn Gob, Associate Professor Ralf Emmers



ASEAN's Role in Institutional Developments in Southeast Asia

HIV/AIDS and Institutional Developments in ASEAN

Alan Collins' presentation addressed four of the issues identified in the RSIS-MacArthur project, which are (i) functional cooperation as a means to advance the formation of a security community; (ii) whether ASEAN members are able to integrate their security outlooks and responses in view of their diversity; (iii) the relationship between the ASEAN Security Community (ASC) and the wider community project in Southeast Asia; and, (iv) the co-existence between the community project and ASEAN's non-interference doctrine.

Collins suggested that functional cooperation occurs over non-sensitive (non-national security) issues in the arena of low politics. His hypothesis is that successful cooperation in one area can cause an over-spill into another and, assuming all goes well, this can spiral in both quantity of cooperative arrangements and qualitatively in what states are cooperating about. However, the depth of cooperation will depend on whether a process of socialization is occurring. Second, he felt that diversity actually hinders the integration of ASEAN member states' security outlooks. While getting agreement from all 10 members that HIV/AIDS presents a threat has been accomplished, this does not mean that they are all responding to it in the same manner. The discrepancy in response may explain the varying success rates members have achieved. Collins stressed the need for a regional response for it is precisely the ability to respond on a regional level that explains ASEAN's involvement in HIV/AIDS.



Dr. Alan Collins

Third, he considered two aspects when speaking of the relationship between the ASC and the wider community project: (i) the connection with the other two pillars/communities; and, (ii) the cooperation beyond Southeast Asia. Lastly, he was concerned with whether ASEAN members are accountable to others and wondered if this constitutes a weakening of the non-interference doctrine. The "others", in this instance, are both external and internal actors. The involvement of non-state actors from within ASEAN members would also enable one to assess the rhetoric of people-centred or -oriented behaviour. Collins opined that the national fight against AIDS has been better at showing accountability upwards to funders than they have downwards to those they are seeking to help.

ASEAN's Security Community Project: The Role of Identity, Democracy and Capacity in Southeast Asia

Christopher Roberts highlighted that a complicated mix of regional events and global uncertainties has challenged the *modus operandi*, values and prestige of ASEAN in recent years. Consequently, a growing proportion of the region's political elite came to accept that the security, stability and economic development of each member would increasingly require greater cooperation and integration between the ASEAN members. For the more democratic states, this realization impelled a growing sense of urgency regarding the need to not only transform the underlying principles of the Association but to also deepen its level of institutionalization.



Dr. Christopher Roberts

Roberts mentioned ASEAN's regionalist intentions, which were also reflected in the debate surrounding the establishment of an ASEAN Charter in 2007. While key components of ASEAN's associated blueprints have emulated certain constructivist ideas, the end goals of the Association reflect half a century of scholarly work on the concept of a security community. He proposed that the realization of such a level of institutionalized regionalism, together with a situation where armed conflict between the members could no longer be foreseeable, indicates an intended level of cooperation and integration that has so far only been witnessed in the European Union. However, he remarked that achieving this end will be no easy feat given the economic, political and ethnic diversity of the region.

Next, Roberts outlined the major opportunities and challenges presented by ASEAN's pursuit of a security community. First, he brought up the major institutional developments that have taken place since Indonesia launched its security community initiative in 2003. Second, he focused on trust, threat perceptions and regional security issues. Based on his analysis, he provided some preliminary thoughts concerning the major developments necessary to enable the formation of a security community in the future. Roberts acknowledged that the nature of any analysis concerning ASEAN greatly depends on whether the central task is to evaluate ASEAN relative to history or to evaluate ASEAN relative to the Association's "statements of intent". His assessments have been formulated on the basis of the latter option. He noted that an investigation of ASEAN's contribution to Southeast Asia relative to the Association's humble beginnings would undoubtedly yield a far more optimistic result.

Non-Traditional Security: Governance and the ASEAN Political-Security Community

Mely Caballero-Anthony began by observing that the region has gone beyond the ASC. What we now have is the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) blueprint. She felt that the assertion of the word "political" in the document reflects two things: (i) that establishing an ASC is very much a regional political project as it is a security goal; and, (ii) an understanding that one cannot divorce security from politics.

She commented that the responsibility of addressing many of the trans-border threats is really from within. In fact, this is how ASEAN has operated, where much of the issues must be dealt with domestically, and if one has a problem with a neighbouring state then one deals with it bilaterally. However, the moment one adopts the vision of an APSC, the dynamics change altogether. It compels us to look at the relationship between states and societies. Caballero-Anthony argued that this relationship needs attention because (i) the state security and the individual security are very much inter-related, where society becomes secure if the security of the state is also ensured; (ii) attaining state and human security requires the participation of many groups; and more importantly, (iii) it requires governance with the capacity of all these actors to produce coherent policies in many sectors, such as employment, educational health, etc.

In dealing with these issues, she discussed the creation of institutions within ASEAN so that ASEAN can then have a more coherent effective response to many of these challenges, but confessed that it is not easy because the idea of having a coordinated regional policy is empty or can become vacuous if we do not have the right institutions or right legislations even from within to address such issues, e.g. labour migration, human trafficking, infectious diseases, drug trafficking, etc. Unless this is crafted from within, where domestic governance is very important, she believed that it will then become problematic when we deal with it at the intergovernmental level. Caballero-Anthony ended by saying that issues of norms, whose norms, nature of security issues, and the approaches to these will have to be calibrated to be able to manage the dynamics between the politics and security of individual states as this will have an important implication on the future of ASEAN as an institution.



Associate Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony

Discussion

Yeo Lay Hwee opened the session by proposing three ways to approach the topic of ASEAN's role in institutional developments in Southeast Asia. The first is by looking at the institutional changes and developments in ASEAN as a form of adaptation to pressures from outside (the global economy, the dialogue partners, the United States, the EU, etc.) and a form of craving for legitimacy from outside partners on the part of ASEAN. Second, Yeo looked at the sub-regional and domestic dynamics, as well as the interaction between the two forces. She questioned if ASEAN has actually been a factor for catalysing change within ASEAN member states or if internal/domestic changes in member states have contributed to institutional changes and development. Third, she looked at ASEAN's role in promoting inter-regionalism, e.g. the Asia-Middle East Dialogue.

Kwa Chong Guan said that the issue comes down to how we want to evaluate/measure ASEAN's success. If one used the realist yardstick, then of course, ASEAN has not performed too well and would be considered a failure. But if one used the constructivist yardstick of identity, then ASEAN would come off as doing pretty well. Alternatively, one could use the institutionalist yardstick to measure whether or not ASEAN is a success story or failure.

Alice Ba noted that ASEAN's capacity building was focused in the presentations. Nevertheless, she wondered if there are limits to regionalism in the Asia Pacific. She questioned on the fact that states and the region itself have to deal with demands from different forums, and unless external actors step in, she opined that ASEAN would be unable to play its role effectively.

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong remarked that growth and qualitative changes are active in smaller states, e.g. Cambodia and Laos (which are also new to ASEAN). The frustration of bigger countries, for example, Indonesia lies in the fact that these newer states are more vocal and not afraid to speak out because of the ASEAN Chapter. Even so, the respective position by official governments is generally cohesive among its leaders. Although ASEAN has a long way to go, Ambassador Ong sensed that compromise will come about if there are one or two good issues to focus on, e.g. HIV/AIDS, human rights and democracy.

Kwa then contemplated the future of ASEAN. Ralf Emmers voiced that the community idea was generated by all its

members. He believed that there is no problem with just two or three member states pushing an agenda forward. Caballero-Anthony reiterated that functional cooperation is the way to go for the ASC, and the fact that this is not just an issue of capacity but also one of governance. All in all, she felt optimistic about ASEAN.

Luncheon Keynote Address The ASEAN Security Community: An Insider's Perspective

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Director, Institute of Policy Studies, Republic of Singapore



Ambassador Ong Keng Yong

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong offered an "insider's perspective" of the plans for an ASC. At the outset, he emphasized that the ASC would adhere to the established norms of the ASEAN Way, and the ongoing attempts at realizing it would constitute a process predicated upon the norms of incrementalism, non-interference and consensus-based decision making. The goal of an ASC has no pretensions of supranationalism and, instead, state sovereignty and respect for the national interests of members would be closely guarded. Even though this established pattern of the ASEAN Way has been subject to much criticism, ASEAN leaders choose it because they are guided by the "big picture" on regional security concerns.

Besides the establishment of the ASEAN Charter, Ambassador Ong pointed out the importance of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting in 2006, and its institutionalization, as a key "milestone" in the development of the ASC. Another development has been the adoption of a blueprint for realizing the APSC and the adoption of a "score card" by the ASEAN Secretariat to monitor its implementation in more than 30 categories of normative and functional cooperation, including the promotion of

human rights, the establishment of a dispute settlement mechanism, measures to fight against human trafficking, and the formulation of disaster-management arrangements. In addition, maritime security has emerged as an area for regional cooperation, as evidenced by the first ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting on this issue in Surabaya in March 2009.

Ambassador Ong elaborated on what he deemed were three important trends in regional security politics in the region. The first is the growing interaction between ASEAN bodies and states with Civil Society Organizations that had fostered some consensus over the need for broadening security to include human security. Second,

China's increasing economic input into the development of the CLMV countries and its growing ties with them was now impinging on the politics within ASEAN members. He said that there was evidence to suggest that the CLMV countries were now more cautious in advancing ASEAN agendas that were not amenable to China. This holds true, though to a lesser degree, for the other ASEAN states as well. The net result, he contended, was that there was a growing reluctance to cause China discomfort. And third, Ambassador Ong noted the growing assertiveness of the newer CLMV countries in ASEAN, which, he said, could come into tension with the positions of the bigger countries. Hence, this relationship between the smaller and bigger members has to be managed carefully.

SESSION II

ASEAN's Role in Multilateralism and Security Cooperation in Asia

Asia's Changing Regionalism: Implications for ASEAN

David Capie surveyed the numerous proposals for regional architecture building in Asia, most notably, Australia's proposal for an Asia Pacific Community (APC), the Japanese proposal for an East Asian Community and, the call for a concert of power in the form of a G2. He queried what was driving these proposals for change. His explanation comprised of four factors: (i) a growing combination of "meeting fatigue"; duplication and under-performance among different regional frameworks (the ARF and APEC being a case in point); (ii) the changing power balance in the region and the emergence of new actors who are keen to play a role in shaping regional architecture; (iii) the immediate stimulus brought by regime change in the region—Kevin Rudd's, Yukio Hatoyama's and Barack Obama's new governments have all introduced new dynamics in institutional activity in the region; and (iv) the global financial crisis, which has called into question the status quo and has enabled a "structural upheaval" for norm entrepreneurs to throw up new ideas.

Of these new proposals, Capie elaborated on the APC concept proposed by Australia, which he remarked, sought to rationalize existing arrangements in the region. Despite

its practical rationale, he reasoned that the APC would face numerous obstacles. First, it challenges ASEAN's centrality to the regional project in Asia and how exactly it seeks to overcome ASEAN remains unclear. Second, the APC is wedded to the notion that its membership and size strikes a right balance, and there remain more pressing concerns such as sovereignty, which will inform long-term obstacles. Third, that existing institutions tend to be sticky in that—once created—they are difficult to root out, and thus creating a new framework or institution may not resolve the problem of overlapping institutional scope and mandate. On account of these factors, Capie expressed his scepticism about the prospects for the APC.

Finally, with regard to ASEAN, he voiced that the organization would face increasing challenges to its leadership position and that ASEAN would change, but only incrementally. Despite the challenges, ASEAN's prospects remained viable, as differences among Great Powers would offer ASEAN a unique vantage point from which to guide and design regionalism. Two challenges to ASEAN's leadership role that nonetheless merit special attention include the possible strengthening of regional cooperation in Northeast Asia and the growing role of the G20 in contemporary multilateralism.

Driving East Asian Security: ASEAN and Regional Security Institutions in East Asia

Herman Joseph Kraft suggested that ASEAN was key to East Asian multilateralism and that changes in the former would affect the latter. He discussed how ASEAN was working towards a broader and more ambitious security framework and noted that comprehensive security was giving way to something different from what it was originally intended to be. ASEAN's commitment to cooperative security, elaborated in the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) in 2004, marked a move from militaristic conceptions of security to a more holistic conception that recognized the interdependence between the political, social and economic life of the

region. Hence poverty alleviation, the reduction of social disparity, and the objectives of stability and prosperity were all brought within the mandate of the security agenda.

Kraft discerned how the VAP asserted a commitment to pursuing such security in the context of a "just, democratic and harmonious environment", and the anchoring of security in the context of participatory politics would seem to push ASEAN and its norms further into the realm of human security. However, the concept of human security lacks a clear consensus. Furthermore, it is rarely used within national discourse but used persistently in regional discourse, and this perhaps discloses its usage as a rhetorical device.



From left to right: Dr. Takeshi Yuzawa, Professor Herman Joseph Kraft, Associate Professor Joseph Liow, Dr. David Capie, Professor Cai Penghong, Associate Professor Tan See Seng

ASEAN's Role in Multilateral and Security Cooperation in Asia: A Chinese Perspective

Cai Penghong located his presentation in the context of a rapidly changing regional system, where the rise of Chinese power had been a dramatic and significant dynamic. He said that while the official policy was to emphasize the centrality of ASEAN in regional architecture building, his personal assessment was that ASEAN's future role was unclear and that it was likely to face challenges to its leadership position. He noted that Chinese policy thinkers viewed the United States and its allies as a hostile force and considered the U.S.-dominated architecture as a remnant of the Cold War. However, since the 1990s, this structure

has been changing with the rise of new actors and with the culmination of bilateral and regional FTAs among states. It appears that in this process, ASEAN has been playing the role of a convener.

Even though ASEAN's role is appreciated by Chinese foreign policy elites, there has been some ambivalence about its future position. Cai stated that while Chinese scholars consider the ARF as important, they also realize that it has not been able to match up to the profile of more recent frameworks like the Shangri-la Dialogue. Despite evidence that the ASEAN-China relationship has been unprecedented since the end of the Cold War, the Chinese perceive ASEAN as being reluctant to recognize China's

new security concept even though China is an important part of East Asia. He carried this point further, observing that the ambivalence over the long-term viability (and compatibility) of ASEAN's leadership position by China increased when ASEAN objected to Beijing hosting the first East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2005. Its role in steering the creation of the EAS as a separate regional arrangement by including new members such as Australia, India and New Zealand to the existing pool of APT members compounded doubts over whether China could successfully realize its interests by working within the framework of an ASEAN-led regionalism.

Cai commented that nearly 90 per cent of the GDP in the region was generated in Northeast Asia and recent attempts at strengthening the trilateral summit seem to demonstrate that ASEAN's role is fading. The domestic transitions in ASEAN member countries, the "ASEAN Way", and the lack of innovation in implementing the values of the ASEAN Charter have also been used by other Chinese scholars to argue about the weaknesses of ASEAN. Some also imply that Washington's decision to play a greater role in the region has further weakened the position of ASEAN in regional multilateralism.

The ASEAN Regional Forum and Preventive Diplomacy: A Failure in Practice

Ralf Emmers and **Tan See Seng** explored why the ARF had not adopted Preventive Diplomacy (PD) when other regional institutions and arrangements in Asia had been engaged in some form of PD. In explaining the relevance of exploring this puzzle, they noted that PD, contrary to essentialized arguments framed under the ASEAN Way that deem PD as being unviable in Asia, has been practiced and achieved in different forms in Asia, except in the ARF.

A range of traditional factors is invoked to explain this failure of the ARF: the attachment to sovereignty, and the diversity of members, to name a few. However, these factors alone cannot fully answer the question of why the ARF has not been successful in pursuing PD. Indeed, the above-mentioned traditional constraints hold true for several other regional arrangements and organizations. With regard to

the structural constraints caused by diverse membership and size, they remarked that this was applicable to the EU, which has, however, moved towards effective PD. Similarly, the adherence to sovereignty principles had not prevented PD from being carried out under the Six Party Talks framework and—albeit in a more limited way—under the ASEAN-China Agreement on the South China Sea. Differing strategic perspectives, another often cited factor, was also inadequate as an explanation as it had not prevented ASEAN from some forms of PD.

Emmers and Tan argued instead that the above traditional factors, coupled, crucially, with the formalization and legalization of the ASEAN Way had rendered the ARF highly inflexible and had inhibited its planned evolution from confidence-building to PD. This formalization had occurred with the formulation of a rule-oriented regime and a move towards more formal regionalism, all of which has transformed the ASEAN Way from a flexible practice into an inflexible convention. This was an important reason (along with others) for why the ARF has become inflexible and ineffective in broaching PD, while other arrangements—retaining a flexible ASEAN Way—had succeeded in working towards some forms of PD. They stressed, however, that formalization was not the same as institutionalization. The ARF represented a highly formal institution despite its poor institutionalization.

Promoting Habits of Cooperation or Non-Cooperation? Rethinking the ASEAN Way of Institution Building

Takeshi Yuzawa observed that the ARF's utility in regional order-building had been a subject of intense debate. In International Relations theory, realists and neoliberal institutionalists explained this alleged inefficacy from different theoretical positions: the limits on the ARF imposed by an enduring balance of power as proposed by realists; and its failure to foster substantive transactions, offer material incentives as well as apply sanctions, in the case of the institutionalists. Contrary to these two strands, constructivists emphasize the benefits of socialization accrued under the aegis of the ASEAN Way, which has

internalized norms among the actors participating in the forum. This constructivist argument is undergirded by some empirical evidence: China's active engagement in the ARF and the ratification of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) by many countries, among others.

Yuzawa maintained that this constructivist position is, however, beset with an empirical anomaly, namely that despite its active involvement in the ARF, China had also consistently opposed a high degree of security cooperation in the institution. Moreover, the support of other "activist states"—Japan, Australia, the United States—had been dwindling in recent years. Thus, he posed his primary question: why had the ARF not succeeded in socializing its members into its norms of cooperative security? In pursuing this question, he reconsidered the utility and limitations of the ASEAN Way of institution-building. His assessment was that the ASEAN Way had proved important in the early stages of the ARF as it had enabled the regular participation of "reluctant states", such as China, by socializing them in the habits of multilateralism. However, the teaching of norms does not necessarily translate into an internalization of norms, and nor does socialization serve as a mechanism for the implementation of norms and agreements. Moreover, the informality of the ASEAN Way has ensured the practice of non-binding agreements. Thus, as the ARF proceeded to address sensitive issues, the ASEAN Way became an obstruction to the ARF's success in pursuing its stated security agenda.

Yuzawa also argued that the ASEAN Way and its consensus-based decision-making principle have enabled "reluctant states" like China to manipulate the ARF and veto the initiatives of "activist states". The resulting "negative social interaction" between activist and reluctant states has produced stagnation in the ARF and has eaten into the enthusiasm of the activist countries in pursuing an agenda for more substantive institutionalization of the forum. He concluded that while the ASEAN Way had made an important contribution to the initial development of the ARF, it had soon become an obstruction to the forum's development. The norms underpinning the ASEAN Way have produced "negative social interaction" that has ultimately weakened the commitment of its more active members.

Discussion



Dr. Chin Kin Wah

Chin Kin Wah began by commenting that the region was suffering from "institutional fatigue" and that the current dynamics (and debates) reflect an interesting time for post-charter ASEAN. Not only has the Charter stimulated much debate on ASEAN but its adoption has invited scrutiny on ASEAN's ability to implement and enforce its provisions. At the heart of the debate over ASEAN's place in the emerging regional architectures in Asia is whether ASEAN and its norms and practices provide a viable platform to take this process forward. He noted that there has been a certain co-existence of an "old" ASEAN Way and the attempts at moving towards a "new" ASEAN Way, and that the presentation by Emmers and Tan reflected how the ARF had become stuck in a "time warp", as it were, of the old ASEAN Way.

He observed that ASEAN's position as an appealing cornerstone of regional multilateralism was underpinned by a sum of several negatives: its status as non-hegemonic, non-threatening, non-confrontational and non-partisan. Similarly, its norms of international conduct emphasize non-interference, non-coercion, and a consensus on not saying "no". Instead, he asserted, ASEAN's attractiveness could have been predicated on a sum of positives: of being an organization in a dynamic and developing region, as a paragon of peace and stability, as a model of PD and conflict resolution, and as a source of ideas and ideals. Chin ended by saying that the ASEAN Charter was essentially a work of compromise. In promoting people-oriented norms and yet preserving state prerogatives, it seems to instantiate "enshrined flexibility", of going "beyond the ASEAN Way". How this balance pans out from issue to issue in the future

would depend on the changing perceptions of national interest in the region.

William Tow raised the point of whether the talk of deepening cooperation in the context of the Northeast Asian Trilateral Summit was exaggerated, especially since a range of underlying tensions continued to inform relations between Japan, China and South Korea. He also raised some conceptual questions concerning the papers presented. How, for instance, can a “messy” architecture be measured or evaluated? Is its inherent ambiguity expedient, and if so, is it expedient only to a certain extent? Also, what does “effectiveness” mean in the context of PD, and finally, how exactly can strategic “reassurance” be measured?

On the other hand, **Evelyn Goh** took issue with the usage and conceptualization of architecture as “messy”. She argued that architectures are not supposed to be messy. In addition, she remarked that the use of the word “architecture” carried structural connotations and seemed to underplay the presence/role of social structure, of social elements like hierarchy, for instance. She also asked about the ongoing conflicts concerning membership, specifically, is membership a proxy for dominance and subordination? Capie responded that examining membership is an interesting way to framing the broader questions on ongoing processes and the questions of influence, leadership, and risk avoidance. With regard to the APC, Capie added that it would have to include the United States as the institution calls for comprehensive cooperation, and to do so, U.S. clout would be important.

Emmers wondered whether “messiness” was an incorrect metaphor to describe the current dynamics in the region. He believed that it reflected a broader state of affairs where ASEAN leaders deliberately sought a series of overlapping institutions with their organization at the core, a choice to

pursue regionalism in accordance with core UN principles, while at the same time tackle traditional and non-traditional security issues. He pointed out that a key concern was for Asia to avoid the Concert of Europe in the nineteenth century. In this sense, “messiness” would appear to be a product of design, and far from being unclear, ASEAN seems to have a relatively clear idea of where it wants to go.

Book Launch

ASEAN-India-Australia: Towards Closer Engagement in a New Asia

Edited by Professor William T. Tow & Dr. Chin Kin Wah

Tim Huxley, Executive Director of The International Institute for Strategic Studies (Asia), discussed and officially launched Tow and Chin’s latest edited book—*ASEAN-India-Australia: Towards Closer Engagement in a New Asia*. The book suggests that India’s emergence of a great power has sensitized its regional neighbours to its growing role as a key security actor in an increasingly interdependent world. Both Australia and ASEAN now view India as a major player in the formulation and application of their own broad security agendas. This emerging trilateral compendium is particularly evident in such policy areas as maritime security, climate change, energy security, law enforcement, “good governance” and the politics of security institutions or “architectures”. The book represents one of the first systematic efforts to consolidate these diverse but important concerns into an overarching framework for ascertaining and cross-comparing how these three entities are approaching these policy challenges, individually and collectively. It argues that the dynamics underlying their intensifying security relations are sufficiently important to conceptualize them as a distinct analytical framework that needs to be understood in the larger context of Asia-Pacific security politics.

SESSION III

ASEAN's Role in the Institutionalization of Great Power Relations in Asia



From left to right: Professor William Tow, Associate Professor Alice Ba, Associate Professor Ralf Emmers

Within Institutional Bounds: ASEAN and the Major Powers

Alice Ba opened the session by carrying forward the questions that had animated the discussions in SESSION II, in particular, ASEAN's relationship with Major Powers via regional arrangements in the East Asia-Asia Pacific level. She contended that Major Powers represented (i) challenges for ASEAN; and, (ii) challenges to ASEAN. The main challenge for ASEAN was of how to institutionalize the role of Major Powers in the region. Institutionalization could mean rules—both formal and informal—that bring about stable expectations and practices. It creates a culture of expectations and is marked by a degree of stability and relative permanence. Institutionalization, in this specific context, means that the premises, roles and expectations of Major Powers are not constantly being re-negotiated. Institutionalization, then, would refer to the relative stability of Major Power commitments to the region, and from the security standpoint, the role of the United States and the chronic anxiety over its disinterest becomes a major concern.

Ba went on to note that the challenge to ASEAN comes not only from the possibility of defection by Major Powers but also by their promotion of alternative arrangements. There has been much evidence for this as both East Asia and the Asia Pacific have become sites for much institutional competition. The interest in other proposals also shows dissatisfaction with the process of the ASEAN Way and its related procedures. Here, she made her central argument: that the criticism of ASEAN as being process-driven as opposed to outcome-oriented and of pursuing process for processes' sake, was based on a "flawed dichotomy" of "process versus outcomes". She commented that ASEAN's process reflects its purpose and its prioritized outcomes. This purpose and priority has implications for the design features of the institutions that emerge. The ASEAN Way has thus helped to both build and moderate intra-Asian relations. However, there would be continuing tensions between this model of regionalism based on building relations as pursued by ASEAN and the model of regionalism sought by the United States and Australia based on functional cooperation and outcomes.

Ba emphasized, however, that the criticism—flowing from the "false dichotomy"—of ASEAN not being "outcome-oriented" was unfair. She pointed to the sheer convening power of ASEAN on the basis of which it had institutionalized to some extent the role of Major Powers in the region. The criticism from the United States for ASEAN, as evidenced by dissatisfaction from both policy and diplomatic elites, seemed to be a major challenge for ASEAN. Meanwhile, the challenge from Japan and China was less significant. This was because there is an agreement between the two on the importance of relationship-building (and not simply functional) processes, as well as the more fundamental factor that neither of the two has the standing or the legitimacy to be successful drivers of any new arrangements.

The Institutionalization of Great Power Relations in East Asia: The Limits to ASEAN's Brokerage Role

Evelyn Goh outlined three main arguments on the role of ASEAN in institutionalizing Great Power relations. First, ASEAN has made important contributions in institutionalizing Great Power relations in Asia at junctures of strategic insecurity and flux. However, its role has been rather limited outside of these periods of uncertainty. Second, this is derived in some measure from the inherent limitations small states face in playing a larger facilitating role in international politics. Third, small states face two important challenges in the process of institutionalizing Great Power relations, namely (i) what mechanisms can be placed in order to prevent the bigger powers from attacking their sovereignty; and, (ii) the possibility that they have no role if and when Great Powers strike a bargain on their respective roles in the region. She acknowledged that her questions and conclusions were rather sceptical.

Goh expanded on what she conceptualized as ASEAN's "brokerage role" in the region whereby it was able to provide a means to build confidence and trust among the Great Powers in the region, especially with the end of the Cold War. However, the implication of organizing one's role in terms of a broker was that conceptions of relevance and utility were ultimately derived from some degree of conflict and mistrust. The power of small states via ASEAN thus has to be necessarily grounded in the mistrust that must inform relations among Great Powers in the region. Contrary to constructivist claims about the "normative power" of ASEAN, she stated that ASEAN had succeeded in providing for a "minimalist normative bargain" among Great Powers in Asia. While ASEAN's institutional norms had been crucial in setting the stage for multilateral cooperation, they have not succeeded in achieving the steps necessary for sustained cooperation. This inconsistency is explained by how ASEAN has managed to play a useful role during periods of strategic uncertainty and failed to do so in periods of relative stability. The stunted scope and effectiveness of ASEAN norms has resulted in the operation of a "comfortable regionalism" that lends itself to "soft balancing" by Great Powers.

Goh felt that there were "internal limits" to ASEAN's brokerage role. One major limitation was ASEAN's lack of intra-mural coherence and unity, which has partly occurred by its expansion via the inclusion of CLMV countries. This has added greater complexity to a pre-existing template

of diversity and disagreement over policy and visions. This was reflected most notably in the divisions that marked the founding of the EAS in 2005. There are also "social structural" limits to ASEAN's brokerage role in the region. This argument is conceptually grounded in ASEAN's limited position within a hierarchy of power in the region. While ASEAN has, through its institutions and arrangements, provided a basis for Great Powers to demonstrate their benign power and hierarchical assurance, and at the same time seek hierarchical deference from smaller states, ASEAN cannot change this hierarchy or overcome it. This is why perhaps one must consider the "unpalatable consideration" that ASEAN may not be that important to the maintenance of regional order.



From left to right: Dr. Evelyn Goh, Dr. Ian Storey

A Case Study of Sino-ASEAN Relations and the South China Sea Dispute

Ian Storey's presentation proposed that ASEAN's relationship with China has been a key empirical base to assess its capacity to influence and institutionalize relations with Great Powers in the region. He placed this specific relationship under scrutiny in his paper on the South China Sea dispute. He observed that while ASEAN and China's relations had changed to a substantial degree over the past two decades, and that this had lent credibility to the argument on ASEAN's capacity to engage with and normalize Great Powers, there remained some fundamental uncertainties and unresolved problems that belie the coherence to this impression of ASEAN-China relations. In his assessment, the recent approach of ASEAN towards dealing with this problem had been "disappointing". The process of tackling this dispute was suffering from stasis and he asserted that it would be in the interests of ASEAN if it were to adopt a more coherent and proactive approach in dealing with the problem.

A consideration of the South China Sea dispute, Storey suggested, was of much importance as not only were four ASEAN members claimants of its potential resources but also because of the strategic and economic import of the sea lanes passing through it. The most important current measure in place to deal with the South China Sea dispute is the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. While this document expresses the political commitment of the states involved in addressing the dispute, and in initiating confidence-building measures, there are, he argued, several limitations. First, it is neither a binding treaty nor formal code of conduct; second, it excludes Taiwan; and, third, it does not preclude states from not adding to existing facilities on the atolls they currently occupy.

Storey's main argument was that ASEAN had not played a more proactive role in addressing the South China Sea problem and highlighted the role of changing institutional dynamics to explain this. He noted that until the mid 1990s, there was consensus within ASEAN and a shared anxiety over perceived Chinese assertiveness over the dispute. Thus ASEAN presented a united front in its dealings with China on this dispute. However, the expansion of ASEAN and the inclusion of CLMV countries had added new dynamics to this process. Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar have established close ties with China and are more apprehensive to cause discomfort to Chinese interests in the region. Additionally, the dispute over the Parcel islands constitutes a bilateral dispute between China and Vietnam, and some members are divided over whether ASEAN countries should seek any role in tackling it. Storey also drew attention to ASEAN's "corporate tendency to accentuate positives and downplay negatives" as a factor that had prevented ASEAN from initiating any serious assessment of its position with China on this dispute.

Great Powers and Multilateralism: The Politics of Security Architectures

William Tow began by stating that the current designs for regional architecture building were "frustratingly ambiguous" and that the rise of China, the relative indifference of the United States, and a paralysis of Middle Powers had all undermined the initiatives for regional multilateral cooperation. Multilateral cooperation, he emphasized, was important for regional order, and a lack of progress on current multilateral initiatives comes with

the risk of intensifying security dilemmas and balance of power politics in the region.

Tow first examined the question of who the architects of contemporary architecture building were. He admitted that ASEAN had taken much initiative in this process, but growing political fragmentation within member countries as well as intra-mural tensions had hamstrung its potential. If ASEAN's potential for leadership seems uncertain, then the alternative possibility of Great Powers providing leadership seems as—if not less—promising. Japan's proposal for an East Asian Community—widely seen as an initiative independent of ASEAN in designing regionalism—was met with lukewarm reception by China and South Korea at the Trilateral Summit in October 2009. The lack of enthusiasm on furthering free trade negotiations and underlying historical distrust between China and Japan continue to impede effective leadership by any Great Power in Asia. Washington's uncertain position in Asian regionalism also impedes Australia's proposal for a comprehensive and formal Asia Pacific Community.

Besides the architects, the nature of architecture also warrants examination, and Tow offered his assessment in this regard. First, a multiplicity of contending approaches would vie for dominance in the region over the next decade. More importantly, none of these models would command widespread support. Instead, it is likely that they will be "hybridized" in order to accommodate both multilateral and bilateral aspects of security politics. Second, a U.S.-centred "hub and spokes" bilateral alliance strategy will remain important for the region. However, this arrangement is likely to be less hierarchical than it was in the past. This is both caused by, and a reflection of, growing sensitivity in U.S. policy towards its Asian allies and partners. Third, the attempt at constructing viable architectures would remain susceptible to the tensions of their underlying character, that is, are they cooperative or competitive mechanisms? Even though these regional arrangements are meant to foster cooperation, a number of empirical trends indicate a competitive form of institutionalism in the region. Tow concluded by saying that the future of multilateral security politics in Asia rests on the ability and willingness of the Great Powers to cooperate more than to compete with each other in the interests of multilateralism. In order to be successful, they would also have to engage with and ensure the participation of Middle and Small Powers to make their endeavours legitimate and viable over the long-term.

Discussion

Alan Chong observed that there is great potential for further study on the subject of how small states like those in ASEAN may influence the behaviour of Great Powers and vice versa. He noted that Ba's presentation on process-driven and outcome-driven regionalism addressed the different visions of regionalism in the market today. He believed that ASEAN's emphasis on relationship-building should be celebrated rather than seen as a limitation. With regard to Goh's scepticism, Chong argued that the lowest common denominator need not be framed as a negative attribute and that perhaps "it can be beautiful" too. He commented that Goh's paper should reconsider whether regional institutions are really nothing more than instruments for soft balancing in the region. On Storey's critique of ASEAN's poor dispute settlement record, Chong contended that this record was perhaps not as bad as presented. Dispute settlement, he ventured, also includes the maintenance of a stalemate. Lastly, Chong considered Tow's narrative alarmist and felt that the institutionalized processes of dialogue had been ignored. He thought that the narrative had also ignored the concept of diplomacy and its current elasticity.

Next, **Alastair Cook** asked Ba whether ASEAN's difficulty in driving regionalism had been caused by the externalization of the ASEAN Way to arrangements at a pan-Asian level. On Ba's argument that the outcome-process dichotomy was flawed, Cook queried if this was a case of self-deception and denial. Tangible results, he argued, are important. Another question on the same issue was raised by a participant: Why should the agents of ASEAN regionalism (elites and epistemic community) not be held accountable to a yardstick of goal-accomplishment when they actively operate within the dichotomy of process and outcomes, and indeed have set for themselves a range of specific functional and sociological outcomes within defined time frames? In response, Ba said that the externalization of the ASEAN Way was not responsible for the problems that beset ASEAN in pursuing a leadership role. She explained that

there were other factors and different logics of cooperation at the broader external level that had caused complications. She also added that the challenges to ASEAN were not necessarily automatic. The fact that other actors are coming up with new proposals for a regional architecture does not necessarily mean that ASEAN's position is under threat.

Chung Chong-Wook then made several comments on multilateralism in the context of Northeast Asia. He remarked that the Six Party Talks are important because it seeks to address the problem of nuclear non-proliferation. Besides, the task of engaging North Korea is crucial in order to prevent Japan, South Korea and possibly Taiwan from going down a path of acquiring nuclear capabilities. He noted that a peculiar feature of this arrangement was that while it seemed to be multilateral, it was also underpinned by a strong component of bilateral relations. While this regional dynamic has been interesting, Chung was not very confident about it becoming a strong security mechanism.

Cai Penghong was concerned that Storey's presentation had pitted ASEAN states on one side and China on the other, implying that China was the rival and ASEAN the victims. He voiced that the South China Sea dispute cannot be solved using legal instruments but only through a political solution, and that a starting point for this cannot be by pitting ASEAN and China against each other. He also acknowledged that China prefers to deal with this dispute on a bilateral rather than multilateral basis. Storey responded that his presentation was not about conflict resolution but primarily about conflict management, the latter being necessary when the former is implausible.

With regard to the broader conference project, Goh highlighted that a clarification was necessary on what the scope of the questions is, and whether they pertain to Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia or East Asia. She noted that presentations and comments had been articulated from each geographical vantage point and that this may result in very diverse interpretations of the questions posed.

Concluding Remarks

Ralf Emmers closed the conference by extending his appreciation to the participants and welcoming them for the second RSIS-MacArthur Conference in July 2010. He reminded the speakers to be prepared to present their full research paper by then. Their research paper should subsequently be finalized for publication by end 2010. A series of roundtables will also be organized in 2011 in an effort to bridge the academic and policy-making community. However, this may only involve some of the paper contributors depending on available funding. He then reiterated the call for short policy-relevant commentaries that can be published by RSIS as well as put up on the Asia Security Initiative (ASI) Blog throughout the speakers' involvement with this research project.

Finally, Emmers offered an invitation to future Ph.D. candidates/junior researchers to be part of the RSIS-MacArthur Associate Fellowship Programme. This programme, which is for a period of up to three months, requires the Associate Fellow to contribute to the School's research agenda and ASI Blog, as well as complete one or two RSIS Commentaries and a RSIS Working Paper (to be submitted to a journal) by the end of one's term with RSIS.



APPENDIX A

The RSIS-MacArthur Conference on Regional Security Cooperation Programme

23 November (Monday)

Arrival of overseas participants

19:00–21:00 **Welcome Reception/Dinner**
Cafebiz, Level 1, Traders Hotel (*for Speakers and Invited Guests*)

24 November (Tuesday)

The Gallery, Level 2

08:30–09:10 **Registration**

09:10–09:20 **Welcome Remarks**
Dr. Ralf Emmers
Associate Professor and Coordinator, Multilateralism & Regionalism Programme, RSIS Singapore

09:20–09:30 **Opening Remarks**
Ambassador Barry Desker
Dean, RSIS Singapore

09:30–10:30 **Session I: ASEAN's Role in Institutional Developments in Southeast Asia**
Chair: Mr. Kwa Chong Guan, Head of External Programmes, RSIS Singapore

Dr. Alan Collins, Swansea University, UK
HIV/AIDS and Institutional Developments in ASEAN

Dr. Christopher B. Roberts, University of Canberra, Australia
ASEAN's Security Community Project: The Role of Identity, Democracy and Capacity in Southeast Asia

Associate Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony, RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, Singapore
Non-Traditional Security: Governance and the ASEAN Political-Security Community

10:30–11:00 **Coffee Break & Photo Opportunity** (*for Speakers and Invited Guests*)

11:00–12:00 **Discussion**
Discussant: Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee, Director, European Union Centre, Singapore

12:00–14:00 **Keynote Address & Luncheon**
Penang Room, Level 2A, Traders Hotel

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Director, Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore
The ASEAN Security Community: An Insider's Perspective
Q&A Session

- 14:00–15:30 **Session II: ASEAN’s Role in Multilateralism and Security Cooperation in Asia**
 Chair: Dr. Joseph Liow, Associate Dean and Associate Professor, RSIS Singapore
- Dr. David Capie, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Asia’s Changing Regionalism: Implications for ASEAN
- Professor Herman Joseph Kraft, Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, Inc., Diliman
Driving East Asian Security: ASEAN and Regional Security Institutions in East Asia
- Professor Cai Penghong, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, China
ASEAN’s Role in Multilateralism and Security Cooperation in Asia: A Chinese Perspective
- Associate Professors Ralf Emmers & Tan See Seng, The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, RSIS Singapore
The ASEAN Regional Forum and Preventive Diplomacy: A Failure in Practice
- Dr. Takeshi Yuzawa, The Japan Institute of International Affairs, Tokyo
Promoting Habits of Cooperation or Non-Cooperation? Rethinking the ASEAN Way of Institution Building
- 15:30–16:00 **Coffee Break**
- 16:00–17:15 **Discussion**
 Discussant: Dr. Chin Kin Wah, Deputy Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore
- 17:20–17:40 **Book Launch**
ASEAN-India-Australia: Towards Closer Engagement in a New Asia,
 edited by William T. Tow & Chin Kin Wah
 Discussant: Dr. Tim Huxley, Executive Director,
 The International Institute for Strategic Studies (Asia), Singapore
- 19:00–21:00 **Dinner**
 StraitsKitchen, Grand Hyatt Singapore (*for Speakers and Invited Guests*)

25 November (Wednesday)

The Gallery, Level 2

09:00–10:15 **Session III: ASEAN's Role in the Institutionalization of Great Power Relations in Asia**
Chair: Dr. Ralf Emmers, Associate Professor and Coordinator, Multilateralism & Regionalism Programme, RSIS Singapore

Associate Professor Alice D. Ba, University of Delaware, USA
Within Institutional Bounds: ASEAN & the Major Powers

Dr. Evelyn Goh, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK
The Institutionalisation of Great Power Relations in East Asia: The Limits to ASEAN's 'Brokerage' Role

Dr. Ian J. Storey, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore
The Institutionalization of Great Power Relations in Asia: A Case Study of Sino-ASEAN Relations and the South China Sea Dispute

Professor William T. Tow, Australian National University, Australia
Great Powers and Multilateralism: The Politics of Security Architectures

10:15–10:45 **Coffee Break**

10:45–12:00 **Discussion**
Discussant: Dr. Alan Chong, Associate Professor, RSIS Singapore

12:00–12:30 **Writers' Session & Concluding Remarks**
Dr. Ralf Emmers
Associate Professor and Coordinator, Multilateralism & Regionalism Programme, RSIS Singapore

12:30–14:00 **Farewell Lunch**
Ah Hoi's Kitchen, Poolside, Level 4

14:00– **Free & Easy**

26 November (Thursday)

Departure of overseas participants

APPENDIX B
Participants

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About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** was officially inaugurated on 1 January 2007. Before that, it was known as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), which was established ten years earlier on 30 July 1996. Like its predecessor, **RSIS** was established as an autonomous entity within Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The School exists to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of Asia-Pacific security studies and international affairs. Its three core functions are research, graduate teaching and networking activities

in the Asia-Pacific region. It produces cutting-edge security related research in Asia-Pacific Security, Conflict and Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Area Studies.

The School's activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia-Pacific and their implications for Singapore.

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