THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS’ CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY BUILDING WITH THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Kwei-Bo Huang

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Kwei-Bo HUANG**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is twofold. First, it is aimed at providing a contour of confidence and security building between the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)† and the Peo-

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** Kwei-Bo HUANG earned his doctoral degree of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, College Park, in May 2001. He has published a Chinese article on post-Cold War PRC-ASEAN political cooperation in the National Chengchi University Journal of International Relations, Vol. 15 (December 2000), Taipei: Department of Diplomacy, National Chengchi University, pp. 173-214.

† ASEAN consists of ten sovereign states – Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia (Kampuchea), Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. East Timor has not been admitted to ASEAN. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand founded ASEAN in 1967. Brunei joined ASEAN and became the sixth member in 1984 (ASEAN-6). Vietnam became the sev-
ple's Republic of China (PRC) after the Cold War. A historical description of the evolution of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) is of great help to illustrate the complexity of the issue in question. By doing so, changes in ASEAN's confidence and security building policy toward the PRC over time and patterns of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building can be identified. Second, the framework necessary for understanding the process of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building after the Cold War includes both external and internal factors. The impact of external factors has been studied extensively by numerous scholars, while the influence of internal factors has not. As a result, from an "inside-out" perspective, this research seeks to explain why ASEAN has not been able to engage the PRC effectively and assertively to develop mutual trust and promote bilateral security relations that will contribute to regional peace and stability. In addition, this research from the perspective of ASEAN, explores the implications of future ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building.

Before embarking on the delineation of the major arguments, it is absolutely necessary to define the term "confidence and security building," both because of its vague nature and multiple characteristics in practice, and because of many different explanations provided by students of international security.

Confidence and security building can have multiple meanings, both because nowadays the meaning of security has extended beyond its traditional use and because its practices have been diversified with its spread from Europe to other regions. This research will focus on the political-military dimension of the term. That is, confidence and security building refers to the enhancement of predictability and mutual confidence and security in the politico-military aspect that leads to the diminution in the risk of conflict and the creation of international peace without damaging the national security of the parties involved. CSBMs in this research refer to po-

enth member in 1995 (ASEAN-7). Laos and Myanmar were accepted by ASEAN in 1997 (ASEAN-9). Cambodia joined ASEAN in 1999 (ASEAN-10).

litical and military commitments that are aimed at mitigating or reducing the possibility of political and military conflicts, which include "the process of arms control and disarmament negotiations," "the settlement of international disputes and conflicts," and "the strengthening of the security of States" through mutual restraint that will maintain or enhance the stability in regional and international relations. As Ralph A. Cossa holds, CSBMs indicate "both formal and informal measures, whether unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral, that address, prevent, or resolve uncertainties among states, including both military and political elements." Effective CSBMs can achieve at least four major objectives: (1) the reduction of the risks of war; (2) exchange of information that enhances the transparency in military matters; (3) the creation and maintenance of regular contacts and consultation mechanisms between conflict-prone states; and, (4) the establishment of principles, rules, norms, or code of conduct governing states' behavior. Hence, psychologically, the process of CSBMs can enhance mutual understanding of the participants and let all parties involved feel certain about the process of conflict avoidance and the development of future cooperation.

Confidence and security building between ASEAN and the PRC has occurred more frequently when the issues on national security, territories or sovereignty are not the focus of attention. Although the need for the reduction in these issues' negative impact

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3. See Comprehensive Study on Confidence-building Measures, id., p. 6; and Johan Jorgen Holst, "A CBM Regime in Europe: 19 Interrelated Propositions" in R. B. Byers, F. Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch, eds., Confidence-Building Measures and International Security, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1987, p. 31. By this definition, all the following can be seen as CSBMs, because they are steps that are aimed at maintaining or enhancing national security: (a) expanding transparency measures; (b) supporting global treaty regimes on CSBMs; (c) building on existing cooperation; and, (d) developing unilateral, bilateral or multilateral approaches to regional or global peace.


— or, the need for CSBMs that can enhance mutual understanding about these issues — may be a catalyst or stimulus for more talks or consultations on confidence and security building or other conflict-resolution means, these issues have produced deep mistrust between ASEAN and the PRC that to some extent impedes the progress in ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building.

The next section is aimed at introducing a historical overview of the shape and development of confidence and security building between ASEAN and the PRC, as well as the difficulties that have not been solved. It is of help to discern what kinds of CSBMs have occurred between ASEAN and the PRC after the Cold War. The section that follows analyzes ASEAN’s confidence and security building with the PRC through the lens of capacity to act. More specifically, it delineates how ASEAN’s internal weaknesses have affected ASEAN’s confidence and security building policy toward the PRC. For ASEAN, its unique norms, principles, and rules of decision-making and thorny problems of conflicting interests of the member states are the most influential constraints. As a result, ASEAN is not willing and less able to undertake a more aggressive policy toward the PRC.

In the concluding section, in addition to reviewing the internal constraints on ASEAN’s confidence and security behavior and explaining from the perspective of capacity to act why ASEAN has not been able to make an assertion on its security relations with the PRC, the future development of ASEAN’s CSBMs with the PRC will be presented. Owing to weaker capacity to act, ASEAN will be less capable of controlling the process of CSBMs with the PRC, depend on the United States military presence and balance of power among major powers in the region of Southeast Asia to maintain peace and stability, and enhance the degree of participation in regional regimes contributing to multilateral security dialogue and confidence and security building.

II. THE EVOLUTION OF ASEAN’S CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY BUILDING WITH THE PRC

Through ASEAN, Southeast Asian states have gradually become a regional unit rather than a divided region with different political territories. In the very beginning, although the founding members of ASEAN underscored that ASEAN would not become a military alliance, ASEAN has gradually played an important role in Southeast Asia’s security concerns. To date, ASEAN has been viewed as a regional mechanism aimed at coordinating Southeast
Asian states to cope with economic, social, cultural, political and security challenges. Because of their geographic proximity to the PRC and because of their political, ethnic and historical experiences with the PRC, Southeast Asian governments have emphasized time and again their security concerns associated with the PRC. As Harlan W. Jencks remarks, "Chinese military power, or the lack of it, has affected Southeast Asia for millennia. . . [and] Southeast Asia has been deeply influenced too, by the sporadic migration of peoples into the Southeast Asian massif from the north, as a result of war, conquest, and turbulence in China proper." Individual Southeast Asian states in ASEAN have been able to deal with the PRC without falling into an extremely asymmetric power struggle.

The history of confidence and security building between ASEAN and the PRC is not very long. Before the 1980s, there were no CSBM's between ASEAN and the PRC that were aimed exclusively at the easing of tensions between the two political entities. The following paragraphs are aimed at introducing the development of ASEAN's confidence and security building policy toward the PRC since its inauguration. It is necessary to point out in advance that this chapter may not remark on every detail, but the facts and events mentioned should be enough to depict a picture of ASEAN's effort to enhance mutual trust and promote security relations with the PRC.

A. From 1967 to 1989

ASEAN in the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 emphasized its economic, cultural and social functions, but the PRC always viewed it as a regional security organization driven by the United States. In 1971, the tensions between ASEAN and the PRC seemed to ease up a little bit because of the idea of the Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) raised by ASEAN. However, substantial issues, such as the ideological conflicts between ASEAN members and the PRC, the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-supported communist rebellions in Southeast Asia, were still major obstacles to the further development of ASEAN-PRC relations. For example, the support of

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the CCP for the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) brought about anti-communist and anti-Chinese campaigns led by the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, ABRI) and finally caused the severance of diplomatic relations between the PRC and Indonesia. Similar cases occurred once and again in other ASEAN member states. Since the main pillar of ASEAN-PRC relations hinged on the PRC-Indonesian relationship, it is thus understandable why ASEAN-PRC security relations could not improve.

In the 1970s, there were a handful of unilateral CSBMs initiated by ASEAN, most of which were less effective and rhetorical only. One of the earliest unilateral CSBMs was the proposal of the ZOPFAN raised by ASEAN in 1971. Its emphases on “the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, abstention from threat or use of force, peaceful settlement of international disputes, equal rights and self-determination and non-interference in affairs of States,” the “Declaration on the Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation” of the 1955 Bandung Conference, as well as the resolution to maintain peace, freedom and independence, all garnered extensive support from the PRC. The other major CSBMs put forward by ASEAN in the 1970s included the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord, which states that all ASEAN member governments, “individually and collectively, shall take active steps for the early establishment of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality,” as well as the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, which recognizes the value of “cooperation with all peace-loving nations, both within and outside Southeast Asia, in the furtherance of world peace, stability and harmony.” What is worth noticing is that, despite the goodwill, these CSBMs were introduced unilaterally by ASEAN member states and aimed mainly at dealing with situations within the South-east Asian region.

In February 1979, mainly out of strategic considerations, the PRC’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) attacked Vietnam to check the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. This military operation seemed ineffective, but beyond all question, it triggered a series of political cooperation between ASEAN and the PRC – both were against the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia. Subtle changes emerged in ASEAN-PRC relations since the mid-1970s. With the normalization of United States relations with the PRC, some ASEAN states considered improving their relations with the PRC, as well. Among ASEAN states, Malaysia fi...
lished diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1974. The Philippines and Thailand then followed and set up diplomatic ties with the PRC in 1975. Indonesia and Singapore decided to put off the establishment of formal relations with the PRC on account of domestic concerns and military considerations. Despite different foreign policies toward the PRC, all founding members of ASEAN sent trade representatives to Beijing by the end of 1977. Meanwhile, the separation of the PRC and the Soviet Union and the territorial disputes between the PRC and Vietnam made the PRC realize the importance of bettering relations with its neighboring states, especially ASEAN members. Out of political and strategic considerations, the PRC had to cooperate with ASEAN in dealing with the great pressure from the Soviet Union and Vietnam.

During this period, the most symbolic and obvious CSBM might be the establishment of diplomatic relations between ASEAN member governments and the Chinese communist government, because it meant that these governments began the process of eliminating disagreements, avoiding confrontations and devoting themselves to the improvement of their relations.8

In the 1980s, interactions between ASEAN and the PRC increased both economically and politically. These interactions were of great help for the enhancement of mutual understanding, the reduction in unnecessary suspicions, as well as the establishment of a stable and peaceful external environment that could boost their economic growth.

Economically, as a result of both political and economic considerations, the trade volume – probably the most salient indicator

8. For example, Malaysia in 1974 was the first ASEAN member government to establish diplomatic ties with the PRC, when Prime Minister Tun Haji Abdul Razak visited Beijing. In 1975, both the Philippines and Thailand established formal relations with the PRC. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos paid a visit to Beijing when the two sides agreed to establish formal relations. The PRC Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping and Vice-Chairwoman of the National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Deng Yinchao visited Bangkok in 1978 and 1979, respectively. Thai Prime Ministers and the Presidents of the National Assembly visited Beijing even more frequently at that time. The remaining two founding member governments of ASEAN – Indonesia and Singapore – did not set up diplomatic ties with the PRC until the 1990s. However, high-level visits between Singapore and the PRC had begun. Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew visited Beijing in 1975, and the PRC Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping reciprocated in 1978. These high-level visits appeared to be the most obvious bilateral CSBMs that could be observed in the 1970s.
between ASEAN and the PRC increased, but not remarkably. Although trade volume between ASEAN and the PRC increased, ASEAN-PRC trade remained marginal, and the United States, Japan, and Western Europe were still the targets of ASEAN exports and the major sources of ASEAN imports. Some think that, although in certain sectors there was a competitive relationship between ASEAN and the PRC in the 1980s, the flexible nature of ASEAN economies made their relationship with the PRC complimentary rather than competitive. This argument is challenged by others, such as Fred Herschede and Leszek Buszynski, who maintain that because the economies of ASEAN states and of the PRC were alike and competitive in nature, it was possible that such competition could result in economic rivalry between ASEAN and the PRC. In Southeast Asia, there have always been concerns about trade and investment competition between ASEAN member states and the PRC that may affect the economic growth in the ASEAN region. Therefore, one can not rule out the possibility that the development of economic relations may not always expedite confidence and security building between ASEAN and the PRC.

During this period, despite the limited impact of improved economic relations, political breakthroughs in ASEAN-PRC relations were rather manifest. Although large-scaled CSBMs between ASEAN and the PRC had not sprung up in the 1980s, high-level visits remained the most visible aspect of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building. One of the key turning points for progress in CSBMs between ASEAN and the PRC was the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. Feeling intimidated by the Vietnamese pres-

9. Regardless of their relations with the PRC, the founding members of ASEAN, except Indonesia, had sent their trade missions to the PRC before the mid-1970s. The trade mission of Indonesia was not sent until November 1977.


13. For example, LEE Kuan Yew of Singapore expressed the same viewpoint in a speech in Sidney, Australia. For details, see China Times, November 26, 2000.

14. With the exception of Brunei and Indonesia, high-level officials of four other ASEAN-6 members had visited Beijing to promote diplomatic and trade relations.
ence in Cambodia and the refugee outflow from Vietnam and Cambodia, ASEAN members, particularly Thailand and Indonesia, had to coordinate different opinions and measures to maintain the stability of the region and make Vietnam withdraw from Cambodia. Out of its strategy of counter-Soviet expansion and of support for communist insurgents, the PRC leadership expressed its desire for friendly relations with ASEAN states by downplaying its party-to-party relationships with several communist parties in Southeast Asia and providing moral and material support to ASEAN members to resist threats from Vietnam.15

As a result, ASEAN-PRC relations during the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia were generally better, especially Sino-Thai bilateral relations, which to a certain extent benefited mutual understanding and trust between ASEAN and the PRC. Yet, the Cambodian issue had limited effect on the further development of ASEAN-PRC relations, because Indonesia and Malaysia presupposed that the PRC’s cooperation with ASEAN was aimed at countering expansion of the Soviet Union.16

It is obvious that in the 1980s, there were no major bilateral CSBMs between ASEAN and the PRC, except high-level visits, but overall bilateral relations improved over time. Due to Soviet-Vietnamese expansion, both ASEAN and the PRC formed a loose political alignment for containment of Soviet-Vietnamese threats. By means of such an alignment, ASEAN and the PRC gradually understood shared concerns and enhanced mutual understanding, thus building trust to a greater degree. Nonetheless, ASEAN states were still worried about the real intention behind the PRC’s moves, and conflicts over sovereign territories, particularly the South China Sea, remained among ASEAN states and the PRC.

Despite the slow development of ASEAN-PRC CSBMs, both sides participated in various global, legally-binding CSBMs, which indirectly allayed mutual distrust between ASEAN and the PRC. Irrespective of real intentions, participation in these CSBMs made

16. For details, see Buszynski, supra note 12, p. 166.
ASEAN and the PRC realize the rules of the game and sped up their integration into a world where arms control and peaceful foreign relations were mainstream thinking. Of these global, legally-binding CSBMs, participation in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Treaty of Nuclear Non-Proliferation (NPT), and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) were the most influential. Only major ASEAN member states are IAEA members. Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam became IAEA members in 1957, the Philippines in 1958, Singapore in 1967, and Malaysia in 1969. The PRC officially joined IAEA in 1984. With regard to the NPT, all Southeast Asian states but Myanmar granted accession to or ratified it in the 1970s or 1980s. The PRC did not accede to the NPT until March 1992. With respect to the BTWC, all Southeast Asian states signed it, except Brunei, which signed in January 1991. The PRC signed the BTWC in November 1984.

B. From 1990 to 2000

ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building entered a new phase in the post-Cold War era. With the precedent set by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), norms developed, most of which were quite informal, which dealt with internal security matters of ASEAN. These norms have played a significant role in confidence and security building among member states. After the Cold War, with growing economic and military power and with the changing regional security milieu in Southeast Asia, ASEAN has realized an increasingly important role in security affairs, and its members have begun to consider establishing formal CSBMs to prevent potential conflicts within and outside ASEAN. Since one of the largest possible threats to Southeast Asian security comes from the PRC, ASEAN and its member states have attempted to enhance CSBMs between them and the PRC to create favorable conditions for peace. Nonetheless, the PRC did not embrace the concept of confidence and security building until the PRC was gradually involved in multilateral conferences or meetings on international and regional security in the early 1990s.


18. Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam signed the BTWC in 1972, and Thailand signed one year later.
Before then, rhetorical goodwill rather than substantial compromise or collaboration was the major strategy adopted by both ASEAN and the PRC. Even since the 1990s, conflict and cooperation still co-exist in interactions between ASEAN and the PRC.

Politically, despite continued suspicions about the PRC’s motives, ASEAN has developed a cooperative relationship with the PRC and endeavored to create a peaceful external environment in Southeast Asia. In addition to its original goal of promoting the economic, social and cultural development of Southeast Asia, ASEAN has turned into a security-oriented regional organization that spoke collectively for the Southeast Asian states. In the meantime, PRC leaders suspended their support for armed insurrections in Southeast Asia, recognized the significance of conflict resolution with its neighboring states, and reiterated their adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Economically, ASEAN member states increased their trade and investment in the PRC. The PRC exported more products to the Southeast Asian region. Economic activities between ASEAN and the PRC became an important part of ASEAN-PRC cooperation.

The number of state and other high-level official visits between ASEAN member states and the PRC grew rapidly in the 1990s, which seemed to denote “the point of no return” in the development of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building. For example, from 1990 to 1992 there were 219 political visits between ASEAN states and the PRC. In the 1990s, major leaders of ASEAN and of the PRC visited each other very often.

Both ASEAN and the PRC expressed, implicitly or explicitly, goodwill to eliminate animosity and magnify mutual trust. Participation in global CSBMs signifies one of their collective efforts. Table 1 shows some major global CSBMs in which both ASEAN members and the PRC participated after the Cold War. These CSBMs include the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA). The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is an important indicator of devotion to arms control and disarmament, but neither ASEAN members nor the PRC agreed on it. ASEAN member states have not been capable of developing advanced missile tech-

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nology, but the PRC has. In 1992, the PRC wrote to United States to show its adherence to the MTCR, but it has not yet pledged to adhere to the revised 1993 MTCR guidelines.

Table 1. Select Global CSBMs in which ASEAN Members and the PRC Participated in the 1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CTBT*</th>
<th>UNCLOS</th>
<th>CWC</th>
<th>UNROCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>01/1997</td>
<td>11/1996</td>
<td>07/1997</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>09/1996</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>01/1993**</td>
<td>yes (signed only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>07/1997</td>
<td>06/1998</td>
<td>02/1997</td>
<td>yes (signed only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>09/1996</td>
<td>05/1996</td>
<td>01/1993**</td>
<td>yes (signed only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>09/1996</td>
<td>05/1984</td>
<td>12/1996</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>01/1999</td>
<td>11/1994</td>
<td>05/1997</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>11/1996</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>01/1993**</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>09/1996</td>
<td>06/1996</td>
<td>04/1997</td>
<td>yes (before 1998)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All are signatories to the NPT.
** Signatories to the UNCLOS, not ratified yet.
*** The PRC announced its withdrawal in November 1998 in protest because the United States provided the United Nations with information about arms sales to the Republic of China (ROC), each year. 20

In addition to high-level visits and joining global, legally-binding CSBMs, most of the CSBMs undertaken by ASEAN have been declaratory and transparency ones and occurred in regional regimes that were politically binding such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Council for Security and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSAP).

The following description of ASEAN’s attitude toward the PRC is neither detailed nor broad but is able to serve as a basis for understanding why ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building after the Cold War is a seeming success.

The year 1991 denoted the inception of a new age of ASEAN-PRC political cooperation and confidence and security building. In July 1991, the PRC sent its delegates to participate in the Workshop

20. In 1997, the PRC protested against US arms transfers to the ROC, because it alleged these sales were neither legitimate nor transfers between sovereign states. Hence, it asked that such entries be deleted from future reports to the UNROCA. Yet, a footnote itemizing 1996 US arms exports to the ROC was still included in the US 1997 report to the UNROCA. See Malcolm Chalmers and Owen Greene, “The UN Register of Conventional Arms: A Progress Report,” Disarmament Diplomacy, No. 35 (March 1999), at <http://www.acronym.org.uk/35armreg.htm>. 
on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea, held in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{21} Also in 1991, the 24\textsuperscript{th} ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in Kuala Lumpur included the presence of Qian Qichen, then-PRC Foreign Affairs Minister, as guest of the Malaysian government. Qian expressed the PRC's desire for improvement in mutual cooperation, particularly in the field of science and technology.

In July 1992, the 25\textsuperscript{th} AMM invited Qian as guest of the Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC). Foreign Affairs Ministers of the ASEAN member governments issued the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea, which is a synthesis of the 1991 Bandung joint statement of the Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{22} This Declaration was put forward because “ASEAN members, notably the Philippines, were most concerned with what [the PRC] would do next in the South China Sea. . . when. . . the United States would withdraw from Subic Bay by [the] end of 1992.”\textsuperscript{23} It stresses “the necessity to resolve all sovereignty and jurisdictional issues pertaining to the South China Sea by peaceful means, without resort to force,” encourages “all parties concerned to exercise restraint with view to creating a positive climate for the eventual resolution of all disputes,” aims to “explore the possibility cooperation in the South China Sea” relevant to non-military issues, and requests “all parties concerned to apply the principles contained in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as the basis for establishing a code of international conduct over the South China Sea.”\textsuperscript{24} Acknowledging the basic principles of the Declaration, the PRC did not accept the whole document.\textsuperscript{25} Despite his insistence on bilateral solutions to the maritime disputes, Qian indicated that the PRC was willing to discuss and solve the South China Sea dispute by joint exploration and endorse security cooperation in the Asia Pacific region.\textsuperscript{26} This occasion is historically important because it

\textsuperscript{21} Yet, the South China Sea sovereign dispute has not been on the agenda of the Workshop since 1995 because of PRC opposition.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Id.}, pp. 23-4.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea}, Manila, Philippines (July 22, 1992).
\textsuperscript{25} In fact, the PRC's reluctance to discuss the South China Sea dispute multilaterally did not diminish until 1996, when the third ARF was held in Jakarta.
\textsuperscript{26} Lee, supra note 22, pp. 42-4.
was the first official meeting issue between ASEAN and the PRC touching on the South China Sea.

After the Philippines had negotiated with the PRC and Vietnam about a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea, ASEAN foreign ministers officially backed such an idea at the 26th AMM. In early 1993, both the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and the meeting of ASC recommended that the Secretary-General of ASEAN visit Beijing to explore the possibility of further cooperation with the PRC. Obviously, the PRC felt very much interested in the ASEAN Secretary-General’s visit. In September 1993, ASEAN Secretary-General Dato’ Ajit Singh was invited by TANG Jiaxuan, then-PRC Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, to pay an eight-day visit to Beijing. The principal objective was to enhance ASEAN-PRC cooperation in the low-politics field. ASEAN and the PRC co-published the Joint Press Statement for the Meeting to Explore the Establishment of the Consultative Relationship with the People’s Republic of China. They admitted that the stability and dynamic economic growth of the Asia-Pacific region were of great help for the development of ASEAN-PRC cooperation, but no specific political-military CSBMs were discussed in this document.

In 1994, at the 27th AMM held in Bangkok, the PRC became ASEAN’s consultative partner and was admitted to the ARF. The PRC thought that CSBMs could not be too specific, or they would be difficult to conduct. Furthermore, ASEAN and the PRC concurred that consultation meetings at the senior official level should be used to exchange views on political and security affairs.

Since April 1995, ASEAN and the PRC have convened the SOM on political consultations on a yearly basis. At the 1995 meeting in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, both sides exchanged their respective views on the South China Sea dispute. A follow-up development was that Qian at the 28th AMM and Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) in May 1995 recommended that maritime disputes be solved "through peaceful negotiations according to recognized interna-

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28. The ASEAN-PRC Senior Official Consultative Meetings were composed of ASEAN Secretary-General, SOM leaders (permanent secretaries of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of all ASEAN member governments), and the PRC Vice or Assistant Foreign Minister.

29. However, it is said that the South China Sea dispute was discussed in a private form, and that such a discussion was the result of a collective request of ASEAN delegates.
tional law and the contemporary law of the sea including the basic principles and legal regimes defined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.” It not only was the first official expression of such a view at ASEAN-PRC meetings, but also an announcement welcomed by ASEAN.

The second ARF held in 1995 witnessed important steps toward the establishment of ASEAN-PRC CSBMs in the aftermath of the Cold War. First of all, the second ARF issued a Concept Paper, mainly by the effort of ASEAN, which addressed two complementary approaches to confidence and security building – i.e., the adaptation of ASEAN’s practices and the implementation of solid CSBMs. In the first approach, states involved in the ARF were encouraged to learn from ASEAN’s experiences in the easing of tension among its member states, the promotion of regional cooperation without explicit legally-binding CSBMs, as well as the establishment of consultation, consensus and a good-neighbor policy further sustained by the regular exchanges of high-level visits among ASEAN member governments.

In the second approach, the Chairman of the second ARF, Brunei Darussalam, conducted a thorough consultation and proposed short, medium, and long-term practices of confidence and security building for ARF participants. The Track Two activities – such as ASEAN-ISIS and the CSCAP – were deemed helpful to strengthen CSBMs in the Asia Pacific region. The PRC accepted the principles stated in the Concept Paper, but it did not want to turn the ARF itself into a conflict-resolving regime. The PRC argued, in addition, that efforts could be made to promote issues about which all participants had reached consensus and that the move from confidence building to the ultimate goal – conflict resolution – should be gradual and piecemeal, with pursuit of unanimity within the ARF.

At the second ARF, all member states were encouraged to publish defense white papers every year on a voluntary basis and exchange views on the information provided in their respective white papers. For example, Singapore has published Defense of Singapore annually since 1990; Thailand had its first defense white paper entitled The Defense of Thailand in 1994; Malaysia published a report on its military in the same year; and, Indonesia issued Pol-

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30. ASEAN Secretariat, Twenty-eighth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Post Ministerial Conferences and Dialogue Partners and ASEAN Regional Forum, Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 1995, p. 66.
icy of the State Defense and Security of the Republic of Indonesia in the following year. In November 1995, the PRC State Council published *China: Arms Control and Disarmament*, which was the PRC’s very first attempt at contributing to its military transparency. Although this document did not reveal important military information to the outside world, it had a symbolic meaning, showing the PRC’s concession to other ARF members in the field of confidence and security building.

Also significantly, at the second ARF, Qian officially introduced Beijing’s position about confidence and security building. Participation in the UNROCA, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the settlement of the South China Sea dispute according to international law and the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea were confirmed by all participants.

At the 1995 ASEAN Summit, ASEAN-7 and Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar signed the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). This treaty reaffirmed the devotion of the Southeast Asian states to peace and stability in Southeast Asia through peaceful coexistence and cooperation. It also corresponded with the ZOPFAN, the Program of Action on ZOPFAN, the NPT and the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the UN General Assembly. The PRC has upheld ASEAN’s idea of nuclear disarmament and environmental protection presented in the SEANWFZ treaty, but has not fully acceded to the treaty because it opposed the treaty’s inclusion of the area comprising Southeast Asian states’ continental shelves and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), some of which pertain to the South China Sea.

In July 1996, at the 29th AMM in Jakarta, the PRC was accorded full dialogue partner status. It marked the transition of

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31. He held that the establishment of CSBMs was highly associated with the improvement of the Asia-Pacific security and the stability and prosperity in the region, that benign and shared political desire was the prerequisite for voluntary cooperation among states in the Asia-Pacific region, that confidence building should not be confined to political and military affairs only, that mutual respect and equal consultations were of great importance to success in CSBMs, that CSBMs in the region should be based on the reality of diversification in the Asia-Pacific region and should not heedlessly transplant other regions' models of CSBMs among ARF members, and that an incremental approach should be adopted to establish CSBMs. See QIAN Qichen, statement before the Second Ministerial Meeting of the ARF on August 1, 1995, *Renmin Ribao* (People’s Daily), August 2, 1995; quoted in XIA Liping, “The Evolution of Chinese Views Toward CBMs,” in Michael Krepon, ed., *Chinese Perspectives on Confidence-building Measures*, Report 23, Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1997, pp. 17-8.
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ASEAN-PRC intercourse from consultative relationship to dialogue partnership. At the third ARF in 1996, ASEAN member states, the PRC and other ARF participants promised to sign and ratify global non-proliferation and disarmament regimes such as the NPT and CTBT. Because of the Mischief Reef incident, some ASEAN member states insisted on discussion of the South China Sea dispute, and Qian contended that the PRC had ratified the UNCLOS and intended to shelve the dispute while endorsing joint exploration in that area.

At the 1996 ASEAN-PMC 7+10, Qian reiterated the PRC's willingness to support the development of the ARF and maintain bilateral and multilateral exchanges of views with ASEAN on issues of collective interest. Then, the ASEAN-China Joint Cooperation Committee (ACJCC) was first held in Beijing in February 1997. Both sides agreed that the ACJCC would coordinate all the ASEAN-PRC economic, developmental, people-to-people, cultural and functional interchanges at the working level. The ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund was established to fulfill the aforementioned purpose.

The East Asian financial crisis between 1997 and 1998 further improved ASEAN-PRC relations. Most of the major ASEAN member states could not withstand the crisis and thereby sought a stable economic environment in which their respective economies could recover. Because the PRC was barely affected by the crisis, it announced a monetary policy aimed at maintaining the Renminbi and provided immediate financial aid of billions of dollars to Southeast Asian states, both of which effectively stopped Southeast Asian economies from worsening.

In March 1997, Beijing and Manila co-chaired the ARF's Inter-sessional Group (ISG) on Confidence Building Measures. It was Beijing that first proposed the idea of co-chairing such a conference on multilateral political and security issues of common concern, which was a positive step toward ASEAN-PRC CSBMs, as well.

32. ASEAN-PMC 7 + 10 was presented by ASEAN-7 plus ASEAN's ten dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, the PRC, the European Union, India, Japan, South Korea, Russia, New Zealand and the United States), following the annual ARF foreign ministers meeting.

In December 1997, ASEAN invited the PRC, Japan and Republic of Korea (ROK) to the ASEAN+3 Summit in Kuala Lumpur. PRC President JIANG Zemin, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, ROK Prime Minister Koh Kun and the heads of ASEAN member governments attended this summit. The ASEAN leaders met Jiang – i.e., the ASEAN+1 (or ASEAN-PRC) Summit – after the summit of all twelve states. In addition to his reemphasis on the intention to stabilize the exchange rate of its currency, Jiang was in line with ASEAN leaders that the territorial disputes in the South China Sea ought to be solved “through friendly consultations and negotiations in accordance with universally recognized international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.”

In July 1998, the PRC State Council issued its first defense white paper, entitled China’s National Defense, which further enhanced the transparency of its military capabilities and intentions. It noted increased military interactions between the PRC and the world and emphasized the PRC’s determination to pursue confidence and security building with its neighboring states. In addition, it outlined the PRC’s “new concept of security” – “mutual and equal security; seeking security by establishing mutual trust, dialogue and cooperation without interfering in the internal affairs of other countries and without aiming at a third party; preventing military forces from threatening or harming other countries’ security and stability; implementing and sticking to a national defense policy that is defensive in nature; adopting suitable confidence-building measures in border and disputed areas on a bilateral basis; and engaging in friendly contacts between military forces.”

At the fifth ARF in 1998, ASEAN and the PRC, along with other ARF participants, agreed to set up multilateral communications network and engage in more military exchanges. In December 1998, ASEAN leaders at the 6th ASEAN Summit in Hanoi announced unanimously that they would “promote efforts to settle disputes in the South China Sea by peaceful means in accordance

35. Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, China’s National Defense (July 1998), pp. 34-5. A similar concept was outlined earlier by Qian at the 1997 ARF: “security should be based neither on military build-up nor on military alliance, but rather, it should be grounded in mutual trust and common interests.” See QIAN Qichen, Opening Statement for the ARF, Subang Jaya, July 27, 1997.
with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and in the spirit of the 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea. Then, ASEAN and the PRC held the second ASEAN+1 Summit in Hanoi. Both sides acknowledged the partnership of good-neighborliness and mutual trust between ASEAN and the PRC and that the PRC had great vitality as the twenty-first century was approaching.

In March 1999, the PRC made a major concession to the Philippines by refraining from hostile action in the Spratlys and agreeing to cease building structures on Mischief Reef, located within the 200 nautical mile EEZ claimed by the Philippine government. Yet, the PRC reiterated that it possessed incontrovertible sovereignty over the South China Sea, that the sovereign dispute should be put aside and the parties involved should focus on joint exploration in this area, that this dispute should be solved according to international law, and that this dispute should be negotiated on a bilateral basis.

In November 1999, the ASEAN+3 Summit was held in Manila. All participants issued a Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation, in which they assented to continuing coordination and cooperation in the political-security and transnational issues in order to enhance mutual understanding needed to create enduring harmony and stability in East Asia. At this Summit, both ASEAN and the PRC reiterated their resolution to work their differences out through amicable and peaceful means and forge consensus on the South China Sea dispute by discussing a code of conduct in that area. Despite the hesitation in signing the SEANWFZ treaty, PRC Premier Zhu Rongji affirmed the PRC’s intention to accept the Protocol to the SEANWFZ treaty and supported the TAC in Southeast Asia.

Since March 2000, efforts to come up with a code of conduct in the South China Sea have begun. The first round of the ASEAN-PRC Senior Officials Consultations Working Group on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea convened on March 15, 2000, in Hua Hin, Thailand. Self-restraint and the non-use of force or threats against each other were deemed of importance by both ASEAN and the PRC officials. In addition, four major issues were discussed: (1) dispute resolution in the South China Sea; (2) confidence building; (3) cooperation in marine issues and environmental protection; and, (4) methods of consultation. Possible areas of cooperation included: marine environmental protection, marine scien-

tific research, safety navigation and communications, search and rescue operations, and the prevention of transnational crime. Although ASEAN preferred a more specific code of conduct, the PRC wanted to start with general principles.37

A follow-up meeting was held on May 26, 2000, in Kuala Lumpur. A consolidated working draft was put forward in order to establish principles and norms about peaceful settlement of disputes and regional cooperation. On August 24, 2000, the PRC hosted the next meeting of the Working Group in Dalian. In October, the fourth round meeting was held in Hanoi. No salient progress was made at the last two meetings.

In October 2000, the State Council of the PRC published another white paper entitled *China's National Defense in 2000*, trying to further enhance the transparency in its national defense policy. The PRC's primary goal in the twenty-first century is “to safeguard state sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security,” and to work hard “for a peaceful international and a favorable peripheral environment for [the PRC's] socialist modernization drive.”38 Strengthening national defense is aimed at creating a safe and mutually beneficial environment for economic development. In terms of specific CSBMs the PRC has been involved in, it simply mentioned those with its northern or northwestern neighboring states.39

CSBMs can be divided into five main categories: declaratory, communication, constraint, transparency and verification.40 The


39. They include, for example, the Agreement on Confidence-Building in the Military Field Along the Border Areas and the five-power joint communiqué for the development of mutual military and political relations and friendly cooperation based on equality and mutual trust, both of which include the PRC, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

history of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building shows that progress has been made in the first four categories – that is, contemporary ASEAN-PRC CSBMs occur in the declaratory, communication, constraint and transparency categories. Declaratory measures have taken place very often between ASEAN and the PRC. Acceptance of existing borders, the promise of non-attack or non-use of force, a commitment of non-interference in domestic affairs, and a pledge of peaceful co-existence have been confirmed by both ASEAN and the PRC. With regard to communication measures, high-level visits and participation in security dialogue between ASEAN and the PRC have been frequent since the 1990s. In terms of constraint measures, probably because of concern about the South China Sea dispute and the emerging PRC as a coercive hegemon, negotiations on a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea and the request for accepting the SEANWFZ and the ZOPFAN have become a principal theme of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building.

Despite the above-mentioned CSBMs, there have been some setbacks in the development of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building. Some ASEAN member states are still involved in armed or rhetorical conflicts with the PRC over territorial and sovereign disputes, which has generated a certain level of misgivings about the PRC. For example, in 1992, the PRC National People's Congress passed the law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone, claiming sovereignty over a large area, including the South China Sea archipelagos, and declaring the right to pursue and catch foreign vessels violating laws and regulations of the PRC. Partly because of the passage of this law, ASEAN claimants of the South China Sea adopted various moves to gain more solid control over part of the disputed area. In addition to building an airfield in the Paracels in 1993, the PRC since about 1995 has built structures on Mischief Reef without notifying other parties claiming sovereignty over part of all of the South China Sea, which has become one of the "hot spots" for continued Sino-Philippine territorial disputes.

In March 1995, after the Mischief Reef incidence, ASEAN Foreign Ministers issued a statement regarding their worry over uncertain development in the South China Sea dispute. In addition to its reemphasis on the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea,
ASEAN called for extensive discussions on this issue at various levels, following the breakthrough in 1995 when a joint working group between the PRC and Vietnam was set up to work on negotiations over the Spratly dispute. The PRC and the Philippines met and discussed the Spratly dispute, as well. These meetings have contributed to mutual understanding between ASEAN member states and the PRC, but have not been able to ease tensions saliently in the disputed area because the parties involved have always tried to consolidate their control over their claimed areas.

In the 1999 ASEAN-PMC, ASEAN argued that the South China Sea dispute needed to be solved on the basis of the 1997 Joint Statement of the Meeting of the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN and China and the 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea. However, the PRC simply responded vaguely that it would "unswervingly safeguard its sovereignty and independence, firmly pursue the set policy of reform and opening-up, and develop friendly relations and cooperation with all nations in the rest of the world, its neighboring countries in particular, on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence." After the third-round of ASEAN-PRC Senior Officials Consultations Working Group on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea in August 2000, both sides had different strategic and political goals — whereas ASEAN, especially the Philippines, sought the PRC's guarantee not to occupy uninhabitable islets, the PRC simply asked the parties involved to avoid undertaking any action that could make the South China Sea dispute even more complex. What also caused further ASEAN misgivings about the PRC was that the PRC Foreign Affairs Ministry stated at the end of 2000 that the PRC's sovereignty over the South China Sea was indisputable, despite its acceptance of joint development of this area.

The arms buildup in Southeast Asia and the modernization of the PLA are important factors influencing the process of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building, too. Not only is the arms

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buildup of most ASEAN states a consequence of domestic security concerns, but it can also be seen as a counter-measure for the seeming "China threat" and as a way to protect their territories, including EEZs. The PLA usually acts as a hard-liner in the PRC's security policy and tends to view some ASEAN member states, especially Vietnam, as potential threats. Furthermore, the insistence in PRC defense white papers on the primary importance of defending national sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security has generated greater concerns for Southeast Asian states about the real intention of the PRC to develop CSBMs with ASEAN.

Obviously, there is still great uncertainty in security relations between ASEAN and the PRC in the post-Cold War era, mainly resulting from the territorial disputes – particularly the South China Sea. On the one hand, ASEAN and the PRC have signed or agreed on many bilateral or multilateral arrangements or agreements, but on the other hand they cannot remove the deepest conflict while they are attempting to create a peaceful and cooperative environment that can boost economic development. With such a conflicting view on national and regional security, both ASEAN and the PRC understand that the establishment of CSBMs is simply the first stage of development to achieve ultimate peace in Southeast Asia, though apparently they have adopted different approaches to each other.

What with its membership expansion and its members' increased territorial disputes with the PRC, ASEAN has been forced to take into serious account possible territorial conflicts between its member states and the PRC. In general, ASEAN's confidence and security building policy toward the PRC has not changed since the 1990s. To ASEAN, engaging the PRC is in the best interest of ASEAN and probably the fundamental basis for ASEAN-PRC CSBMs. Yet, ASEAN still fears that the PRC is pursuing a regional hegemonic status and turning Southeast Asia into its sphere of influence. Both because the PRC is stronger militarily than any

46. Chalmers, Supra note 44, pp. 44-5.
individual ASEAN member states, and conceivably than ASEAN as a whole, and because ASEAN has called for peaceful and legal resolutions to the settlement of disputes in various official documents, ASEAN as the collective representative of all Southeast Asian states has adopted a strategy of constructive engagement to deal with the PRC, in the hope that consultation and cooperation on CSBMs can be achieved with the PRC.

According to LEE Lai To, inside ASEAN there has not been a unified PRC policy, but engagement as ASEAN's PRC policy is certain.\textsuperscript{47} Allen S. Whiting also points out that engaging the PRC has become the consensus of ASEAN member states, and ASEAN "is careful not to signal a collective anti-China stance."\textsuperscript{48} Since ASEAN is employing the strategy of constructive engagement, not containment, to handle its security relations with the PRC, one of the most urgent matters for ASEAN is to reach a consensus among its member states is to how to develop CSBMs with the PRC – that is, how to engage the PRC more peacefully and effectively, given the fact that there is great diversity in ASEAN member states' perceptions of the potential threat imposed by the PRC.\textsuperscript{49}

To sum up, the end of the Cold War brought new dynamics to ASEAN-PRC CSBMs. Both sides' decision-makers perceive great opportunities for healing historic wounds between ASEAN members and the PRC and working together to create a peaceful and mutually beneficial environment for their respective economic development, but they meanwhile notice sources of incertitude and

\textsuperscript{47} Interview with LEE Lai To, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore, Singapore, August 10, 1999; and LEE Lai To, "Problems and Prospects of Sino-ASEAN Relations," paper presented for the international conference "PRC and the Asia-Pacific Region: Evolving Interactions and Emerging Trends," National SUN Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung, Repp. of China (June 3-4, 1999), p. 8.


\textsuperscript{49} For a different categorization of major ASEAN member states' strategies toward the PRC, see KOONG Paiching, Southeast Asian Countries' Perceptions of China's Military Modernization, Washington, DC: Sigur Center for Asian Studies, George Washington University, 1999, pp. 18-26. Koong argues that Singapore favors a regional balance of power, Malaysia supports counter-dominance, Indonesia adopts assertive engagement, and the Philippines and Vietnam prefer a strategy of containment. This does not, however, conflict with my points of view, because within ASEAN, engaging the PRC is the consensus of ASEAN member states, and the variation in these states' strategies toward the PRC is reflected in bilateral relations between these states and the PRC, especially when these states find out that multilateral regimes are not very effective in dealing with an emerging hegemon – the PRC.
latent threats that can easily sabotage the newly-established foundation of ASEAN-PRC political-military cooperation.

ASEAN member states consent to the principle of non-use of force, and no ASEAN members want to exacerbate security relations with the PRC. ASEAN itself must rely on stable security relations between its member states and the PRC to proceed to consultations on confidence and security building with the PRC. Knowing some of its core member governments have undertaken a “hard approach” to regional security issues, especially to the potential of the “China threat,” ASEAN has insisted on a “soft approach” to maintain friendly relations with the PRC.50

For ASEAN, promoting multilateral security dialogues and mechanisms at different levels is helpful to engage the PRC. Being reluctant to turn into a formal security regime,51 ASEAN has paid a great deal of attention to security cooperation with outside powers and the establishment of regional security dialogues. This is partly because of uncertainty about the post-Cold War external environment. Furthermore, correctly understanding that their security is enhanced to a great extent by showing their collective strength as a larger organization, Southeast Asian states re-constructed ASEAN’s decision-making structure and created multilateral mechanisms to manage regional security issues. The most profound attempt ASEAN made is the institutionalization of the ARF, the only official multilateral regime on security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific. Besides, within the framework of ASEAN, ASEAN Post Ministerial Meeting (PMC), ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1 and the like are also being used to exchange views about security affairs and enhance mutual understanding and trust between ASEAN and the PRC. ASEAN member states also are actively involved in such


51. According to Amitav Acharya, ASEAN’s reluctance results from two factors. First, ASEAN’s founding fathers did not want ASEAN to be looked at like the failed United States-sponsored Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). Second, security cooperation within ASEAN was “neither feasible nor desirable in view of the differing external threat perceptions of the member-states, their lack of self-reliance in defence and unresolved bilateral disputes that threatened the viability of the nascent regional grouping.” See Amitav Acharya, A New Regional Order in South-East Asia: ASEAN in the Post-Cold War Era, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1993, p. 53.
Track II regimes as the CSCAP and the Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea.

When ASEAN is using these mechanisms to exchange views and enhance trust between itself and the PRC, it applies its spirit of solidarity and respect toward different opinions to the above-mentioned mechanisms and successfully establishes channels of consultation and reduces conflict and tension among participants. In addition, ASEAN is unambiguously employing a balance of power among major powers – the PRC, the United States and Japan – to leave the PRC no choice but to join the dialogue with ASEAN and regional security regimes to maintain or augment its influence in Southeast Asia.

III. INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS ON ASEAN: ANALYSIS THROUGH THE LENS OF CAPACITY TO ACT

As global interdependence increases, it appears rather difficult to confine the study on the impact of these internal determinants to national borders. Arms buildup, ethnic conflicts and environmental pollution in one state may affect the stability and security of other states or the region. Consequently, decision-makers will simultaneously calculate "the domestic and international implications of their actions" when dealing with foreign affairs.\(^{52}\) Factors outside the state actors are important. They "may constrain individual choices, but they do not determine behavior."\(^{53}\) It is conceivable that transitions in international or regional systems may result from small changes in domestic political, economic and social changes, while these domestic changes may or may not be caused by external forces.\(^{54}\)

Given the importance of the role of internal changes in regional or global changes, the research focuses on three major sets of domestic or internal determinants to explore their impact on ASEAN's confidence and security building policy, some of which can be viewed as responses to the challenges from foreign actors.

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The three sets of determinants are: differences in power\textsuperscript{55} – particularly military capabilities and socioeconomic development; internal political and decision-making restraints; and, perceptions of external security and threats. Scrutinizing these variables separately will not advance the understanding of the formation and development of ASEAN-PRC CSBMs in the post-Cold War context. Through the lens of capacity to act, nevertheless, these determinants together condition access to the decision-making process in the international community.\textsuperscript{56}

The first determinant is used to gauge ASEAN's power. Knowing this can be of help in understanding how ASEAN would exert influence on the PRC. The second and third determinants are employed to evaluate the willingness of ASEAN to use its power to deal with security issues. With a better grasp of power and willingness ASEAN possesses in the arena of foreign relations, that is, with better knowledge of ASEAN's capacity to act, one can know why ASEAN accepted and conducted certain confidence and security building policies. These determinants might contribute to ASEAN's power or intention to adopt a confrontational or high-profile policy, thus impeding confidence and security building between ASEAN and the PRC to a certain degree. Or, they might prevent ASEAN from becoming more assertive when it is involved in a dilemma or predicament in its relations with the PRC. In this section, why and how these determinants impact the evolution of ASEAN's confidence and security building policy toward the PRC in the aftermath of the Cold War will be the focal point.

What needs to be mentioned in advance is that this research focuses solely on the nature of, and constraints on, ASEAN's, not the PRC's, capacity to act. The analysis on the PRC's capacity to act will be presented briefly to give readers a better grasp of why these constraints affect ASEAN's confidence and security building policy toward the PRC after the Cold War.


A. Differences in Power: Military Capabilities and Socioeconomic Development

ASEAN's attributes associated with power can be determined largely by the development of military capabilities and socioeconomic conditions. These attributes not only affect the decision-making of political elites but are also one of the important criteria of influence that can be imposed on other actors in the system.

ASEAN is an agglomeration of small powers in Southeast Asia, whereas the PRC is now viewed as a rising power that might be capable of confronting the current global hegemon — the United States — in the near future. After the Cold War, ASEAN has successfully involved Myanmar and the states in Indochina and finally moved toward the goal of boosting economic development and maintaining peace in the region of Southeast Asia. With great diversity among its members, ASEAN leaders have committed to economic growth and integration but refused to consider joint military actions. The financial crisis in 1997 held off economic progress and arms acquisition in most Southeast Asian states, and it takes years for these states to recover from the economic loss. The PRC has sped up its economic and military development and modernization and become too large to ignore. With growing political power globally and regionally, it began interacting with the outside world and getting involved in external affairs to garner support and gain influence. Having shunned the financial crisis, moreover, it can concentrate on economic development and military modernization in a more efficient way.

It is obvious that the differences in military capabilities and socioeconomic development will more or less influence the strategic calculations of ASEAN leaders. The following descriptions are static and aimed at sketching out the configurations of ASEAN's and the PRC's military and socioeconomic capabilities after the Cold War. Military capabilities will be measured by military expenditures and the military forces and weapons. The analysis of socioeconomic attributes will be based on the following seven categories: population, the adult literacy rate, the growth rates of gross domestic product (GDP), per capita gross national product (GNP), merchandise exports/imports, total external debt and international reserves. It needs to be noted in advance that they may be neither complete nor detailed in depicting the full picture of ASEAN's and the PRC's military and socioeconomic power.

Military Capabilities. ASEAN's military capabilities are reflected in the mixed characteristics of modern and obsolete weap-
onory, as well as in salient differences in defense budgets and the quality of military forces. Besides its ethnic and cultural diversity, ASEAN has a salient diversity in the formation and development of the military forces. Among major ASEAN states, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand adopt an American military system, whereas the military systems in Malaysia and Singapore are more British. Vietnam’s military system is influenced by the former Soviet Union. Most ASEAN member states rely on external powers other than the PRC to enhance self-security. For example, the Cobra Gold maneuver includes the United States, Thailand and Singapore, and the Five Powers Defense Agreement (FPDA) includes two ASEAN members – Malaysia and Singapore – and three non-ASEAN states – Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

For all ASEAN members except Singapore, one of the major reasons of using force or expanding the defense forces is the maintenance of internal security. In the 1990s, internal insecurity within ASEAN states diminished, but territorial and sovereign disputes in Southeast Asia had become another major reason to do so. On the one hand, ASEAN states have the same goals in terms of national defense – that is, ensuring the stability of the external environment beneficial to their economic development; on the other hand, it is very difficult for ASEAN to coordinate with its members to form a unified defense policy that can meet all members’ needs: more specifically, the integrity of their territories. For example, there is little coordination in developing compatibility between ASEAN members’ military orders of battle and no bilateral or multilateral proposals for arms purchasing and production.\(^57\) It is therefore very complex and difficult if one would like to measure ASEAN’s military capabilities as a whole. This research will provide an overview of the development of ASEAN’s military capabilities in the post-Cold War period.

ASEAN states have always directed their efforts into developing conventional warfare capabilities rather than nuclear warfare ones, because they all agree on the SEANWFZ treaty. Developing rapid deployment forces that can deal with internal and external security and command, control, communication and intelligence capabilities threats – particularly those of the navies and the air forces

play a crucial role in ASEAN states' defense programs.\textsuperscript{58} The size of defense budgets of ASEAN member states expanded with the betterment of domestic economics.\textsuperscript{59} In addition, "[t]he need to respond to technological superior military capability in the ASEAN region, on the one hand, and the rise of adversaries with high technology weapons, on the other, also made the acquisition of high technology weapons necessary and vital."\textsuperscript{60} It is obvious that military expenditures of major ASEAN states have decreased – with the exception of Singapore – after the financial crisis in 1997 (See Table 2).\textsuperscript{61} Without such a crisis, major ASEAN states would have been able to replace their old or second-hand weapons with high-tech ones even more rapidly.

Table 2. Military Expenditures of Select ASEAN States

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</tr>
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<td>Singapore</td>
<td>2706</td>
<td>2875</td>
<td>2967</td>
<td>3068</td>
<td>3673</td>
<td>4026</td>
<td>4518</td>
<td>4901*</td>
<td>4972*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>2664</td>
<td>2996</td>
<td>3289</td>
<td>3321</td>
<td>3571</td>
<td>3563</td>
<td>3511</td>
<td>3271</td>
<td>2653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11040</td>
<td>11569</td>
<td>12011</td>
<td>12738</td>
<td>13388</td>
<td>13861</td>
<td>15130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Estimated amount

Figures are in United States $ million, at 1995 prices and exchange rates

\textsuperscript{58} Id., p. 141; and MA Yanbing, “Dong Meng Leng Zhan Ho De An Quan Zhan Lue,” in YAN Xuetong, et. al., Zhong Guo Yu Ya Tai An Quan (China and Asia-Pacific Security), Beijing: Shi Shi Press, 1999, pp. 178-81.


\textsuperscript{60} Singh, id., p. 57.

Table 3 presents a rough overview of the physical military capabilities of key ASEAN member states. Generally speaking, most of the ASEAN states’ arms procurement has been heavily impacted by the financial crisis. Indonesia’s navy and air force were capable of countering smuggling, piracy and controlling the straits and adjacent waters before the financial crisis. Due to economic difficulties, the Indonesian government has suspended its purchase of 12 Su-30 fighters from Russia and some advanced submarines from Germany. Yet, their naval strength could be enhanced if the plan for 14 new warships and an enlarged marine corps can be carried out. The quality of the Malaysian military is at least equal to most of its ASEAN neighbors. Although Malaysia has postponed plans to procure new submarines, offshore patrol vessels and combat tanks, its plan to enhance the air force is continuing. With a small number of advanced fighters such as the F-18 and MiG-29, Malaysia also is looking forward to purchasing Russia’s Su-30.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Combat Tanks: 355</td>
<td>Main Combat Vessels: 41</td>
<td>Combat Aircraft: 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aircraft: 72</td>
<td>Submarines: 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aircraft: 104</td>
<td>Tanks (Marine): 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Combat Tanks: 26</td>
<td>Main Combat Vessels: 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helicopters: 10</td>
<td>Anti-Sub Helicopters: 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Combat Tanks: 41</td>
<td>Main Combat Vessels: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aircraft: 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Combat Tanks: 410</td>
<td>Main Combat Vessels: 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aircraft: 286</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Combat Tanks: 787</td>
<td>Main Combat Vessels: 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aircraft: 286</td>
<td>(including an aircraft carrier)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Combat Tanks: 1935</td>
<td>Main Combat Vessels: 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aircraft: 99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>Combat Tanks: 3554</td>
<td>Main Combat Vessels: 145</td>
<td>Combat Aircraft: 707</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These numbers are estimates only.

The Philippines’ armed forces may remain negligible because of a small number of offensive weapons and lasting economic predicaments. It has put off the 15-year plan approved by former Presi-

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62. Simon, id.
63. Ibid.
dent Fidel V. Ramos before the financial crisis that would build a capable force for maritime patrol, a fighter-interceptor squadron and a national radar system.\textsuperscript{64} The financial crisis did not slow down Singapore’s military modernization and arms acquisition. Its military strength may be superior to its ASEAN neighbors. With extant weapons such as AMX-13 light tanks, missile-armed corvette, F-16 jet fighters and A-4 strike aircraft, Singapore has placed orders for a handful of submarines from Sweden and 12 more F-16 C/Ds from the United States.\textsuperscript{65}

The armed forces of Thailand have begun to transform from counterinsurgency to conventional warfare and emphasize the procurement of advanced naval and air force weapons, albeit the number is small. Close Bangkok-Beijing relations made Thailand decide to purchase PRC-made T-60 main battle tanks and some other weapons from the PRC. What is worth noticing is that, in 1995-96, Thailand obtained the only helicopter carrier (built by Spain) in the ASEAN region. The ambitious modernization plan, including ordering 8 F-18 fighters, 16 F-16s and 18 A-7 naval fighters, was stopped by the financial crisis. As the Thai economy recovers, Thailand is seeking to purchase up to 20 used F-16 A/Bs from the United States.\textsuperscript{66}

Vietnam cut its arms forces by 600,000 and encountered difficulty acquiring high-tech weapons from Russia after 1991, partly because Russia no longer provided free weapons. To date, Vietnam still relies on Russia’s supplies of military equipment and spare parts, but Russia does not seem willing to sell weapons to Vietnam without hard currency. Hence, Vietnam’s more than 1000 Russian T-55 / PRC Type 59 battle tanks, 8 Russia-made destroyers, 65 Su-22s and 125 MiG-21s will remain the core of its armed forces.\textsuperscript{67}

In addition to the above-mentioned predicaments that come with the financial crisis – i.e., lacking advanced weapons quantitatively and qualitatively due to the insufficient funds, ASEAN can not perform its full military strength because it is not designed as a military alliance or instrument of regional security. More importantly, bilateral intra-ASEAN tensions make the foundation of a military alliance less likely. The collective strength of ASEAN will

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.; and Thananthan and Amin, supra note 61.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
not be realized if ASEAN fails to establish an organized multilateral military network among its member states.\textsuperscript{68}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{PLA Army} & Personnel: approximately 1,800,000  \\
 & The reserve-militia: about 1,200,000  \\
 & Combat Tanks: 9,500  \\
 & Helicopters: 60  \\
\hline
\textbf{PLA Navy} & Personnel: approximately 230,000  \\
 & Main Combat Vessels: 53  \\
 & Submarines: 71  \\
 & Aircraft: 541  \\
\hline
\textbf{PLA Air Force} & Personnel: approximately 420,000  \\
 & Combat Aircraft: 3520  \\
\hline
\textbf{Nuclear Forces} & Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles: 15-20  \\
 & Intermediate-range Ballistic Missiles: 66  \\
 & Short-range Ballistic Missiles: 150  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Military Forces of the PRC}
\end{table}

The PLA is huge in terms of quantity (see Table 4). Effort to produce or acquire state-of-the-art weapons and technologies seems fertile and aggressive. The PRC's military capabilities are growing rapidly, given that its military forces are the largest in the world, it has a huge defense budget, and it possesses nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Although the PLA is ridiculed as the world's largest military museum, the quantity of the weapons the PLA holds can still be a clear threat to other states. Having witnessed the Persian Gulf War and NATO operations in Kosovo, the PLA believes that the next conflict in which it will be involved may be a peripheral or local war under high-tech conditions. The PLA has endeavored to reinforce its military strength in almost every category by developing high technologies. Nonetheless, developing high technologies heavily hinges on foreign assistance and sources, particularly those of Russia and probably Israel, and the PLA has problems integrating newly-acquired weapon systems and technologies, and training officials and troops to use them.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{68} For a brief discussion of ASEAN's "collective strength" system, see Singh, \textit{supra} note 59, pp. 58-9.


\clearpage
However, most military experts argue that the PLA’s conventional military capabilities are 20 to 30 years behind the state-of-the-art. With the updated weaponry, the PLA hopes to improve power projection and sea control in the near future. Overall, the PLA might be unable to dominate its surrounding areas at the present time and to speed up its military modernization, but technology and arms transfers “may change the existing military balance in [the PRC’s] favor and create realignment among [the PRC’s] neighboring countries in East Asia.”

What may be intimidating is the PRC’s enormous military personnel and rapidly increasing defense budget. According to *China’s National Defense in 2000*, annual defense expenditures from 1998 to 2000 were 934.7 billion RMB, and were 8.66%, 8.20% and 8.29% of PRC central government expenditures. At the end of 1999, the PLA limited the total number of military personnel to roughly 2.5 million. These, along with efforts to modernize its weapon and management systems and improve research and development capabilities, provide a material basis to believe the PRC is a possible aggressive power.

*Socioeconomic Development.* Of the ten ASEAN member states, only Singapore is a successfully industrialized country with high economic development. Most of the others are still developing countries with a huge variance in their socioeconomic development. Although Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the other ASEAN nations enjoyed high economic growth rates before the financial turmoil, their economies have generally been based on labor-intensive industries. The political effect of rapid economic development has not fully reached the society, and the governments have tight control over economic affairs, with the exception of Singapore.

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71. Ding, *supra* note 69, p. 75.

72. The PRC State Council, *China’s National Defense in 2000*. It is often believed that these numbers have been undervalued. For a different estimation, see The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database at <http://projects.sipri.se/milex/mex_database1.html>.

ASEAN’s economic success before the mid-1990s “had been in the area of collective bargaining with the developed nations and resource pooling rather than market sharing.” Table 5 indicates the socioeconomic strength and heterogeneity of major ASEAN member states. ASEAN has a lower population and a higher average rate of literacy than the PRC does. Trade volume and international reserves of ASEAN are roughly equal to those of the PRC. Its per capita GNP is larger than the PRC’s. However, owing to the financial crisis in 1997, ASEAN has had more external debt than the PRC, and its growth rate of GDP tripled in 1998 but gradually rebounded in 1999. Most of the indicators point to the potential for further economic development of ASEAN as a whole, notwithstanding the fact that these variances create sharply different national identities of ASEAN members themselves. For example, while small ASEAN member states such as Brunei and Singapore have small population and high per capita GNP, large states such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam are way behind Brunei’s and Singapore’s paces of economic development.

Southeast Asian states’ socioeconomic diversity becomes even more vivid in economic systems and religions. In terms of ASEAN economies, they range from highly industrialized (for example, Singapore) to newly industrialized economies (e.g., Malaysia and Thailand), to primarily agricultural economies such as Laos and Cambodia. Religious division in Southeast Asia is very complex, as well. Approximately 87% of the Indonesian population is Islamic, and 9% Christian; about 53% of the Malaysian population is Muslim, 19% Buddhist and 9% Hindu; about 83% of Filipinos are Catholic and 5% Muslim; Singapore has a plurality (about 29%) of the population that is Buddhist, followed by Christian (about 19%); in Thailand, about 95% of the population follows Buddhism; and the majority of population in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar is Buddhist or Theravada Buddhist.

Table 5. Key Socioeconomic Indicators of Select ASEAN States and the PRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>87/94</td>
<td>1.0/6</td>
<td>24630</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>207.4</td>
<td>83/93</td>
<td>-13.2/0.2</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>488/274</td>
<td>147475</td>
<td>27345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>78/89</td>
<td>-7.5/5.4</td>
<td>3670</td>
<td>733/585</td>
<td>44773</td>
<td>30930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>94/95</td>
<td>-0.6/3.3</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>293/320</td>
<td>47817</td>
<td>15029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>89/97</td>
<td>0.4/5.4</td>
<td>30170</td>
<td>1098/1015</td>
<td>14222</td>
<td>76843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>92/96</td>
<td>-10.2/4.2</td>
<td>2160</td>
<td>536/418</td>
<td>86172</td>
<td>34781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>91/96</td>
<td>5.8/4.8</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>90/110</td>
<td>22359</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>380.6</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3238/2722</td>
<td>362818</td>
<td>181328</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>1254.6</td>
<td>73/90</td>
<td>7.8/7.1</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>3579/3289</td>
<td>154599</td>
<td>161414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A: Population (Million) of 1999  
B: Female Adult / Male Adult Literacy Rate (%)*; Brunei in 1999; Indonesia in 1998; Malaysia in 1995; the Philippines in 1995; Singapore in 1998; Thailand in 1995; Vietnam in 1995; and, the PRC in 1995.  
C: Growth Rates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (%) in 1998/1999  
D: Per Capita GNP (United States $) in 1998  
E: Merchandise Exports/Imports in 1998 (United States $ Billion)  
F: Total External Debt in 1998*  
G: International Reserves (End of year, United States $ Million) in 1999  
* Includes Hong Kong’s reexports.  
a Adult literacy rate refers to population 15 years old and over.  
b Consists of public and publicly guaranteed long-term debt, private non-guaranteed long-term debt, estimated short-term debt and use of IMF credit.  

Despite its internal socioeconomic diversity with possible cooperation problems among members that could lessen its economic power as a whole, ASEAN has devoted itself to an economically-integrated Southeast Asia. ASEAN plans on implementing the regional free trade area by 2002. Nonetheless, whether this goal will be fulfilled remains to be seen. For newly admitted members, they fear the possible negative consequences of economic openness they witnessed during the financial crisis and may be reluctant to work on regional economic integration as scheduled by ASEAN. The achievement of this goal has been further impeded by the financial crisis in 1997 that led to continued withdrawal of capital, the disintegration in domestic financial sectors, unstable exchange rates, higher interest and unemployment rates, as well as sharp disagreement of the social consensus over national and regional economic

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policy. Hence, economic resurgence becomes the priority for ASEAN leaders.

In addition to domestic economic reform, troubled ASEAN states depend on financial assistance from the U.S.-led International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Japan. They are, in addition, dependent on the PRC’s commitment not to devalue its currency to survive the period of economic recession. ASEAN at the sixth summit distinctly announced that concerned states and international financial institutions should “continue to assist the affected countries in their economic recovery through development assistance, increased private investment flows, greater market access of goods originating from ASEAN region, increased technology transfer and cooperation in human resource development,” and that it looked forward to the Miyazawa Plan and the Asian Growth and Recovery Initiative, which could help Southeast Asia’s private sector grow. The PRC also played a significant role in helping affected ASEAN states out. In addition to maintaining a fixed exchange rate of Renminbi, the PRC provided $3 billion of financial support to Thailand and $1 billion to Indonesia. The effect of foreign assistance still remains to be seen. Nonetheless, one can be sure that without a rapid economic recovery, followed by a success in regional economic integration in Southeast Asia, it will be very difficult for ASEAN to compete with the PRC, either economically or militarily.

The PRC after the mid-1980s has become one of the world’s fastest growing economies. It appears that the PRC has developed an historically unprecedented socialist market economy and launched a series of economic reforms aimed at accelerating economic growth. The PRC’s economic reform and regulation were of help to its economic development. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), with tight control over mainland China, has reiterated


the importance of economic growth under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping theory. At the 14th Party Congress in 1992, the CCP determined the policy for market reforms, and the key task in that decade was to build a "socialist market economy."  

As indicated in Table 5, the PRC's socioeconomic achievement is impressive. On the social front, although pressure from rapid population growth is still one of the largest concerns of the PRC, improvement in the national economic condition helps avoid serious social problems to a certain degree. Despite low per capita GNP that might be underestimated according to some analysts, the PRC's economic power basis is relatively strong. In terms of economic performance, the PRC is superior to every ASEAN member state in growth rate of GDP, merchandise exports/imports and international reserves. Its numbers in the last two above-named categories are particularly convincing.

In addition to domestic economic development and reform, the PRC has endeavored to actively uphold economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (e.g., the proposed "China-ASEAN Free Trade Area" by the PRC Première ZHU Rongji in 2000), participate in international economic organizations and, most importantly, enter the World Trade Organization (WTO) as a full member in order to gain access to various international markets, compete with the other developing economies that might conduct a protectionist policy, and ensure its economic interests even when Washington-Beijing relations turn sour. The PRC through the IMF has provided

79. However, rapid economic development with liberalization and marketization has resulted in increased dependence on foreign capital and technology, the need to reform state-owned enterprises (SOEs), rising social problems (e.g., high unemployment rates), an unbalanced development between the western region and the coastal provinces, and possibly intense debates over the pace of future economic development, both domestic and international. See, for instance, Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future, Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2000, pp. 99-100; and Vasily Mikheev, "Mainland China's Economic Interaction with Asia-Pacific Region in the Light of Economic Globalization, and Its Influences Upon Regional Security," paper presented for the international conference "PRC and the Asia-Pacific Region: Evolving Interactions and Emerging Trends," June 3-4, 2000, Graduate Institute of Political Science, National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, ROC, pp. 18-24.


81. Swaine and Tellis, supra note 79, pp. 116-17 & 134-35. As for why the PRC is so eager to partake of the WTO, see Jan S. Prybyla, "China in the WTO: Threat or Prom-
assistance to ASEAN members in need. It stressed that its accession to the WTO would mean market expansion and more business opportunities for ASEAN. Needless to say, the PRC has increased its economic power or influence by participating in various international economic organizations and actively promoting regional economic cooperation in East Asia.

It is obvious that no single ASEAN state can compete with the PRC both militarily and socioeconomically. Together, ASEAN may be able to do so, but whether the gap between ASEAN and the PRC will expand still remains to be seen. In addition, although the power difference discussed means ASEAN’s power may be weaker than that of the PRC, it does not help one understand the willingness of ASEAN and the PRC to cooperate on CSBMs. Power and willingness together determine basic foreign policy. It is hence necessary to scrutinize ASEAN’s internal political and decision-making constraints, as well as its perceptions of regional security and threats in order to figure out its willingness. With both capabilities and willingness being examined, ASEAN’s capacity to act after the Cold War can be clearly presented.

B. Internal Political and Decision-making Constraints

Internal political and decision-making constraints consist of one of the most important factors determining the willingness of an actor to engage the international community. The internal political and decision-making restraints that ASEAN is facing are in fact two-tiered. Restraints in the first tier are those within the organization of ASEAN itself, i.e., the way by which ASEAN is operating. Restraints in the second tier are those within the respective boundaries of ten ASEAN member states that have an impact on the policy output of individual ASEAN members. The second tier that influences individual members’ policies toward a specific issue discussed in ASEAN is the root of ASEAN’s internal political and decision-making constraints. To avoid unmanageable complexity that could reduce the readability of this research, this research will simply treat the second tier as one of the factors that constrain ASEAN’s capacity to act.

There are two major internal constraints on ASEAN’s capacity to act: (1) the negative impacts of the “ASEAN Way” – the norms, principles and rules by which ASEAN operates; and, (2) ASEAN
expansion, followed by increased variance of goals and interests of individual member states that may contradict or undo the ASEAN Way.

The "ASEAN Way" is not an official document or rule that legally binds ASEAN members. The most popular explanation of the "ASEAN Way" is consultation and consensus. In other words, ASEAN operates on the basis of dialogue and unanimous agreement. This implies that all ASEAN members are equal and that balance of power among member states is the game ASEAN is playing. No resolutions will be passed in ASEAN without the consensus of all members. Often being considered fragile institutionally, ASEAN has survived for over 30 years simply based on consultation and consensus which, ASEAN members believe, are helpful to avoid public confrontation and maintain regime unity.\(^6\)

According to Hussin Mutalib, through consultation and consensus, ASEAN members can exchange views on a non-confrontational and egalitarian basis, discern others’ positions in greater sincerity and compromise to “split the difference and join the similar,” prevent any member from being superior to others, and join different opinions patiently in a “flexible accommodation of opposites.”\(^3\)

The “ASEAN Way” also refers to the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs, the peaceful settlement of disputes, informality and minimal institutionalization, and the commitment to solidarity and mutual respect. In the 1967 Bangkok Declaration, ASEAN members agreed to “ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of their peoples.” The principle of non-intervention was aimed at allowing ASEAN governments to cope with their internal armed insurgencies without paying full attention to possible human rights violations or external pressures.\(^4\) Moreover, ASEAN can use the principle of non-intervention to neglect intentionally the differences in members’ positions, in the hope that intra-regional

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conflict will be minimized. Nowdays, it seems to be "honored more rhetorically than in practice, since ASEAN does intervene in special circumstances," such as the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978.

The peaceful resolution of disputes is vital to maintain the stability of Southeast Asia. Given the fact that bilateral and territorial tensions between ASEAN members have existed before the establishment of ASEAN, intensified intra-ASEAN conflicts will definitely have a devastating impact on the development of ASEAN. The peaceful settlement of disputes can be viewed as a spin-off of the process of consultation and consensus ASEAN favors. Joining ASEAN is parallel to the expression of good will and agreement on abiding by justice and international law.

Informality and minimal institutionalization have always been one of ASEAN's institutional and decision-making characteristics since the inauguration of ASEAN. As Hadi Soesastro and Rizal Sukma point out, the original goal of ASEAN was not to become a regional organization with complicated structures and mechanisms. The "ASEAN Way" enables the institution of ASEAN to be less legalistic. Progress in institutionalizing the organization of ASEAN appeared limited before the 1990s. In the Bangkok Declaration, on the top of the formal structure of ASEAN was the annual Ministerial Meeting, attended by each member's Minister of Foreign Affairs. The ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC), chaired by the Foreign Affairs Minister of the member state that would host the annual Ministerial Meeting, was responsible for daily routines. The permanent ASEAN Secretariat and the post of Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat were not set up until the first meeting of the ASEAN Heads of Government (ASEAN Summit) in Bali, Indonesia, in 1976, when the Declaration of ASEAN Concord was signed.

85. Vatikiotis, id., p. 178.
86. Quigley, supra note 82, p. 4.
88. Soesastro and Sukma, supra note 81, p. 5.
In addition, ASEAN Heads of Government became the highest authority, and other newly established Ministerial groupings could report directly to the Heads of Government. 90 Since then, the institutionalization of ASEAN has almost stopped. Another effort to adjust the structure of ASEAN was successful at the 1992 ASEAN Summit in Singapore, in which participants agreed to hold the meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government every three years and informal meetings during the interval, and changed the title "Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat" to "ASEAN Secretary-General" to enhance the autonomy and role of ASEAN Secretariat. 91

Informality and minimal institutionalization are shown by the form of informal meeting attended by ASEAN national leaders, too. Many important decisions of ASEAN have been made at such meetings. 92 Personal ties (or private diplomacy) that link ASEAN states and facilitate the operation of ASEAN are another important form of informality. Soeharto of Indonesia is the most prominent example. Soeharto was the main architect of ASEAN and exerted personal influence to persuade other leaders with different opinions to compromise, especially in the early stage of ASEAN’s development. 93 This has been proved by Soeharto’s insistence on a non-


91. For recent development of institutionalization of ASEAN, see Soesastro and Sukma, supra note 82, pp. 9-13.

92. For example, the first informal ASEAN Summit was held in Jakarta in November 1996, announcing ASEAN’s resolution to speed up the realization of an ASEAN comprising all ten Southeast Asian states. The second informal ASEAN Summit was held in Kuala Lumpur in December 1997. ASEAN leaders adopted the ASEAN Vision 2020 and initiated the ASEAN 9+3 and ASEAN 9+1 Summits with Japan, the PRC and the ROK. The third informal ASEAN Summit was held in Manila in November 1999. ASEAN leaders decided to introduce a Troika of ASEAN Foreign Ministers as a means of coping with regional security concerns and confirmed the framework of ASEAN+3 as a channel for regional cooperation in East Asia. The fourth informal ASEAN Summit was held in Singapore in November 2000, when ASEAN leaders launched the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) to narrow the divide within ASEAN and enhance ASEAN’s competitiveness.

93. Quigley, supra note 82, p. 7; Mutalib, supra note 83, p. 79; and Mohammed Ayoob, The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1995, p. 60. It is well recognized that “Soeharto was one of the founding leaders of ASEAN, and had long been a stabilizing influence. Indonesia has not always dominated ASEAN – Thailand was the most important country in co-ordinating ASEAN’s approach to the Cambodian issue.
alignment policy and "national resilience" accepted by other ASEAN members, efforts to reach compromises among ASEAN members without destroying the spirit of solidarity at the Bali Summit of 1976, and a contributive role in the settlement of the Cambodian issue.94 When Soeharto stepped down in May 1998, Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia, who had been Prime Minster since 1981 and who was the last remaining founding head of Government of ASEAN, became the most influential but controversial political figure in ASEAN – his influence increases because Soeharto has left the scene, but his public image is controversial mainly because of his comments on the financial crisis and decision to sack Malaysian ex-Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.95 Hence, after Soeharto and LEE Kuan Yew of Singapore – another senior leader that founded ASEAN – have left office, there may be no more "obvious successor" in the future to take the leadership of ASEAN.96

The commitment to solidarity and mutual respect means ASEAN's members, with the habit of dialogue and consultation where grievance and objection might be aired, will try to reach a consensus on specific foreign policies and strive for a convergence of views on global issues.97 Despite difficulties in achieving solidarity, ASEAN's members are willing to understand other members' interests and make concessions, if at all possible, to work things out on an equal and voluntary basis. Because the principle of solidarity and respect has been able to help ASEAN member states group together and reach consensus on many crucial issues, as Paul Dibb claims, ASEAN, "which acts together as a united bloc on key issues, has already accrued to itself significant political influence out


97. Chalmers, supra note 44, p. 22; and Soesastro and Sukma, supra note 82, p. 17-8.
of all proportion to any objective measure of its economic, military or political power." 98

The "ASEAN Way" has its limitations, nevertheless. The most evident one is the protracted process of decision-making, which has been regarded as "a hindrance to the development of formal institutional structures in ASEAN." 99 It will be time-consuming when national interests of ASEAN members can not converge and thus ASEAN sometimes will be unable to reach a consensus quickly on an urgent issue. For instance, on the issue of whether or not to admit Cambodia to ASEAN, ASEAN was divided into two groups – Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam were for it, while the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand remained uncertain. As a result, attempts at reaching a consensus among ASEAN members were made one after another, and Cambodia, being an ASEAN observer since 1994, was not admitted until April 1999. 100 Furthermore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam disagree on the application and scope of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. Without consensus, it is conceivable that ASEAN will encounter more challenges when facing the PRC on the South China Sea issue.

The second limitation resulting from the "ASEAN Way" concerns the policy of non-intervention. As John Funston argues, ASEAN must consider "strengthening its secretariat, restructuring organizational arrangements, assisting newly admitted Cambodia to resolve its internal problems and integrate with ASEAN, and addressing broader security issues in the ARF. But the most immediately challenging issues are those created by conflict over the doctrine of non-intervention, and the recent spate of bilateral disputes." 101 Indeed, the latest developments have suggested that this policy "is slowly being challenged." 102 Examples include the impact of the Indonesian forest fires of 1997 that led Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore to force Indonesia to adopt policies to prevent a repeat occurrence, the proposal of the Philippines and


99. Soesastro and Sukma, supra note 82, p. 18.

100. For a general analysis of Cambodia's admission to ASEAN, see Henderson, supra note 75, pp. 39-40.


Thailand that was aimed at blocking Cambodia’s entry into ASEAN, some Southeast Asian leaders’ open criticisms of their neighbors, and Thailand’s recommendation in 1997 that such a policy should be replaced with “constructive intervention” – which was first raised by ex-Deputy Prime Minister Anwar of Malaysia – or “flexible engagement.” It seems that insistence on the policy of non-intervention will remain for awhile, because Thailand’s recommendation was rejected by Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia and Vietnam immediately, and Thailand then held back from its previous position by arguing that adhering to a non-intervention policy can unite ASEAN states. Three years later, Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid still urged other ASEAN members to adhere to ASEAN’s non-intervention policy.

The problem with the debate over the policy of non-intervention is that Indonesia and newly admitted ASEAN members feel suspicious about the consequences of altering such a policy. Although ASEAN is trying to operate by consensus and act as a united regional organization, this debate still reflects a struggle between the protection of national sovereignty and integrity and the accommodation of the force of globalization that generates pressure for modification of such a policy from inside and outside national boundaries. It seems possible that as younger leaders emerge to lead, ASEAN will gradually abandon or adjust its policy of non-intervention in member states’ domestic affairs. Yet, before that really happens, the policy of non-intervention will remain obstructive to ASEAN’s capacity to act.

Informality and minimal institutionalization are a component of the “ASEAN Way” but also the third limitation to the “ASEAN Way.” The less legalistic nature of ASEAN denotes that the consensus approach plays a rather crucial role in decision-making. To reach a consensus without damaging the interest of the member(s) with objection, ASEAN in 1980 had a “5 minus 1” principle, meaning consensus and unanimity could be formed even if one member


105. Henderson, Supra note 75, pp. 54-5; and Funston, supra note 103, pp. 9 and 14.

did not concur in a specific issue.\textsuperscript{107} In 1995, with cautious avoidance of sabotaging the "ASEAN Way," this principle was confirmed again by ASEAN members and applied to economic issues.\textsuperscript{108} This principle has a double-edged effect on the unity of ASEAN. On the one hand, it can meet different needs of ASEAN member states and enhance the flexibility of ASEAN; on the other hand, it may sap ASEAN's representation as the united voice of all Southeast Asian states.

To sum up, the "ASEAN Way" can be of help to unite ASEAN member states and maintain harmony in ASEAN, but sometimes it is not. In talking about intra-ASEAN economic problems, former ASEAN Secretary-General Ajit Singh argues that ASEAN member governments "should show solidarity and find ways of resolving the region's economic woes instead of plunging into controversies which will only play into the hands of those who are bent on seeing a divided and weak ASEAN," and that the "ASEAN Way" of resolving disputes has held out against the test of time.\textsuperscript{109} It is, however, a fact that ASEAN may fail to make decisions on significant and urgent issues simply because it would like to accommodate the "ASEAN Way." If ASEAN can not reach a consensus on a specific issue after long discussion, the "ASEAN Way" will guide ASEAN to shelve this issue and not let it hinder the development of intra-regional cooperation.\textsuperscript{110}

For instance, ASEAN could merely come up with a press statement based on the non-intervention principle when it failed to shape a concrete collective action toward such an important issue as Hun Sen's military coup in Cambodia in July 1997, as well as a concurrent opinion about the entry of Cambodia into ASEAN.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{107} This "5 minus 1" principle was raised by LEE Kuan Yew at 1980 ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting. For details, see D. Irvine, "Making Haste Less Slowly," \textit{supra} note 94, p. 62; and Amado Castro, "ASEAN Economic Co-operation," \textit{supra} note 90, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{108} Henderson, \textit{supra} note 75, p. 48. With ten members in ASEAN, this principle has been expanded as the "10 minus X" principle. That is, ASEAN can take a position on a specific issue without unanimous agreement, and hesitant member states can protect their national interests by abstaining from participating the collective action of ASEAN.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{The Star} (Malaysia), July 18, 1998.


\textsuperscript{111} In terms of ASEAN's initial reaction to Hun Sen's bloody coup, ASEAN first decided that internal political insecurity was a threat to the security of the ASEAN region, and it called for mediation between the warring parties and an election in Cambodia. However, "ASEAN's position on human rights and free elections is not likely to
Each member state is able to interpret and justify ASEAN’s statement according to its national interests and policies. Hence, sticking to the “ASEAN Way” may make ASEAN less capable of taking strong positions, thus weakening its collective strength and presenting a public image of a divided ASEAN.

In addition to the possible hindrances caused by the “ASEAN Way,” ASEAN’s expansion in the 1990s, followed by an increased variance of views and interests of individual member states, may contradict or undo the way by which ASEAN operates.

The expansion of ASEAN membership in a sense helped realize the long-time goal of “one Southeast Asia” and one strong voice representing all Southeast Asian states in the world. A successfully integrated Southeast Asia will play a key role in world affairs. Nonetheless, some impacts associated with such an expansion seem inevitable and need to be dealt with step by step. First, technically, both Cambodia and Laos had difficulty in attending English-speaking ASEAN meetings. Second, there is a huge economic development gap between the existing members and the newly admitted ones. Third, the entry of Myanmar brought a public relations problem, along with international pressure over human rights and democracy.¹¹²

The expansion of ASEAN membership intensifies bilateral tensions in ASEAN, thereby encumbering the process of dialogue and consultation and the formation of consensus on security affairs. It has been generally recognized that Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore constitute the security and geostrategic core of ASEAN.¹¹³ Nonetheless, this core is not intact at all in the post-Cold War era. The Indonesian-Malaysian, Indonesian-Singaporean and Malaysian-Singaporean tensions or conflicts never stop. The Indonesian-Malaysian relationship suffers from a measure of over-exposure of Indonesia, illegal immigrants from Indonesia, historical security concerns when the Federation of Malaya was extended in 1963, interpersonal differences between Soeharto and Mahathir, and over-

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¹¹² Donald Crone, “Southeast Asia: A Year When High Ambition Was Challenged,” in Derek da Cunha and John Funston, eds., supra note 76, p. 10.

lapping territorial claims.\textsuperscript{114} The Indonesian-Singapore tensions did not aggravate until the resign of Soeharto. The origin of tensions between them is not about sovereignty or territories, but differences in economic and environmental policies.\textsuperscript{115} The Malaysian-Singaporean tensions are due to unpleasant historical experiences in the Federation of Malaya and differences in ethno-religious, defense and development policies. The relationship between Malaysia and Singapore can be termed interdependent but lukewarm.\textsuperscript{116}

In addition, Malaysia has had disputes with most of the ASEAN states after the Cold War.\textsuperscript{117} There are other bilateral tensions and disputes in post-Cold War ASEAN, such as those between Kuala Lumpur and Manila, between Bangkok and Rangoon, and between Jakarta and Hanoi.\textsuperscript{118} After the resignation of Soeharto, who strongly supported the policy of non-intervention, a number of bilateral disputes have taken place in ASEAN.\textsuperscript{119} These bilateral tensions have made intra-ASEAN cooperation in security affairs become a tough task.

ASEAN’s enlargement also supplies thorny difficulties in institutionalizing ASEAN and integrating the region by “reducing ASEAN’s determination to preserve the sanctity of national sovereignty.”\textsuperscript{120} In addition, ASEAN’s expansion of membership, especially the entry of Myanmar, may result in the PRC’s military access to the Straits of Malacca and probably will increase PRC influence in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{121}

The last, but not least, problem with the expansion of ASEAN membership is the increased complexity of decision-making of

\textsuperscript{114} N. Ganesan, \textit{Bilateral Tensions in Post-Cold War ASEAN}, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999, pp. 29-34.

\textsuperscript{115} For example, Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, Soeharto's successor, criticized Singapore as Indonesia's neighbor for being reluctant to assist Indonesia actively and referred Singapore to a “red dot” on the map. For an examination of the Indonesian-Singaporean tensions, see “What’s Happening to Singapore-Jakarta Ties?,” \textit{The Straits Times}, February 27, 1999.

\textsuperscript{116} For details, see Ganesan, \textit{supra} note 114, pp. 35-44; and Smith, “Indonesia's Role in ASEAN,” \textit{supra} note 96, pp. 250-51.

\textsuperscript{117} Amitav Acharya, \textit{supra} note 89, pp. 30-2.

\textsuperscript{118} For details, see Ganesan, \textit{supra} note 114; and John Garofano, “Flexibility or Irrelevance: Ways Forward for the ARF,” \textit{Contemporary Southeast Asia}, Vol. 21, No. 1 (April 1999), pp. 80-3.

\textsuperscript{119} Smith, “Indonesia’s Role in ASEAN,” \textit{supra} note 96, pp. 250-52.

\textsuperscript{120} Soesastro and Sukma, \textit{supra} note 82, pp. 12-3.

ASEAN on such sensitive issues as the South China Sea dispute and deeper economic integration in Southeast Asia. With the entry of Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia, ASEAN can be characterized by "unity out of diversity." In terms of political development, ASEAN consists of democratic states (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand), socialist or communist states (Laos and Vietnam), and authoritarian states (Brunei, Cambodia and Myanmar). Although it was common for Southeast Asian states to have had political strongmen who intended to use ASEAN as a conflict-resolution vehicle for disputes among ASEAN members and between their states and others, in order to maintain regional peace and economic prosperity that would affect regime unity and legitimacy, different political profiles of newly-admitted members still makes the process of consensus building and decision-making within ASEAN more difficult.

The gap of socioeconomic development that divides ASEAN has become wider with the entry of Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. It now seems that ministerial meetings of ASEAN help enhance mutual understanding among constituent members with varying views and interests, but domestic pressures that come with rapid economic growth and technological development – e.g., challenges from democratic transition, globalization, growing civil society, and ethnic and class issues – may cause instability for some of the ASEAN member states. It is a tough test for ASEAN’s ability to manage such a situation, because the stability of ASEAN is in fact dependent on the stability of its member states. History has shown that ASEAN has not done well in dealing with domestic instability of individual member states, such as the 1997 coup in Cambodia, the independence of East Timor and Muslim terrorist activities that caused dispute between Malaysia and the Philippines in 1999. If ASEAN and its member states fail to handle increased domestic challenges successfully, the role and strength of ASEAN in voicing Southeast Asia’s interests and needs will diminish, mainly because at that time ASEAN will have to take care of its internal affairs and will not be able to focus on external ones.

It is difficult to compare the PRC’s internal constraints on decision-making in the post-Cold War period with those of ASEAN.

122. This term is introduced in Vatikiotis, id., p. 173.
123. Id., p. 176. A similar argument can be found in Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994, pp. 286-87.
124. Mutalib, supra note 83, p. 84.
Yet, it is certain that the PRC does not have the strong structural, or organizational, limitation that ASEAN has. Constraints on PRC foreign policy decision-making are less serious than those of ASEAN, because the PRC is a communist party-led state with a centralized decision-making mechanism. Although the PRC's internal constraints on foreign policy decision-making result mainly from the slowness and power struggle of bureaucratic decision-making, the challenge of society, and the rising tide of nationalism, CCP leaders still enjoy more autonomy than ASEAN leaders with respect to CSBM policy. Given the above-mentioned scenario, the ability of ASEAN to deal with the PRC promptly and effectively in the arena of confidence and security building will be significant.

C. Diversified Perceptions of External Security and Threat

After the Cold War, ASEAN may have felt more secure mainly because it has included all Southeast Asian states and because the Soviet-Vietnamese influence diminished with the settlement of the Cambodian issue and the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Yet, at the same time, ASEAN may have begun to feel a little bit uncertain of regional security, because there is no multiple framework that can regulate regional politics when new power centers are looming. ASEAN has been in a dilemma: it wants to create a neutral zone in Southeast Asia on the one hand, and use the strategy of balance of power among major actors on the other hand to maintain regional peace and stability. The idea of a neutral zone does not seem feasible at the present time, so ASEAN tends to draw the United States, Japan and the PRC together to work on regional political and security consultation.

ASEAN's view of post-Cold War regional political and economic security is best observed in a 1996 speech of Ali Alatas, then-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia:

ASEAN...thus...engaged in two vital and complementary processes covering the Asia-Pacific region: APEC in the economic field and, in the political and security field, the ARF in which we in ASEAN serve as the driving

force. Through APEC, we enhance and accelerate our social and economic development, thereby promoting our resilience, the first, inward directed concept in our security strategy. Through the ARF there could ultimately evolve code of conduct among the major powers and the regional powers such as envisioned in the concept of ZOPFAN, the second concept in our security strategy. These two vital processes, along with other arrangements and process in which ASEAN is involved, such as the SEANWFZ, the AFTA and the Treaty of Amity and cooperation, complement one another in a positive and synergistic way and a network for building confidence and cooperative security. . .

It is clear that ASEAN is adopting a two-tiered approach – economic cooperation and political/security dialogue – to enhance regional cooperation and pursue regional peace. This approach will not threaten the “ASEAN identity” because, as Leszek Buszynski points out, “ASEAN leaders recognize that their security to a considerable extent would depend on an Asia-Pacific security dialogue that would involve all major actors, but they strive to protect their organization from the consequences.”

ASEAN’s need for security and political dialogue with major powers in this region becomes even more urgent when ASEAN members fail to reach a consensus about the threat to Southeast Asia, not to mention after its membership increased from six to ten. ASEAN does not view the United States as a threat. With the opposition of the PRC, ASEAN still supports the US military presence in the Asia-Pacific and the US-Japan alliance to maintain regional peace and stability. It is, however, unwilling to see the US and some other Western states and transnational organizations criticizing the human rights record in Southeast Asia, thus cooperating with the PRC to resist the pressure imposed by those states and organizations.

In addition to the United States, it is Japan and the PRC – traditionally considering Southeast Asia their sphere of influence – that have deeply swayed Southeast Asian regional security.

129. Ayoob, supra note 93, p. 61.
ASEAN would like to see Japan exert its political influence, but due to the past unpleasant experience with Japanese militarism, ASEAN avoids letting Japan take military responsibility unilaterally. ASEAN has never referred to the PRC as a potential threat. Instead, its official put emphasis on the constructive side of ASEAN-PRC relations after the Cold War. This is particularly true in the economic sphere. However, because of the diverse views on the PRC's role in regional security affairs, ASEAN and its ten member states have not had a unified policy toward the PRC yet, except for the engagement of the PRC.

As argued before, there is a perception among some ASEAN states that the PRC may eventually impose latent threat to the Asia-Pacific region. Threat from the PRC has not loomed large for the time being, because of its inadequate project power and military capability of taking over and effectively controlling disputed territories, its desire for rapid economic growth and the remaining United States military presence. ASEAN's ambiguous role in dealing with the PRC actually results from various attitudes of ASEAN members toward the PRC. The differences are especially salient between ASEAN's founding members and its new entrants.

Among the original ASEAN members, Thailand appears to hold the most benign perception of the PRC's role in Southeast Asia. In the Thai leaders' mind, the threat from the PRC still exists, but in different forms. For some ASEAN states, the PRC is a principal threat to their national security, but for Thailand, economic development is the largest concern in Thailand's foreign policy and the PRC will not be a major threat to Thailand as long as the PRC does not use its economic power as a means to dominate the region of Southeast Asia. Besides, the PRC's military support for Myanmar is also seen by Thailand as a destabilizing factor in Southeast Asia.

Singapore, with a political elite differing in their perceptions of the PRC, favors the strategy of engaging the PRC, but it also supports American military presence in the Asia-Pacific region. Inferior in its strategic position, Singapore tries to keep itself from being involved in military conflict with the PRC, but still acknowledges

130. Interview with an ASEAN official, Jakarta, August 5, 1999.
131. Interview with LEE Lai To.
132. Interview with a Thai scholar, Bangkok, August 13, 1999.
the PRC, with rapid military modernization and unsolved territorial claims, as a destabilizing force in Southeast Asia.\footnote{Id.; and David B. H. Denoon and Wendy Frieman, "China’s Security Strategy: The View from Beijing, ASEAN, and Washington," \textit{Asian Survey}, Vol. 36, No. 4 (April 1996), p. 431.}

Malaysia has historical distrust of the PRC. Although their relations have turned better since the early 1990s, the Spratly issue remained a main obstacle to improving Kuala Lumpur-Beijing relations. Because of its desire for further economic cooperation with the PRC and more solid political support from the PRC to counter the West, Malaysia understands the growing importance of the PRC and thus endeavors to keep good relations with the PRC. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad remains optimistic about the future political, economic and military development of the PRC. The Spratly issue has not become trouble between Malaysia and the PRC, and it can be solved bilaterally, according to Malaysia.\footnote{R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, \textit{Malaysian Politics under Mahathir}, New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 132; and Lee, \textit{supra} note 22, pp. 117-25.}

Indonesia has traditionally had suspicions of the PRC. Indonesian decision-makers, especially those in the Indonesian Armed Forces, have a fixed perception of the PRC – i.e., that the PRC has always been a source of instability for Southeast Asia.\footnote{Interview with an Indonesian scholar, Jakarta, August 5, 1999; and Robert Lowry, \textit{The Armed Forces of Indonesia}, New South Wales, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1996, pp. 4 and 33. The ABRI also remains alert to the possibility that "[t]ogether with its technology advancement, this level of growth will at some time make [the] PRC become the pre-eminent country in the region, both economically and militarily. [The] PRC has sold a range of its weapons to a number of third world countries. The [adaptation] of Territorial Law in 1992 enforces PRC to claim Paracel and Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. The relationship between the PRC and Taiwan is another sensitive issue potential to [disrupt] regional stability. These conditions could raise military conflict with other claimant countries." See The Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia, \textit{Indonesia’s Defence and Security Policy}, 1995, at <http://www.abri.mil.id/whiteb1.htm>.} After the end of the Cold War, Indonesia has been moderately determined to engage the PRC with caution. Being a leading member state of ASEAN, Indonesia is unambiguous in taking responsibility for engaging the PRC through such multilateral forums as the Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. The unresolved borders and maritime resources disputes between Indonesia and the PRC – most importantly, the Natuna Islands – do not seem to cause setbacks in Indonesia-led meetings focusing on security affairs and constructive engagement with the PRC.
The Philippines has no historical enmity with the PRC. It is the South China Sea territorial dispute that makes security relations between the two states shallow and rickety. The 1995 Mischief Reef incident stunned the Philippine government and resulted in deep skepticism of the Filipinos about the "China threat." Without a consensus on whether or not the PRC should be viewed as a direct threat to the Philippines, the Philippine government not only plays the Vietnam card vis-à-vis the PRC but also makes use of both bilateral and concerted diplomatic approaches (with its ASEAN neighbors, the United States and Japan) at different levels to negotiate with the PRC.

Not surprisingly, although it is trying to improve overall relations with its neighboring states, Vietnam has long been worried about the PRC's real strategic intention and presence in the region of Southeast Asia. The PRC remains the chief security challenge of Vietnam in the aftermath of the Cold War. Having joined ASEAN in 1995, Vietnam is seeking diplomatic support to limit the PRC's action in Southeast Asia, particularly in the South China Sea. Like the Philippines, both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic approaches are adopted by Vietnam to ensure the security interest of Vietnam.

Brunei has territorial disputes with the PRC over the South China Sea, but given the fact that Brunei is too small to affect the PRC, it must rely on the collective power of ASEAN to deal with the PRC. Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar have kept warm diplomatic relations with the PRC long after the end of the Cold War. What worries ASEAN most might be that ASEAN finds it incapable of responding to the PRC's moves in the South China Sea and close links with Myanmar. ASEAN and its member states are thus anxious about the PRC as an incipient hegemon, which helps enhance regional cooperation and mutual understanding to protect the sovereignty of Southeast Asian states.

139. Kim Ninh, "Vietnam: Struggle and Cooperation," in Asian Security Practice, id., pp. 460-63. Despite the unresolved maritime disputes, the PRC-Vietnamese land border disputes had been solved when Tang Jiaxuan, PRC Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Nguyen Manh Cam, Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed an agreement settling these disputes along their 1,200 km border.
140. Thayer, supra note 103, p. 17.
For the PRC, emphasis on a stable environment that can facilitate economic development has been the main theme of its foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Because of Western sanctions after the Tiananmen incident, the PRC turned to its neighboring states for support. For example, in 1990 the PRC established formal relations with Indonesia and Singapore, and in 1991 the PRC established diplomatic ties with Brunei and normalized its relations with Vietnam. To the PRC, the ARF, a principal stabilizing force in the Asia-Pacific region, is an important multilateral mechanism facilitating cooperative security for the Asia Pacific region.\(^{141}\) With regard to the development of post-Cold War confidence and security building, the PRC's official position is to continue to work on such measures because those mechanisms currently are not very mature. Nevertheless, some of the ASEAN member states, Singapore in particular, would like to move on to the stage of preventive diplomacy. To the PRC, however, some measures of preventive diplomacy might cause foreign interference in domestic affairs and national sovereignty.

The PRC believes that a "one superpower, multiple major powers (yichao duoqiang)" international system – i.e., a multipolar world in which the United States is the superpower and Japan, the European Union, the PRC and others are major powers – has taken shape, stabilizing strategic and security relationships among these powers that may contribute to at least momentary peace in the post-Cold War international environment. In such an international system, the PRC is confident of having a greater voice in the future development of international and regional systems. With regard to the improvement of its foreign relations with neighboring states, the PRC has concluded that a multipolar international system causes a shake-up of geostrategic relations in the Asia-Pacific. Mainly because of the possible threat imposed by the United States-Japan military alliance, the PRC accentuates non-alignment and anti-hegemonism and, at the same time, actively carries on military and political exchanges with Russia, Thailand, Myanmar and other countries. Furthermore, the PRC emphasizes the Concept of New Security, which differs from traditional realist thought of national security, in that it is political relations rather than differences in

\[^{141}\text{DING Kuisong, "ASEAN Regional Forum: Its Role in the Asian Pacific Security Cooperation," Contemporary International Relations, Vol. 8, No. 7 (July 1998), pp. 14-27. However, in my interviews with mainland Chinese scholars, some of them tended to think that the ARF was incapable of settling disputes and might become less important when more tense relations among major powers began to ameliorate.}\]
national capabilities that determine the international security environment, and that the basis for international security is common security interest, mutual trust and economic development. With the Concept of New Security, the PRC has adjusted its negative view of multilateral security dialogue.

Despite the different perspectives of confidence and security building in the Asia-Pacific region, there is some cause for concern in the PRC. First, ASEAN could turn into an anti-PRC alliance which restrains the PRC from undertaking further action against Southeast Asian states having territorial disputes with the PRC. Second, the ARF, in which ASEAN has been playing a major role, might develop into a security regime that influences the PRC's national interest. These concerns do not become main obstacles to the development of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building in the post-Cold War era, but the PRC might change its view if ASEAN tends to lean toward the United States-Japan alliance or some other external powers politically or strategically. Partly because of such a possibility, the PRC remains extremely cautious of confidence and security building with ASEAN to avoid jeopardizing its national security and interest.

Evidently, because of great diversity of views on the PRC among members, ASEAN can not unite on a more assertive policy toward the PRC. As a result, engaging and enhancing political and security dialogue with the PRC are favored by ASEAN, because by doing so, ASEAN will face a win-win situation and be able to carry out its balancing strategy of keeping major powers in the region of Southeast Asia at the same time. Nowadays, it is fair to say that ASEAN has concentrated on the full development of confidence and security building with the PRC and has largely given up its belief in the PRC as a threat to regional security. Meanwhile, the PRC's concern about ASEAN as a security threat has not superseded its demand for a stable and amicable external environment that is helpful for rapid economic growth. Consequently, CSBMs become both ASEAN's and the PRC's preferred strategy.

142. YAN Xuetong, "Zhongguo Leng Zhan Ho De An Quan Zhan Lue" (China's Security Strategies after the Cold War), in Zhong Guo Yu Ya Tai An Quan, supra note 58, pp. 20-4.
144. Ma, supra note 58, pp. 196-97.
IV. CONCLUSION

This research adopts an "inside-out" perspective to study internal factors influencing ASEAN's policy-making about regional security affairs, and confidence and security building in particular. The three main determinants conditioning ASEAN's policy choices are: power difference, internal political and decision-making constraints, and perceptions of external security and threat. As mentioned earlier, both power and willingness are key analytical elements to see why states decide to take certain actions toward others.

Power differences are associated with many factors. Two of the most important ones – military capabilities and the degree of socioeconomic development – were discussed. The relatively inferior power of ASEAN reveals that ASEAN, unless it is well integrated, will remain more militarily vulnerable than the PRC. However, simply knowing the power differences between ASEAN and the PRC is not enough if one wants to realize why ASEAN has adopted a less confrontational policy toward the PRC since the end of the Cold War. The willingness to engage the PRC – determined by internal political and decision-making constraints and the perceptions of regional security and threats – is another key element.

ASEAN has experienced various constraints that influence its willingness to challenge the PRC. The "ASEAN Way" as the norms, rules and principles that direct ASEAN's decision-making, as well as the negative impact of consensus-building and conflicting interest that has become even more salient after the membership expansion of ASEAN, are viewed as the greatest obstacles to voicing ASEAN's needs in a united way and presenting a strong position on some critical issues promptly. "[T]hrough acting together in a cohesive diplomatic association," James L. Richardson indicates, ASEAN states have guaranteed not only the protection of their national interests but "a major voice in institution-building."\(^{146}\) Yet, this merely reflects part of the fact. One should bear in mind that ASEAN has not formed a strong consensus on its security relations with the PRC. Currently, ASEAN is watching the PRC charity and looking for any possible opportunities to enhance mutual understanding and collaboration. It seems that ASEAN's willingness to confront the PRC has not fully taken shape and has been restrained

because of "ASEAN Way" constraints, and the complexity of its internal decision-making process that evolved from its enlargement in the 1990s and bilateral tensions among its members. In addition, ASEAN's inferior power is conceivably a factor that reduces its willingness to adopt a confrontational policy toward the PRC.

The afore-mentioned argument should not mislead readers to the conclusion that ASEAN will confront the PRC when it succeeds in consolidating its position after integrating different opinions and interests. What can be concluded is that ASEAN will be more able to voice its concerns and needs and probably make the PRC compromise more if the impact of these internal constraints can be reduced. Furthermore, the post-Cold War international and regional environment affects and conditions ASEAN's (and the PRC's) confidence and security building policy to a great degree, though the discussion of their impact is beyond the scope of this paper.

The analysis of the capacity to act becomes more complex when these constraints interact. For example, differences in power and perceptions of threat and regional security are in fact both causes and effects. Without strong mutual trust and a decisive variation in national power, like the case of ASEAN and the PRC, differences may lead both sides to a security dilemma, where one's enhanced national security will render the other more insecure. In order to widen or close the gap with respect to power differences, each side will be very careful of the other's actions, and perceived threats will always endure if differences in power exist. Arms buildup in the ASEAN region, for example, is believed to be a more externally than internally-oriented response to the security environment in Southeast Asia. Although there is a variety of reasons that can explain the arms buildup, the ASEAN states' fear of the PRC is surely an important incentive to modernize defense equipment.147 As for the PRC, although its primary goal is to offset United States and Japanese power, to successfully combat ASEAN in the event of armed conflict over the South China Sea or other territorial disputes is also a key factor contributing to the PRC's rapid military modernization in the last decade.

Differences in capacity to act partially determine foreign policy behavior, but do not necessarily lead to conflict or an overwhelming advantage for one party. Being influenced by international and re-

rgional structures, perceptions of regional security and threats result from two other sets of variables – power differences and internal political and decision-making constraints. The three sets of variables together determine the magnitude of ASEAN’s capacity to act on security-related issues. ASEAN with relatively weaker capacity to act appears to be less able to stand firm on its principle of settling the South China Sea dispute. It appears to have adopted a more conservative approach to the PRC and hopes the positive forces of interdependence, confidence building, and multilateral regimes and organizations can facilitate the process of confidence and security building between itself and the PRC.

Moreover, due to differences in capacity to act, ASEAN seems less capable of controlling the process of confidence and security building with the PRC. The best example is how ASEAN and the PRC have dealt with the South China Sea dispute. Before ASEAN could form a slightly more concerted approach to its security relations with the PRC – that is, when ASEAN’s capacity to act was even weaker than what it is now – the PRC was very successful in insisting that territorial disputes ought to be solved on a bilateral basis. Not until the 1995 ASEAN-PRC Senior Officials Meeting held in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, PRC, where officials from ASEAN for the very first time adopted a collective stand against the PRC’s breach of the ASEAN Declaration of the South China Sea and occupation of the Mischief Reef, did the PRC agree to discuss the South China Sea dispute multilaterally.

Since then, on confidence and security building issues, ASEAN as an organization has been more successful in representing concerned member states in dealing with the PRC. Yet, the PRC is still more capable of controlling the agenda of CSBMs proposed by ASEAN. For instance, on the SEANWFZ Treaty, although ASEAN has reiterated its desire for accepting this treaty, the PRC has expressed its support in principle but has not fully acceded because it infringes on the PRC’s sovereign claims in the South China Sea.

Differences in capacity to act also influence ASEAN’s attitudes toward a possibly emerging power vacuum in the region of Southeast Asia, which can have an impact on the evolution of ASEAN-PRC CSBMs. With insufficient power to compete with major actors militarily, ASEAN appears to depend on the United States military presence to maintain regional peace and stability. Politically, ASEAN has undertaken a balance of power approach to introduce the United States, Japan and the PRC, and possibly India
and Australia, to the region for a stable environment that is of particular importance to its member states' economic development. What ASEAN desires is to engage the PRC through consultations on CSBMs, whereas what the PRC wants to do appears to be enhancing diplomatic relations with ASEAN and reducing ASEAN's mistrust while augmenting its power to prepare for a power vacuum – a two-tiered strategy. For ASEAN, it is the PRC's potential intention of becoming a regional hegemon and the territorial and sovereign disputes that stir up further suspicions about the PRC's motives.

The degree or quality of participation in regional regimes contributing to multilateral security dialogue and confidence and security building partially reflects the differences in ASEAN's and the PRC's capacity to act, as well. The ARF, the CSCAP and the Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea are all politically binding security dialogues and consultations, but are not negotiations. For ASEAN, it is imperative to use these regimes as channels that introduce the PRC to the concept of CSBMs and other ideas about conflict resolution. In addition, it is of particular significance to shape a collective position – sometimes with other non-ASEAN states – to influence the PRC's calculation of costs and benefits when leaders in Beijing plan on conducting aggressive foreign policy toward Southeast Asian states. ASEAN must rely on these regimes to engage the PRC constructively and advance national interests because it alone cannot achieve these goals.148

In short, these determinants point to one possible conclusion that, from this "inside-out" perspective, ASEAN's ten member states do not seem able to gain advantage over the PRC in the politico-military field.149 In addition to concern for economic retrogression, constraints on material power, collective decision-making, and diversified perceptions of regional security and threat – partic-

148. The role of the PRC's capacity to act does not diminish in this case. The PRC's participation in these regimes means to some degree that it wishes to utilize its relatively superior capacity to act to control or influence these regimes, thus avoiding any development adverse to its national interest.

149. Many scholars also argue that the PRC has played an active, or predominant, role in its security relations with ASEAN. See, for example, Chalmers, supra note 44, pp. 41-60; Buszynski, "China and the ASEAN Region," supra note 12, pp. 161-84; and Jonathan D. Pollack, "Security Dynamics between China and Southeast Asia: Problems and Potential Approaches," in Richard L. Grant, ed., China and Southeast Asia into the Twenty-first Century, Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Security Studies, 1993, pp. 30-8.
ularly whether or not the PRC is a threat to Southeast Asia – are the primary reasons for ASEAN to seek a non-confrontational policy toward the PRC. Greater capacity to act in the case of ASEAN-PRC confidence and security building after the Cold War does mean more effective control over the agenda setting. ASEAN with smaller capacity to act is less capable of determining the scope of confidence and security building between itself and the PRC. In addition, weaker capacity to act makes ASEAN more eager to promote multilateral regimes facilitating mutual confidence and understanding. If ASEAN's capacity to act can be strengthened, it is very possible that ASEAN will be able to engage the PRC in a more effective way in order to achieve more concrete CSBMs, and one can probably understand why ASEAN's cooperative behavior toward the PRC has increased after the Cold War.

This study manifests the importance of capacity to act as indispensable to a better appreciation of an actor's foreign policy behavior in the international system. In addition to the above-mentioned analyses, another crucial change within ASEAN and the PRC in the near future that could complicate an analysis of PRC/ASEAN confidence and security building policy toward each other is the rising tide of democratization. What will be the direction of ASEAN's policy when the force of democracy is too huge to ignore? Possibly, democracy will further weaken ASEAN's capacity to act, not only because ASEAN itself will have to cope with its prolonged and ineffectual decision-making, but also because individual ASEAN members will need to deal with their domestic constituents first when policy preferences affecting ASEAN are being determined. Therefore, it will be less likely for ASEAN to adopt a more assertive policy toward the PRC, thus reducing the possibility of conflict and strengthening the basis for confidence and security building with the PRC.

150. Inevitably, the PRC will be influenced by the development of democracy, but how serious such an influence is still remains to be seen.
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