

ASEAN Regional Forum Working Group on Preventive Diplomacy Chairman Statement

The Institute Francais des Relations Internationales and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies jointly sponsored an ASEAN Regional Forum Seminar on preventive diplomacy in Paris on 7-8 November 1996. The Seminar was attended by academics and officials from ARF members in their private capacities.

Principles:

Consistent with the statement by Chairman of the third ASEAN Regional Forum, the meeting developed proposals for preventative diplomacy based on principle set out in the UN Charter, the Treaty of Amenity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the Five Principle of Peaceful Coexistence and the 1992 Manila Declaration on the South China Sea.

Definition:

The meeting noted that a good starting points is the definition of preventive diplomacy by UN Secretary-General Mr. Bhoutros Bhoutros Ghali in his 1992 Agenda for Peace, namely, that preventive diplomacy is "action to prevent existing disputes arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur". The meeting also noted that there were various other understandings of the definition of preventive diplomacy.

Areas for consideration

The meeting agreed that ARF preventive diplomacy can help address subject areas of potential crisis such as: territorial disputes, proliferation of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, non military transnational concern such as drug trafficking, terrorism, water and other resource problems, smuggling, environmental degradation, maritime safety, piracy and unregulated population movements.

Proposals

The Paris meeting concluded that the ARF needs to explore its capacity for preventive diplomacy, subject to the strict maintenance of consensus amongst all ARF members. It considered several categories of preventive diplomacy measures and it identified three broad-areas covering measures which should be conveyed to the ARF for consideration.

1. The meeting agreed on the need for an annual security out look, and the gathering of relevant information and analyses. These activities are now appropriate for Track Two consideration, in for a such as CSCAP. The meeting also discussed the prospect in the future of creating a regional research and information center. Some participants also expressed the desirability of ARF establishing an early

warning system and to act as a repository of information on preventive diplomacy, including monitoring outcomes of specific cases.

2. The meeting agreed that a core list of CBMs specifically oriented towards preventive diplomacy be identified. It proposed that these CBMs be considered by the March 1997 Intersessional Support Group on CBMs to be jointly chaired by China and the Philippines. The meeting discussed the range of preventive diplomacy measures that could be available to the ARF, which could include CBMs, (as set out in Annex of the ARF Concept Paper attached to the Second ARF Chairman's Statement): fact-finding, good offices, mediation, moral suasion, and third party mediation. It specifically recommended, as an example, the simultaneous circulation amongst themselves of ARF member's contributions to the UN arms register.
3. The meeting agreed to recommend an ARF role in preventive diplomacy through the expansion of the good offices of the Chair, guided by the principle of consensus amongst ARF members. The meeting discussed the reinforcement of network of bilateral preventive diplomacy measures: establishing a register of experts on preventive diplomacy; ad hoc procedures such as committees, working groups and the appointment of special representatives; and norm-building. As a longer term measure, some participants expressed the desirability for the ARF chair to consider proposals for an ARF risk-reduction center. The meeting noted a number of measures to service the ARF Chair in its possible implementation of preventive diplomacy: for example, the establishing of an ARF unit which will operate on the basis of equal and full participation of all ARF members.

Funding

The meeting noted the need for ARF to give serious consideration to appropriate funding mechanisms to promote the ARF role in preventive diplomacy.