

The Role of Preventive Diplomacy
In the Future Direction of ARF
Within the Context of
the Evolving Regional Architecture

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(I)

Preventive Diplomacy : To Strengthen Peace Definition

Conflict prevention or Preventive Diplomacy

is **not only** a term

*that applies to measures designed to prevent conflict
from breaking out but also to those intended to prevent a conflict,
even one that has been ongoing for some time,
from escalating and whenever possible to reverse it
and guide it toward a negotiated peaceful solution.*

*The late Ali Alatas in his book, “A Voice for a Just Peace,”
said that the highest national interest of all nations is peace.*

*We all need peace and **East Asia has basically been at peace.***

(II)

Nature of Peace

ASEAN is now moving to a community with three pillars :
political & security , economic and socio-cultural.

This aspiration is made possible because
during its past existence

Asean has in fact been able
to prevent existing disputes from escalating
and at the same time quietly nursed new ambitions.

The peace among Asean members
is enviable compared with some
of the other regions of the world.

*But what is the nature of peace in the context of
the future direction of ARF and
within the context of the evolving regional architecture.*

I think it is fair and logical to conclude that
when people kill each other less and less often,
peace must be gaining some ground.

But what is the nature of this kind of peace?

It is certainly a peace that is not based
on a treaty or a set of security arrangements
- although there is a Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in
Southeast Asia and there is the ARF, and
there are security arrangements between some Asian nations
and a Western power like the United States.

You may call the peace
that prevails in East Asia
“negative peace” or “peace by default” but
whatever name you give it, the fact remains that it works,
since it brings down the casualty count.
And more important is the economic benefit
to all countries in the region and the world
by the expanding trade and investment.
The challenge is to go beyond trade and investment.

As a result : we have a shift of center of gravity
from across the Atlantic to Asia Pacific.

To my mind, much of this peace can be attributed
to the presence in the region of
the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
and its work, particularly the deliberations and
exchanges within the framework
of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Founded in Bangkok in 1994, the ARF aims at promoting
transparency, dialogue and cooperation on matters regarding
security among the powers that have
a “footprint” within the Asia-Pacific region.

(III)

Co-existence of Tension & Peace

East Asia is not famous for resolving regional tensions.

There are disputes that have remained unresolved
over many decades, and yet
peace has been achieved in the region in the sense that
the guns have been silent for a long time.

Dr. Timo Kivimäki - - has explained this to me
by saying that

“East Asian stability and harmony
is based on the fact that the nations of the region focus
on the things that unite, rather than on disputes, and
this has meant that many conflicting parties
have been hesitant to start explicitly
discussing the issues that divide.”

I agree with him.

Thanks to ASEAN/ARF !

You may call the peace that prevails in East Asia
“negative peace” or “peace by default”
but whatever name you give it,
the fact remains that it works,
since it brings down the casualty count.

Asean's greatest achievement is peace
by avoidance of conflict.

What the ARF is Supposed to be Able to Do ?

The goal of conflict resolution is to be attained
in three stages:

- (1) Confidence-building , (2) Preventive Diplomacy
and
(3) Conflict Resolution.

ARF importance lies in the fact that
it is the only forum on security matters
in which all the great powers are represented.

Since its founding in Bangkok in 1994,
it has been intensively engaged in Confidence-building.

(IV)

Evolving Architecture

The East Asian regional architecture is multilayered and multifunctional and its borders are not clear.

In a word, it is rather messy.

The situation is even messier now, if you consider the different inter-state bilateral disputes and the many intra-state conflict situations in the region.

To remedy the situation, Kevin Rudd, then Prime Minister of Australia, proposed a process of consultation toward an Asia Pacific Community, an overarching forum that would include the United States.

And Japan proposed an East Asia Community that also included the United States.

Neither of the two proposals gained enough support. 10

Then Indonesia proposed
the expansion of the East Asia Summit
to include both the United States and Russia, and
this proposal gained the support of the ASEAN members.

Today it is almost definite that
during the East Asian Summit this month,
the foreign ministers of the United States and Russia will be
allowed to address the meeting.

In October 2011, during Indonesia's chairmanship of ASEAN,
the leaders of the United States and Russia will be attending
the East Asian Summit.

It is also almost definite that ASEAN,
which is the driving force of various processes
in East Asia and the Pacific, will further expand with
the admittance of East Timor
during Indonesia's tenure as chairman.

Indonesia will also continue pushing for ASEAN,
through its rotating chairmanship,
having a permanent seat in the G-20 thereby enlarging the voice
of the developing world in that forum.

And it is quite possible that during its chairmanship,
Indonesia will rally the ASEAN membership
to establishing a Bali Concorde III,
which will endeavour to give ASEAN a global outreach.

This means ASEAN deliberately extending help
to other parts of the world to the extent that
its resources will allow and in fields
in which ASEAN has experience and expertise - for instance,
peacekeeping, disaster relief and technical cooperation
through triangular arrangements.

Back to the issue of Peace

Stating the obvious :

all countries need internal peace and stability as well as freedom from external threats to their national security, in order to achieve economic growth and political development.

The attainment and maintenance of internal stability is essentially the responsibility of each country.

Nevertheless, to some degree
the internal situation in any country
is always affected by the external environment.

The external environment, however,
is not something that the individual country can create by itself.
External peace, security and stability within the external
environment **require** the cooperation of other countries
within a bilateral, regional and global framework.

On a multilateral basis, such cooperation
is carried out through international forums,
institutions and arrangements.

But even within these frameworks,
there are barriers to full and perfect cooperation.

Are we willing to take bold initiatives that
create effective and durable
international institutions and arrangements.

Imperative :

peaceful conflict resolution.

The peaceful resolution of conflicts is often
a tortuous process but

it must always be attempted because

the only alternative is its escalation,

which is likely to prove more costly to all concerned

and could lead to widespread and intense human suffering.

Look to EU - the mother of all integration.

The Challenge to ARF

We see that unlike the OSCE in Europe,

the ARF is not organized to carry out
a direct role in preventive diplomacy.

Nor will it be easy for the ARF to organize itself
for purposes of Preventive Diplomacy and
undertake this process on the basis of consensus,
considering the many perspectives
and national interests represented within the Forum,
with not a few of them in conflict with each other.

Part of the problem is that
Preventive Diplomacy, at least in its initial phase,
needs to be carried out as confidential private diplomacy.

In a multilateral framework,
it is difficult to operate confidentially.

It is not likely

that the 27 countries that make up the Forum participants
will simply give a vote of confidence to the Chair,

which will then carry out
the necessary confidential activities
of Preventive Diplomacy
in the name of the Forum participants.

The ARF has not developed
any operational mechanisms
for the purpose of preventive diplomacy.

OSCE :

High Commissioner on National Minorities

The High Commissioner's task is to provide "**early warning**" and, as appropriate, "**early action**" at the earliest possible stage "in regard to tensions involving national minority issues which have not yet developed beyond an early warning stage, but, in the judgement of the High Commissioner, have the potential to develop into a conflict within the OSCE area".

Conflict Prevention Centre - CPC

The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) which provides direct support to all OSCE field operations, helping them fulfil their tasks in the politico-military dimension: early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The CPC's liaison function between the OSCE's field operations and its main negotiating bodies guarantees the full implementation and execution of political decisions.

The ARF Concept Paper,
adopted at the Forum's founding in Bangkok in 1994 envisaged
a three stage process and the establishment EEP , Friends of
ARF Chair and the ARF Unit that were adopted afterwards

So far the ARF has been functioning more
as a forum of dialogue that makes great contribution
to Confidence Building. But the processes of
*the Forum have not raised sufficient trust between and
among participants to levels envisioned at its inception.*

It is only after a sufficient degree of trust
has been achieved that it will be possible to move
to actual action such as envisaged by the Concept paper.

ASEAN is now in the process of establishing
*a formal mechanism for dispute resolution
as stipulated in the ASEAN Charter.*

That particular provision in the ASEAN Charter
is in turn based on a provision
of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation,
which called on all signatories to settle
their disputes through peaceful means.

These developments, too, are still in their early stages and
*only time can tell whether they will lead
to an effective and concrete mechanism
that will serve the region over the long term.*

There is reason to believe that the trend
is toward peace in East Asia and
the world's economic center of gravity is shifting
from the Atlantic to the Pacific,
specifically from the Western powers to the Asian powers,
most of which are in East Asia.

But strictly speaking,
it may be too optimistic to speak of peace in East Asia.

Can we qualify it as relative peace.

Perhaps we should consider calling it
East Asian pacification instead of East Asian peace,
for the simple reason that considerable violence
is in reality taking place in East Asia.

(V)

East Asia's regional architecture.

A new world order is in the making and
the emerging economies of East Asia
certainly have a significant niche in that new world order.

It is clearly part of the solution
to the global problems of our time.

Logically, the global architecture needs to be reformed
in such a way that the economies of East Asia
will have a greater say
in global decision-making on socio-economic issues.

As a group they could be a significant force
in that new world order.

So it is only logical that the question is asked:

*How should East Asia position itself
economically and politically?*

But East Asia is not a single unit.

The individual economies of East Asia
- notably Japan, China, South Korea and
the countries of ASEAN are still driven
by nationalism and narrow self-interest.

There are ongoing attempts to unite East Asia
through ASEAN-driven processes –

the ASEAN Plus Three process and the East Asia Summit,
which includes India, Australia and New Zealand.

Also covering the East Asian region are two processes:
the ASEAN Regional Forum and
the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

That makes for
a multilayered, multifunctional regional architecture.
We often like to cite such variety as an advantage,
even a form of wealth.

But in this age of globalization,
when regional integration is an imperative,
we are not so sure that it is an advantage.

Need to move from a negative peace
to a more positive peace

ASEAN has been able so far to be
the driver of the ARF and

ASEAN Charter :

Spirit of caring and sharing society
is strengthening the sense of community /
the we feeling

In practical terms :

Move beyond avoidance of conflict
and to move beyond trade and investment.