Non-Paper:
Some Ideas on the Relationship Between
the Regional Architecture and Preventive Diplomacy

Overview

1.   The evolution of preventive diplomacy (PD), and in particular the development of PD measures, is influenced in part by the regional architecture within which PD is being developed. It is therefore of critical importance that the debate on evolution of PD or specific PD measures takes into account the emerging regional architecture within which the ASEAN Regional Forum or ARF operates.

2.   The ARF itself has been developing ideas on PD ever since the concept was endorsed as part of the three stage evolution of the ARF in 1997. In the past few years, there has been increased momentum in the field of PD, with the adoption of the ARF Vision Statement in 2009, the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the Vision Statement in 2010 and the PD Work Plan in 2011. Much of this progress is owed to the ideas and contributions of the EEPs from the very beginning.

3.   Today, the ARF is at a critical juncture with regard to the evolution of PD. The doctrinal framework appears in place, based on the various documents adopted at the Ministerial level. We already have some definitions of PD as well as some norms and rules which govern their use in the region.

4.   What is now missing is the development of specific PD measures that could be applied when situations emerge that would require PD implementation – based on the norms and rules agreed to by the ARF. But the types of PD measures that could be developed will be greatly influenced by the regional architecture within which the ARF operates. This regional architecture is constantly evolving and is itself defining parameters for the future direction of the ARF itself.

5.   It is therefore this particular issue of the **relationship between the regional architecture and the evolution of PD** that this Non-Paper seeks to elaborate further and offer some "food for thought".

Types of Regional Architecture and PD

6.   For presentation purposes, three types of regional architectures will be defined and examined:

(1) institutional, rules-based regional architecture,

(2) flexible, multi-layered regional architecture with a single organization playing a coordinating role and

(3) a loose network of fora and regional arrangements without a single coordinating body.

Institutional, Rules-Based Regional Architecture

7.   In an institutional, rules-based regional architecture, there is a clear organization with well defined norms and rules for members that help guide interactions within the region during times of stability and implements actions in the face of challenges to such stability.

8.   Such a regional architecture envisages a high level of acceptance of the "rules of the game" by members and a willingness to engage in collective action to address challenges and maintain stability. Such collective action may or may not include enforcement measures, depending on the rules agreed to by the organization or region. But institutional mechanisms and agreed to standard operating procedures (SOPs) are in place to facilitate collective action when necessary.

9.   Under such a regional architecture, which would essentially be dominated by a single, overarching institutional arrangement or organization, PD measures would appear to have the following general characteristics: well defined and specific, rules-based, and implementable based on pre-defined criteria and SOPs. Such PD measures would be backed by institutional mechanisms that would encourage impartiality and neutrality in order to maintain high levels of acceptance and legitimacy.

10.   Whether such PD measures would be coercive or not would depend on the "norms and rules" that members have agreed to sign on to from the very beginning. It is also up to the organization whether "opt-out clauses" for PD measures would be made available.

Flexible, Multi-Layered Regional Architecture

11.   In a flexible, multi-layered regional architecture, there are some institutional frameworks for cooperation and some norms that govern relationships. Whether such frameworks have reached the level of institutions or whether such norms have evolved into clearly defined rules and even obligations are unclear.

12.   Usually, there is no single, overarching institution that will govern relations but rather a collection of regional and sub-regional arrangements that interact with one another with occasional overlaps. There may be an organization

that seeks to play some form of loose coordinating role but the degree of influence of such an organization varies from one institutional arrangement to another.

13.   In such an environment, PD measures may be less rules-based, less institutionalized, and most probably ad hoc. Since there may be less back-up in terms of institutional organization, it would require more initiative on the part of one or several members or participants in order to implement PD measures. There would be a high premium placed on consensus-based action particularly if there are no pre-agreed SOPs.

Loose Network of Arrangements

14.   In a regional architecture characterized by the existence of multiple regional or sub-regional arrangements with minimal coordination between them, PD measures that evolve will vary and be very specific to a particular arrangement, with minimal potential of being applied across the region.

15.   Because of this inability to develop PD measures acceptable across the region, members or participants may be more inclined to defer to PD measures offered from outside the region, whether those developed by international organizations such as the United Nations, or other regional organizations, or even by one or two States that have capabilities to play a facilitating role and are acceptable to members and participants.

Looking Forward

16.   As the ARF examines possible PD measures applicable to the region, on the basis of the doctrinal framework agreed to in past ARF documents, it is essential that the ARF also assesses how the regional architecture in the Asia-Pacific would evolve as well as the ARF's own role within this evolving regional architecture.

17.   It appears as though the existing regional architecture is one that is flexible and multilayered, with the expanded East Asia Summit (EAS) developing alongside the ARF and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus or ADMM Plus. This triad of arrangements is being coordinated by ASEAN, which is itself evolving into a more integrated and rules-based ASEAN Community within a broader process of East Asia cooperation. This "triad" itself co-exists with other arrangements in the region that deal with security, from the Six Party Talks to the Five Powers Defense Arrangement.

18.   But whether this present flexible and multi-layered regional architecture will evolve into a more institutionalized, rules-based architecture or into a more loosely networked regional architecture or even remain as it is for the foreseeable future, will depend on the vision and initiatives of ASEAN and fellow

ARF participants. PD measures that evolve from the ARF will be influenced by the present regional architecture as well as the perception of what would be the appropriate regional architecture in the future.

19.   There are some other critical factors at work.

20.   One is whether the evolving ASEAN Community can mobilize the necessary resources, both physical and intellectual, in the long-term, to help lead this regional architecture and play a proactive role that is expected from partners across the region. In other words, can ASEAN continue to fulfill its role in the current ASEAN-centered regional architecture?

21.   Second is the extent to which the broader East Asia cooperation process, possibly leading to an East Asia community-building process, will want to play a role on security challenges in the region.

22.   Third is the continued willingness of States that have great capacities in the region to support the regional architecture and defer to its decisions.

23.   Fourth is the extent to which the future evolution of multilateral arrangements dealing with security issues, such as those under the UN framework, will impinge on or interact with the regional arrangements in the Asia-Pacific. Is the UN's envisaged partnership with regional organizations on peace and security issues relevant for the Asia-Pacific and the ARF?

24.   And fifth is the extent to which other issues, such as threats posed by economic and financial instability or climate change and environmental disasters, will become increasingly a regional security concern that would merit the attention of entities such as the ARF.

Task

25.   Recommendations from EEPs on specific PD measures or types of measures that could be developed, within the context of an evolving regional architecture five or ten years down the road, will be eminently useful for ARF Track One in its ongoing consideration.