Chapter Seven

ASEAN AND SAARC APPROACHES TO REGIONAL SECURITY
- THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY DIMENSIONS

The waning tensions of the Cold War have coincided with rising concerns over a variety of non-military threats to security. However it does not mean that political and military threats have vanished. Military security remains a crucial factor in the overall security of states.

During the Cold War period the regional security in terms of politico-military dimension in South East Asia was determined by the intense competitive patterns of great powers--the US, the former USSR and China. Great power intervention internationalised local conflicts and fuelled regional rivalry. Cold War directly contributed to the ideological and political polarization of non-communist ASEAN and communist Indochina. Fear of great power rivalry and uncertain security guarantees contributed to ASEAN notion of regional security based on ZOPFAN. Thus emphasis on regional autonomy and self-reliance is an important part of ASEAN’s regional security approach.

With the end of the Cold War, though regional conflicts like in Indochina were settled, it created strategic uncertainties. A possible scramble by China and Japan seeking to step into the vacuum left by departing superpowers has emerged as a conflictual issue among ASEAN members. ASEAN also has to work for a new security identity embracing all the South East Asian states. The past reluctance of ASEAN states to engage in military security deliberations at the regional level has
been shed with the formation of ASEAN Regional Forum which also involves extra-regional states in the security dialogue process.

In fact, it is in the political aspect that ASEAN has emerged as a successful diplomatic and military community. Though in the ASEAN Bangkok Declaration, 1967, economic and cultural objectives were given priority, immediate objective of ASEAN was political cooperation to institutionalise the end of confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia. Economic cooperation was taken up much later by the ASEAN states.

The security scenario in South Asia has also been constantly influenced by the extra-regional powers. Along with the US, and the former USSR, China has also made persistent attempts to shape a favourable regional balance of power by involving itself in South Asia conflicts. Though SAARC does not deal with cooperation in political or military fields, nevertheless it has played crucial political role in its own way. Moreover, in the SAARC region, cooperation even in non-controversial issues like environment assumes political significance. Today, nuclear weapons have added another dimension to regional security in South Asia.

Hence there is an ongoing need to evaluate-security in a comprehensive framework of regional military, political, economic, environmental threats. We have already analysed the non-military dimensions in the earlier two chapters. This chapter analyses the political and military dimensions of regional security in South and South East Asia and the role played by SAARC and ASEAN in enhancing regional security. This chapter is in three sections. How ASEAN has emerged as a diplomatic community during the Cold War period will be examined in Section 1. In this context
ASEAN's role in the regional military security, ZOPFAN concept and the Indochina crisis are analysed. Section II analyses the causes for the striking differences between ASEAN and SAARC approaches to regional security. This section will also look at the political role of SAARC. Section III deals with the post Cold War regional security question with ASEAN playing a more active role in regional security cooperation. ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN's constructive engagement policy towards China, political cooperation in the SAARC forum, track II diplomacy, regional nuclear security and bilateral military cooperation are analysed in this section. As in all earlier chapters, interpolation between ASEAN and SAARC will be based on issues.

Over the years, ASEAN has evolved into a 'security community'. Conflict and differences of perceptions do exist among member states but they stop short of jeopardizing the Association. War seems to be highly unlikely option of resolving conflicts among the member states. ASEAN has followed and developed a set of principles and a code of conduct to manage the regional as well as extra-regional affairs.

... These tenets are so ingrained in ASEAN that any digression or attempt to fundamentally alter them would be tantamount to disturbing the applecart seriously. These cardinal principles have been viewed as the foundation and driving force behind ASEAN, contributing enormously to its emergence as the most successful attempt at regional cooperation in the developing world.1

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ASEAN has further emerged as a successful diplomatic community specially during the Indochina crisis.

Since its initial response to the Kampuchean invasion, ASEAN has displayed remarkable political coherency and diplomatic solidarity in insisting on a comprehensive political settlement of the Kampuchean issue on its terms ... the ASEAN states have effectively functioned in multilateral forum as an eminently successful diplomatic caucus that has mobilized sustained support in the global international community for its position.\(^2\)

ASEAN is not a defence organization or alliance. It is recognised as an association to be reckoned with. Michael Leifer writes,

> ASEAN's performance in security cooperation has had its most visible impact beyond its walls in collective dealings with regional and extra-regional states. Through an evolving practice of political cooperation whereby five and then six governments have spoken most of the time with one voice on regional issues, ASEAN has established itself as a recognised international actor.\(^3\)

SAARC is designed to be a functional organization with a modest beginning moving on to core areas like the economic arena. SAARC provides a forum to the regional states to interact frequently which itself is a big point given the number of conflicts and different perceptions that exist among the member states. The SAARC Charter did reflect the security concerns of the region. The preamble begins with the

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words, "Desirous of promoting peace, stability, amity and progress in the region..."
The Charter further highlights that the member states shall uphold the principles of
"sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and
non-interference in the internal affairs of other states."  

SAARC has adopted a gradualist approach towards cooperation and
deliberately excluded bilateral and contentious issues from the purview of the
association so as not to impede its progress. The SAARC forum has cleared the path
of regular meetings among the member states and jointly work on non-controversial
issues. However, on the side-tract of these meetings, regional leaders have always
found time to discuss bilateral issues and at times achieved positive results.

On the ASEAN front, when the association came into being, every state was
involved in a conflict of one nature or another. Thus ASEAN members were looking
for political stability and economic development leading to "national resilience"
which would in turn result in "regional resilience". Thus during the initial years of the
association, the progress was slow. However, during this time a close rapport was
developed among the ruling elites of the member states. Moreover member states
were aware of the crucial 'implementation' part of any cooperative nature. Thus an
official network was worked out from top to the bottom level.

Though economic and cultural objectives were given priority in the Bangkok
Declaration the immediate objective of ASEAN was to institutionalize the end of
confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia. ASEAN decided to sideline all the
bilateral disputes like the one between the Philippines and Malaysia over Sabah for

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4 SAARC, Charter of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Kathmandu,
SAARC Secretariat, 1985
the sake of successful working of the association. Some confidence building measures as well as military cooperation efforts were undertaken but at the bilateral level. ASEAN members did not want it to be defence or military alliance like the earlier South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) which were externally sponsored.

The ASEAN Bangkok Declaration put forward one of its aims and purposes as, "... to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of United Nations Charter..."  

**ASEAN and the Concept of ZOPFAN**

All ASEAN'S security initiatives have come in response to change in South East Asian strategic environment. During the late 1960s, ASEAN was concerned with the prospect of dealing with post war Vietnam. Moreover, the question of eventual withdrawal of the US forces from Vietnam pose another problem of how to cope with Chinese and Soviet continued interference in the region. The American presence in the region was part of its policy of containment against the Soviet Union and China. America sought to achieve its objective through bilateral and multilateral alliances, military aid and direct military presence.  

Thailand and the Philippines both had security arrangements with the United States. The withdrawal of the US coupled with the reduced British role left the region vulnerable to the PRC and the USSR.

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Indonesia and Malaysia particularly feared China as it had supported the 1965 attempted PKI coup in Indonesia and supported the MCP in the 1945-57 emergency in Malaysia. Moreover, China had potentially significant influence over the large Chinese community in Malaysia.

Britain had retained responsibility of Malaysia’s external defence after Malaysian independence in 1957 under the Anglo-Malaysian defence treaty. In 1968, the British announced their formal intention of giving up a security role east of Suez by 1971. This gave rise to the Malaysian idea of neutralisation of South East Asia by prevailing upon great powers to restrain voluntarily from intervention in the region.\(^7\) ZOPFAN Declaration was ratified by the ASEAN foreign ministers in 1971 at Kuala Lumpur. "Desirous of bringing about a relaxation of international tension and of achieving a lasting peace in South-east Asia... agreeing that the neutralisation of Southeast Asia is a desirable objective and that we should explore ways and means of bringing about its realization ... do hereby state that Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of, and respect for South-east Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers."\(^8\) In the post Cold War period, a renewed call for ZOPFAN was given by the ASEAN members. ASEAN Hanoi Plan of Action 1998 gave a call for strengthening Regional Peace and Security. "... consolidate and strengthen ASEAN’s solidarity,


\(^8\) ASEAN, *Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration*, Kuala Lumpur, 1971, Jakarta ASEAN Secretariat, 1971
cohesiveness and harmony by strengthening national and regional resilience through enhanced cooperation and mutual assistance to further promote Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality." Initially ASEAN members were not very enthusiastic about the ZOPFAN concept. Thailand and the Philippines felt that their relationships with the United States were a far stronger guarantee of security than being part of ZOPFAN.10

Reduced American presence in South East Asia, fall of anti-communist regimes in South Vietnam and Cambodia in 1975 provided impetus to ASEAN. In 1967 ASEAN Heads of State met for the first time. The Summit produced two important documents--ASEAN Concord and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). TAC's aim was to "promote perpetual peace, ever lasting amity and cooperation among their peoples which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship."11 The TAC was left open for accession by other states in Southeast Asia. Members are to follow principles of "mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations ... settlement of difference or disputes by peaceful means ... renunciation of the threat or use of force."12 Thus ASEAN put forward on idea of South East Asian regional order and wanted Indochinese states to be a part of it. However, Vietnam rejected the prospect outrightingly. Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1978. China attacked Vietnam on 17 February 1979 to administer a 'punitive lesson'. Though ASEAN members dealt with the Indochinese situation collectively, they do have their

12 Ibid.
own perceptions. Thailand was most vulnerable to the Vietnam threat, so welcomed the Chinese counter weight. Indonesia and Malaysia saw China as a more longer-term threat. This found expression in the 1980 Indonesian-Malaysian bilateral summit in the Kuantan Principle. It called for an end to soviet intervention in Vietnam but side by side recognised Vietnam's security concerns with respect to the PRC. This did not become ASEAN official position due to the opposition from Thai and Chinese quarters. Here the main issue seems to be the great power penetration of Southeast Asia rather than the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. However, "...despite such misgivings, the governments of ASEAN have demonstrated an ability to speak and act most of the time with one voice over Kampuchea." ASEAN feared that the Vietnamese invasion is the first step in the "potential actualisation of the feared geostrategic domino theory." Thus ASEAN states changed their military planning from internal, counter-insurgency warfare to preparation for conventional warfare in 1979. This found manifestation in military modernization programmes, deeper military assistance from Western powers and intensifying joint military exercises among ASEAN states and between ASEAN states and the US.

ASEAN'S response to Cambodian invasion was also determined by the need to display solidarity with Thailand. Michael Leifer writes, "The net effect has been for the Kampuchean issue to become a mixed blessing for ASEAN. It has provided a

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14 op. cit. No. 3 p.12.
15 op. cit. No. 2 p. 10.
basis for cooperate solidarity as well as for enhancing the international standing of the Association.\textsuperscript{16}

In July 1979 ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bali, the members reiterated their support for the right of the Cambodian people to determine their future by themselves, free from interference by Vietnam and the Soviet Union. They called for immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodian territory. They also urged the international community to support this policy.

Meanwhile, Vietnamese actions in Cambodia were creating larger number of refugees on the Thai border. The flood of Vietnamese boat people reached staggering proportions. The 1979 foreign minister meeting expressed grave concern over the refugee question. The ministers appealed to the international community to prevail upon Vietnam to stop the exodus.

In 1979, the Vietnamese installed Hang Samrin as Head of State of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. ASEAN argued that as the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea is a violation of the UN Charter, credentials of the Hang Samrin government should not be recognized. At ASEAN's initiative, the US was asked to support continued representation of the Pol Pot government in the United Nations.

In July 1981, ASEAN was the main participant at the International Conference on Kampuchea which was sponsored by the UN and was held in New York. The major aspects of the ICK declaration are:

\textsuperscript{16} op. cit. No. 3 p. 138.
- An agreement on a ceasefire by all parties and withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea in the shortest time possible under UN supervision and verification.

- Appropriate arrangements to ensure that armed Kampuchean factions will not be able to prevent or disrupt the holding of free elections or intimidate or coerce the population in the electoral process.

ASEAN initiatives further resulted in the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CADK) bringing together three opposition factions of Khmer Rouge under Khieu Samphan, the United National Front for an Independent Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) under Norodom Sihanouk and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) under the republican leader Son Sann. Individual ASEAN governments have provided arms and military training to the opposition factions in Kampuchea.

The ASEAN states in order to find a diplomatic solution to the Kampuchean problem developed the concept of 'proximity talks'. These were to provide an opportunity for Vietnamese and Hang Samrin regime officials to talk to the resistance groups through intermediaries. ASEAN took the initiative of bringing warring factions together in April 1985. At this meeting a plan was proposed by Indonesia and Malaysia, with the support of other ASEAN members, which subsequently came to be known as the 'proximity talks'. These were to be held among the various factions to the conflict - the CGDK and Vietnam and also People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), with the ASEAN as the mediator. The talks proposed the withdrawal of foreign troops, a UN control and supervisory commission, national reconciliation and
UN supervised elections and self-determination. Several changes were made to the 'proximity talks.' Initially PRK was to attend but had to be later changed since the US refused to extend support to the idea of talks which included the PRK, as it would give the impression that the PRK was the legitimate government in Cambodia. Finally the Vietnamese were to act as representative of the PRK and would articulate the PRK's views. This was not acceptable to the Vietnamese who took exception to the exclusion of PRK. Moreover, Vietnam also objected to holding any direct talks with the CGDK since it refused to enter into a dialogue with the Khmer Rouge. After these talks fell through, breakthrough came in the form of Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Sihanouk meeting. This was followed by Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM).

This became the blueprint upon which the solution to the Cambodia conflict was built. This took place in two stages--the JMI I, held at Bogor in July 1988. This meeting laid out two crucial factors, the withdrawal of the Vietnamese and the prevention of genocidal policies as that practised by the Pol Pot regime. The meeting aimed at establishing an 'independent, sovereign, powerful, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia on the basis of self-determination and national reconciliation' which was to be achieved under effective supervision by international observers. The first meeting established a working committee of senior officials comprising all participants who were to examine the specific aspects of a political solution and then give its recommendation to the second meeting. The JIM II talks were held in February 1989, where the participants reiterated their collective stance on the various resolutions.

17 ASEAN, Joint Statement of the ASEAN Foreign Minister on the Kampuchean Problem, Kuala Lumpur, 8 July 1985, Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1985
Indonesia played an important role in evolving this process, where different Cambodian factions participated and later on joined by Vietnam, Laos and ASEAN members. This finally resulted in the Paris International Conference on Cambodia in 1989. The 1990 UN Security Council Permanent Members meeting laid out the formula for the UN role in the transitional period. ASEAN endorsed the formula. The UNTAC mandate in Kampuchea came into force with the signing of the Paris treaty in 1991. ASEAN supported the process. Bilateral ties between ASEAN and Kampuchea were on the move since the Kampuchean elections. However, the 1997 coup in Kampuchea delayed its entry into the ASEAN. But the Cambodian issue did prove ASEAN to be a successful diplomatic community and increased its prestige at the international fora.

Section II

Regional Cooperation and Regional Security both share a basic conceptual relationship. Regional cooperation enhances regional security but the resolution of regional security problem is vital for regional cooperation. ASEAN efforts at institutionalising different security initiatives are the result of changes in South East Asian security environment both intra-state as well as regional. Change in leadership in Indonesia from Sukarno to Suharto and the resultant change in domestic and foreign policies was a crucial factor in immediate suspension of Konfrontasi between Indonesia and Malaysia.

Thus the establishment of ASEAN in 1967 flowed from the end of confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia, and also reflecting a strong desire on the part of the original five members to minimise the prospect of any further conflict
among themselves. If SAARC has not been able to move ahead it does not mean that beneficial effects of regional cooperation do not exist in South Asia, they do, as they exist all over the world. What is lacking is the perception of common enemy and common threat that was the driving force in South East Asia. Thus, corollary to this argument of the resolution of regional security problem is the second argument dealing with the perception of common external threat of an enemy, which brings the nations together to collectively deal with this threat. The threat of internal communal insurgencies in ASEAN states, the unification of Vietnam and Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1978 provided ASEAN with an urgent sense of unity and common goal of making Vietnam abandon its position in Cambodia.

Thus unlike ASEAN, where common external threat perceptions provided the association a common purpose, a sense of urgency to respond collectively, the South Asian states do not have a common threat perception. Mohammed Ayoob identifies four basic political factors for successful regional cooperation effort. They are: i) common threat perception; ii) similar ideological perception; iii) similar foreign policy orientation; and iv) consensus regarding the role of a pivotal power. These factors are obviously missing in the case of SAARC.

So, for the SAARC process to begin it was vital to sideline the bilateral issues as member states do not share a common perception. Each of the member states had a different reason to join the association in accordance with their own perception of their national interest and how they are positioned in the region. Initially Pakistan was not keen on the association. It felt that the association will lead to India's hegemonic domination over the other regional states. Moreover, Pakistan was also apprehensive of involvement in the South Asian Regional Association as it would hurt
its seriousness developing closer ties with the West Asian Islamic states. Finally it joined the SAARC so as not to isolate itself in South Asia and also to champion the smaller countries against India. Initially, India was also apprehensive of joining the association as it believed that the association could be used by smaller members to put collective pressure on India. As far as smaller members are concerned they perceived SAARC as a forum to collectively bargain with India with a view to securing concessions on various issues. Bhutan saw the association as a way of expanding its foreign and economic relations with other states. Maldives used the association to air its concerns regarding the security of small states. Nepal wanted to tap its vast water resources through cooperation.

As already explored in the preceding chapters, the South Asian region is characterized by the preponderant position of India in every sphere - be it military, economic or territorial. The security perceptions of India and her smaller neighbours are divergent. Smaller states want to counterbalance India by forging alliance with the external forces. Thus, far from trying to keep the world power out of the region the urge in to get them involved in the region. As for India, its regional security policy is based on the assumption of South Asia as a single strategic area. In South Asia every domestic problem becomes inter-state problem and most of the efforts at bilateral or regional cooperation get embroiled in domestic politics being artifact of the colonial period with weak state institutions, the national identity is subverted by subnational identities. These subnational ideas are usually transnational in nature as people of the same linguistic and religious group find themselves divided among several

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neighbouring states. This creates a peculiar security problem with every state fearing subversion by its own neighbour.

Today India-Pakistan relations show case a continuing political tension. Pakistan was created as an Islamic state. India organised on the basis of secular federalism still has large Muslim population. Pakistan is so obsessed with India that its sole aim seems to be counterbalance and destabilize India. SAARC by adopting the principle of consensus and unanimity gave a sense of equality to all the members.

Cold War intensified the India-Pakistan rivalry. In South Asia, the extra-regional powers--the US, former USSR and China have tried to pull the regional states apart. Unlike South East Asia where US encouraged ASEAN as an anti-communist organisation in pursuit of the policy of containment, in South Asia, US and Chinese supply of arms to Pakistan has always been an irritant in Indo-US, Sino-Indian relations. It is Chinese policy to keep India tied down in South Asia and club it with Pakistan.

**SAARC Proceedings and International Political Issues**

This is not to say that SAARC has not made any progress at all. From modest beginnings it has moved to 'core' area of economics. Moreover international political and military issues have always found a place on SAARC Summit agendas. During the 1987 summit at Kathmandu the Heads of State or Government expressed their "faith in and commitment to the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations Charter. They further believed that the United Nations has an important role to play in "promoting universal trust, understanding and concerted actions for the

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attainment of lasting peace, global development and general disarmament."

Similarly in 1988 Islamabad summit members argued that escalation in military expenditure was a constraint on world development. UN conference on disarmament and development had clearly established a link between disarmament and development. SAARC members urged that resources saved through disarmament measures should be directed towards development. At the fifth summit of SAARC in Male in 1990 the members noted that the "initiative of the Government of the Maldives for the protection and security of small states at the UN in 1989, which they all supported, had also received overwhelming support of the international community." In 1991 Colombo Summit members noted the changing power structures in international relations and the reduction of confrontations and tensions, particularly among the superpowers. They also welcomed the trend towards popularly based democratic governments in different parts of the world including South Asia.

On the same lines in 1993 Summit held in Dhaka, the South Asian leaders noted that the end of the Cold War presented new opportunities and challenges. Despite successes in resolving some regional conflicts, the international political scene was still marred by strife and tension. Efforts must be intensified to find peaceful and viable solutions to conflicts of long standing nature through greater respect for international law and universally accepted humanitarian norms and standards.

SAARC--Crucial Political Role

SAARC provides an opportunity for confidence building measures among members through the multilateral framework. Although political issues are not mentioned in the Charter yet the Summit meetings provide an opportunity to the members to hold talks on the various conflictual issues at the higher political level. Political issues form an important part of Summit talks through the informal arena.

At the very first summit meeting in Dhaka in 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Zia met informally and discussed bilateral issues. This was followed by a bilateral visit to India by General Zia where the discussions continued. In Dhaka, both the leaders agreed not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. In November 1986 at Bangalore Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Prime Minister of Pakistan Junejo discussed the ongoing Indian military exercise "Brasstacks", near the Indo-Pakistan border which led to some tension between the two. During the Dhaka and Bangalore Summits the Indian and Bangladeshi leaders discussed Chakma insurgency and the Teen Bigha dispute and agreed to resolve their differences over the sharing of river waters. At the 1987 SAARC Foreign Ministers meeting India and Sri Lanka forged an agreement on the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).

By the time fourth SAARC Summit was held in Islamabad in 1988, bilateral relations between India and Pakistan had stated improving. The two countries signed three agreements relating to avoidance of double taxation on mutual trade, promotion of cultural exchanges and agreement on prohibition of attack on nuclear installations. Similarly in 1990 Male summit, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian
counterpart Chandra Shekhar agreed to resolve disputes peacefully and set the date for the meeting of foreign secretaries. The 1997 Maldives summit gave an opportunity to Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to break the deadlock. This meeting played a crucial part in the restarting of the dialogue process between the two states.

Section III

In the post-Cold War era, ASEAN has adopted a more vigorous approach to security (in the traditional sense). It has decided to increase ASEAN's security cooperation through dialogues, CBMS and transparencies between themselves through early warning on exercises near borders and publication of white papers on defence expenditures. On relations with the great powers, ASEAN has political diplomatic instruments in the form of ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (ASEAN-PMC) and ARF.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Initially it was Japan which suggested a forum for region-wide dialogue in the post-Cold War era. Later on Canada and Australia advocated something on the lines of Conference on Security Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The US which had till now preferred to manage regional security environment through bilateral relations with Asian states also supported a multilateral approach.

The ASEAN nations were reluctant to replicate the European example. They argued that what worked in Europe could not be transplanted in Asia. But at the same time ASEAN members also realized that a consensus is building in favour of a multilateral security framework in Asia and they risked being marginalised. Armed
clashes between China and Vietnam in the South China Sea and Chinese declaration of sovereignty over all the islands in the South China Sea expedited the debate on a security forum for the Asian-Pacific region. Moreover, it seems that the US was unwilling to commit large number of troops is the post-Cold War era. The American decision to close down its largest overseas base facilities in Subic Bay in the Philippines after failing to secure the renewal from the Philippines created fears of power vacuum and resultant competition among the other powers to fill the void. There was general agreement across the region that ASEAN's lead in the creation of a new security framework would be the best arrangement. ASEAN already has a lot of experience in dealing with the security issues in its own 'Asian way'. Moreover, ASEAN already had a dialogue process with extra regional power through the ASEAN-Post ministerial Conferences (PMC).

During the 1993 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, it was decided to establish the ARF with membership including ASEAN members, its dialogue partners, China, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Vietnam and Laos (now of course Vietnam and Laos are members of ASEAN). ARF'S first meeting was held in 1994. In its second meeting held in Brunei in 1995 a "Concept Paper" was put forward that spelled out details regarding ARF'S approach to security.

ARF has to move forward gradually so that the 'comfort level' of different members can be taken into consideration. The step was to build trust and confidence among members, to develop a sense of involvement, inculcate the habit of free exchange of views. The 'concept paper' discovered three stages in the evolution of ARF namely promotion of confidence-building measures, development of preventive diplomacy and development of conflict resolution mechanisms.
Confidence Building Measures

CBMS are recognised as significant part of cooperative security. The basic thrust of the effectiveness of the CBMs depend on the issue of transparency especially that of military structure and doctrine. Most of the ARF members are willing to publish Defence White Papers. But there is general reluctance to give too much information. The implementation of the CBMs is voluntary. They include dialogue on security perceptions, meetings of Heads of National Defence Colleges, voluntary submission of defence white papers and reporting to the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

Preventive Diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy refers to certain measures that are adopted to resolve or contain disputes through non-military methods. These measures are enshrined in Article 33 of the UN Charter. These include, negotiations, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement of disputes. ASEAN TAC was accepted as the basis of regional order during the ARF 1994 meeting. The ASEAN, specifically Singapore, presented a concept paper to the ARF-SOM in 2000. The important points are:

- Preventing severe disputes from arising between states, to prevent such disputes from escalating into armed confrontation.
- Use of diplomatic rather than military means, respect for sovereignty.
- An enhanced role for the ARF Chairman-liaison with other regional arrangements.

Annual security outlook to be published, contributions to this to be voluntary.
The Foreign Minister of Thailand in his capacity as acting chairman of the ARF has already established informal contacts with the UN, OAS and OSCE. The first volume of the *Annual Security Outlook* has been released containing the voluntary submission of the security outlooks of thirteen countries. Till date ARF had discussed important issues like ZOPFAN Declaration, SEANWFZ and South China Sea disputes.

The ARF has been created on the basis of what Acharya calls "Asian institutionalism". This form does not focus on "formal legalistic structures of cooperation", but takes institutional approach as a long-term process of socialization and consensus-building". The approach is incremental in nature. The ARF is definitely not a collective defence organization."... the process itself is an extremely important product, since increased dialogue promotes increased understanding which in turn, may lead to a reduced risk of conflict." Its aim was to create a mechanism flexible enough to accommodate divergent opinions.

**ASEAN and Constructive Engagement Policy Towards China**

China has supported communist insurgencies in ASEAN states. In the post Cold War period China has become assertive with its military modernization. Difference on the question of sovereignty over the South China Sea Islands persist. China passed a controversial territorial waters laws in 1992 by which it claimed virtually the entire South China Sea. In 1994, China seized Mischief Reef. Earlier it

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24 Amitav Acharya, "Realism, Institutionalism and the Asian Economic Crisis" *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, No. 21, April 1999, pp. 1-29.
has also fought with Vietnam over Paracel and Spratly islands. It was also involved in skirmishes with the Philippine navy in the South China Sea (Map 7.1).
Map 7.1

MARITIME CLAIMS AND DISPUTES IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

The South China Sea comprises two major Island groups-Paracel and Spratlys. Not only do the Spratly Islands lie astride one of the most important Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC), but also have potential deposits of oil and natural gas of 17.7 billion tonnes according to the extensive survey carried out by China's Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources in the early 1990s. Apart from China and Taiwan, four other South East Asian states--Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei claim parts of the island territories.

In the early 1990s, China started re-establishing diplomatic relations with the South East Asian states. This was followed by institutionalization of the Sino-ASEAN Cooperation. Five dialogue mechanisms were created: China-ASEAN Senior Leaders' Political Consultations, China-ASEAN Science and Technological Cooperation Committee, China-ASEAN Joint Committee of Economic and Trade Cooperation, ASEAN Beijing Committee and China-ASEAN Joint Cooperative Council whose function is to coordinate activities of other mechanisms to facilitate comprehensive cooperation. In July 1992, the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea was adopted emphasizing the relevance of enunciating and promoting confidence building measures, as well as calling for a peaceful solution to the Spratlys disputes.

At the informal level Indonesia, took the initiative supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1990 to convene a workshop on South China Sea Issues among ASEAN countries in Bali. The second workshop was held in

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Bandung in 1991 and included China, Taiwan, Vietnam and Laos. The third workshop in Jakarta in 1992 identified some areas for political cooperation. Two technical working groups were established, one on Resources Assessment and Ways of Development and one on Marine Scientific Research. Bilateral initiatives have also been taken. China and Vietnam have agreed to use only peaceful means to resolve the Spratlys dispute.

It is the ASEAN policy of "Constructive engagement" that brought China into the multilateral fold. China has finally agreed to talk on a number of disputes including the South China Sea. It has also been publishing white paper of defence. "Unlike the oft-talked about 'containment' which has a strong tinge of dubious connotation, engagement is positive and affirmative."27 China-ASEAN Senior Officials Meetings is another mechanism that was started to discuss South China Sea disputes.

Although the Defence White Paper of China 1998 fell short of expectations. It did mention,

... disputes on territorial and marine rights and interests between China and neighbouring countries, are to be solved through consultation by putting the interest of the whole above everything else, so that the disputes will not hamper the normal development of state relations or the stability of the region... should be properly solved through peaceful negotiations and consultations, in accordance with common accepted international laws and modern maritime laws, including the basic principles and legal systems as prescribed in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.28

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The 1998 ASEAN Hanoi Plan of Action also called for efforts to establish a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea among the parties directly concerned. In July 1999, Senior Officials of ASEAN agreed in Singapore to refer to an ASEAN working group a draft regional code of conduct with regard to South China Sea specially the security and economic aspects of the disputes concerning sovereignty over the Spratly islands. The Malaysian Foreign Minister Hamid Albar, in November 1999 expressed satisfaction over the progress and said, "the most important thing was that the ASEAN members have agreed in principle the need to have a code of conduct that will govern the relationships in the disputed areas". Informal consultations between ASEAN and China took place in Thailand in March 2000 and first meeting of the Working Group of the ASEAN China Senior Official Consultations on the code of conduct took place in May 2000 in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting agreed on a consolidated working draft to be the basis for future discussions. The seventh meeting of the ARF, held in Bangkok in 2000 also welcomed the Informal Workshop on managing potential conflicts in the South China Sea.

With the end of the Cold War, a possible scramble by China and Japan seeking to step into the vacuum left by departing superpowers has emerged as a conflictual issue among ASEAN members. With the Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea and its programme of military modernization ASEAN states too embarked on a significant modernisation programme of their Air force and Navies. Chinese defence expenditure in US $ bn increased from $ 21.21 in 1991 to $ 39.80

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in 1998 (see Table 7.1). ASEAN states too experiencing high economic growth till 1998 economic crisis increased their defence expenditure with Indonesia’s defence expenditure being the highest in 1997 at $4.80 (US billion dollars) followed by Singapore and Thailand with $4.10 and $3.20 respectively (Table 7.2 and Figure 7.1). Vietnam comes first when we compare 1997 defence expenditure as percentage of GDP followed by Myanmar. Singapore with Indonesia occupy the sixth position in ASEAN 10. (See Table 7.3). Figure 7.2 shows the trend of defence expenditure as percentage of GDP among ASEAN states since 1991.

Compared over the years Singapore has shown a marked increase in its per capita defence expenditure from US$1838 in 1991 to $1332.90 in 1997 (Table 7.4 and Figure 7.3). The countries with the largest population are also states with largest defence forces. See Table 7.5 and Figure 7.4. In the same way countries with comparatively small populations tend to have a higher soldier-to-citizen ratio. See Table 7.6. The value of the conventional arms imported by the ASEAN states in 1999 is given in Table 7.7.

In the SAARC region, India’s defence expenditure remain highest followed by Pakistan (Table 7.8 and Figure 7.5). However, Pakistan’s defence expenditure figures do not include the cost of acquisition of arms. Pakistan received substantive loans/aids from the US and other states for acquiring major weapon systems. Table 7.9 and Figure 7.6 show regional defence expenditure as percentage of GDP. Pakistan has continued to allocate resources for military purposes at the cost of economic security. There are increasing pressures from the IMF/World Bank of Pakistan to reduce defence expenditure to handle the fragile economy. Sri Lanka has the highest per capita defence expenditure with US $23.83 in 1997 followed
by Pakistan with $23.83 (Table 7.10 and Figure 7.7). Table 7.11 and Figure 7.8 give a comparative picture of total armed forces in South Asian states. Number of soldiers per thousand citizens in South Asian states are given in Table 7.12. Pakistan again is the highest spender on defence with conventional arms import value of US $839 million in 1991, with Sri Lanka being the lowest with $26 million US dollars (Table 7.13).
Table 7.1

China: Defence Statistics

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Defence Expenditure US $ Billion</th>
<th>Total Armed Forces in thousands</th>
<th>Defence Expenditure GDP%</th>
<th>Defence Expenditure per capita US$</th>
<th>Number of Soldiers per 1000 Citizens</th>
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### Table 7.2
Southeast Asian Regional Defence Expenditure (US$ billion)

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</table>

*Note:* - = Data not available

Fig. 7.1
South East Asian Regional Defence Expenditure (US$ billion) - 1997

- Indonesia: $4.80
- Singapore: $4.10
- Malaysia: $3.40
- Thailand: $3.20
- Myanmar: $2.20
- The Philippines: $1.40
- Vietnam: $1.00
- Lao, People's Democratic Republic: $0.063

Sources: Based on data given in International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), The Military Balance, London, various issues and US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfer, Washington DC, various issues
Table 7.3
Southeast Asia: Regional Defence Expenditure as percent of GDP

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<td>10.76</td>
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Note: - = Data not available

Fig. 7.2
South East Asian Regional Defence Expenditure as per cent of GDP

Sources: Based on data given in International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), The Military Balance, London, various issues and US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfer, Washington DC, various issues
Table 7.4

Southeast Asian Regional per capita Defence Expenditure (US$)

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<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
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<td>12.94</td>
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**Note:** - = Data not available

**Sources:** International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance*, London, Various issues and US, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), *World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfer*, Washington DC, various issues
Fig. 7.3
South-east Asian Regional per capita Defence Expenditure (US$) - 1997

Table 7.5

Total Armed Forces (in Thousands) in Southeast Asian States

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<tr>
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Note: - = Data not available

Fig. 7.4
Total Armed Forces (in thousand) in South East Asian States, 1997

Vietnam: 492
Indonesia: 476
Myanmar: 435
Thailand: 254
The Philippines: 118
Malaysia: 111.5
Singapore: 72.5
Lao, People's Democratic Republic: 29.1

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Note: - = Date not available

Table 7.7

Conventional Arms Import in South east Asia

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<tr>
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Note: - = Data not available

Figures are trend indicators values, which are an indicator only of the volume of International arms transfer, not of the actual financial value of the such transfers. Published reports of arms transfers provide partial information, as not all transfers are full reported. The estimates prescribed are conservative and may understate actual transfers of conventional weapons.

Table 7.8

South Asia Regional Defence Expenditure (US$ billion)

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<tr>
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<td>6.88</td>
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<td>0.868</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* - = Data not available

Fig. 7.5
South Asian Regional Defence Expenditure (US$ billion) - 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Expenditure (US$ billion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>$9.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>$3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>$0.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>$0.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>$0.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Based on data given in International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), The Military Balance, London, various issues and US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfer, Washington DC, various issues
Table 7.9

South Asia Regional Defence Expenditure as per cent of GDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.52</td>
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<td>5.26</td>
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<td>4.83</td>
<td>4.41</td>
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<td>6.24</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: - = Data not available

South Asian Regional Defence Expenditure as per cent of GDP

### Table 7.10

**South Asia Regional per Capita Defence Expenditure (US$)**

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3.00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.96</td>
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<td>1.73</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>28.70</td>
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<td>27.74</td>
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</table>

Note: - = Data not available

Fig. 7.7
South Asian Regional per capita Defence Expenditure (US$) - 1997

### Table 7.11

Total Armed Forces (in thousands) in South Asian States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>102.0</td>
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<td>115.5</td>
<td>117.5</td>
<td>121.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>1145.0</td>
<td>1145.0</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
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<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>580</td>
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<td>577</td>
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<td>115</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: - = Data not available

Fig. 7.8
Total Armed Forces (in thousands) in South Asian States (1997)

India: 145,000
Pakistan: 587,000
Bangladesh: 121,000
Sri Lanka: 110,000
Nepal: 46,000

Table 7.12

Number of Soldiers per Thousand Citizens in South Asian Countries

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>.86</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.95</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.39</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>5.95</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>6.60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: - = Data not available

Table 7.13
Conventional Arms Imports in South Asia

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<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>US$ Million 1999</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>26</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: - = Data not available

Figures are trend indicator values, which are an indicator only of the volume of international arms transfer, not of the actual financial value of such transfers. Published reports of arms transfers provide partial information, as not all transfers are full reported. The estimates prescribed are conservative and may understate actual transfers of conventional weapons.

The East Timor Crisis

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1976 and incorporated it in the Republic of Indonesia. When B.J. Habibie took over the reins after Suharto was forced to quit in 1998, he promised to reduce the number of troops in East Timor. He announced a possible referendum on the future of East Timor in 1999. External pressure was mounting on Indonesia and East Timor continued to drain precious resources with no political or economic returns. The 1999 referendum showed 78.5% of the people opting for independence. ASEAN was reluctant to head the multinational presence to stop pro-Jakarta militia violence and implement the wishes of the East Timor people. ASEAN did not want to antagonise the biggest state of ASEAN whose support is vital for the success of ASEAN. Moreover, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other is one of the cardinal principle of ASEAN.

In relation to East Timor the concern is about security of small states. Moreover some analysts have argued that independence of East Timor would encourage other separatist movements in an ethnically heterogeneous Indonesian society. At the thirty-third ASEAN ministerial meeting held in Bangkok in 2000, the ASEAN foreign ministers commended Indonesia for all its efforts in resolving the East Timor issue and noted the key role of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in enduring the territory's smooth transition to full independence. They reaffirm ASEAN'S support for and encourage the international community to remain engaged in the process of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction that is essential for a peaceful and stable East Timor.
In the joint communique, the Foreign Ministers also reiterated their continuing support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Indonesia, which includes the Provinces of Aceh and Irian Jaya (Papua). The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed that the stability and prosperity of Indonesia would positively contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity of the Asian region as a whole.\textsuperscript{31}

The 'ASEAN WAY'

ASEAN countries have also expressed Asian value and beliefs on a number of issue contradicting western views-known as "Asianisation of Asia".

\ldots Several ASEAN countries have been articulating ideas on issues such as democracy and human rights and on broader Asian values, which often tend to be contrary to Western perceptions, it is for the first time that ASEAN has firmly stood ground on Myanmar which has been ostracised because of its poor domestic political record. Unlike the Americans and many Europeans who have been toying with the idea of imposing sanctions on military-ruled Myanmar because of human rights violations and a lack of democracy, ASEAN has made it quite clear that it would not only not support any sanctions, but would also engage Myanmar in a big way...\textsuperscript{32}

In 1998 at the Manila ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, that Foreign Minister Swin Pitsuwan argued, "The reality is that, as the region becomes more interdependent, the dividing line between domestic affairs on the one hand and external or transnational issues on the other is less clear." He further added, "Many domestic affairs have obvious external or transnational dimensions, adversely

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\textsuperscript{31} ASEAN, \textit{Joint Communique of the 33 rd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting}, Bangkok, 2000, Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 2000.
\textsuperscript{32} op. cit. No. 27

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affecting neighbours, the region and the region's relations with others." Thus he suggested "flexible engagement " to avoid any suggestion of interference in each other's affairs. However, on the whole this suggestion was not very enthusiastically taken. Majority of the members did not want to deviate from the well-established norms and principles of ASEAN. They were not keen on disturbing the already existing framework of ASEAN functioning. In fact in the Bangkok meeting of ASEAN held in May1999, Malaysian Prime Ministers Mahathir Mohamad took the president of the Philippines Joseph Estrada to task for his alleged interference in the domestic affairs of Kuala Lumpur. It was Joseph Estrada's meeting with Mahathir's new political foe, Ms wan Azizah Ismail in Manila that had enraged Malaysia.  

**Momentum to Introduce Bilateral Issues on the SAARC Agenda**

Coming back to SAARC, it seems that members have agreed to link political cooperation to regional cooperation. In 1998, SAARC summit, members reiterated, "...Their commitment to the promotion of mutual trust and understanding and recognizing that the aims of promoting peace, stability and amity and accelerated socio-economic cooperation may best be achieved by fostering good neighbourly relations, relieving tension and building confidence, agreed that a process of informal political consultations would prove useful in this regard. The Heads of State or Government further recognised that this process would contribute to the appreciation of each other's problems and perceptions as well as for decisive action in agreed areas of cooperation." Similarly CASAC Discussion Paper II on South Asian cooperation highlights, "On the political front, institutionalized regional cooperation has generated

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greater confidence among the countries of South Asia. It has provided a framework for frequent and regular contacts at various levels including at the highest political level and has provided opportunities for better bilateral relations through informal political consultations.\textsuperscript{36}

Moreover, in recent years a view that political cooperation should form a part of official regional cooperation in South Asia is gaining ground. The President of Maldives in the 1997 Male Summit urged for a SAARC declaration on principles of political cooperation and stability for strengthening bilateral relations. In the 1998 Summit meeting in Colombo the members (though most of them unofficially) indicated that political approach and issues cannot be kept out of the SAARC's purview for a longer period. It may be necessary to amend the Charter soon. But as member states have divergent views regarding the political approach to be institutionalised through the SAARC Charter, political issues should be introduced into the SAARC agenda gradually. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema argues, "It is indeed strange that SAARC excludes discussion on bilateral contentious issues whereas most of the problems in South Asia are of bilateral nature ... Indeed political discussions do take place on a wide variety of matters including contentious bilateral issues. What is lacking in the mechanism for formalising and regularizing the informal discussions on contentious bilateral issues."\textsuperscript{37}

However this is not to say that SAARC in its existing form has not been of any use. SAARC has proved its usefulness as a regional association which has

\textsuperscript{36} "South Asian Cooperation: From Commitment to Implementation", CASAC Discussion Paper II, New Delhi, November 1998.

brought countries of divergent perceptions together. SAARC was not designed as a conflict resolving mechanism, as Charter has specifically ruled our bilateral and contentious issues. There is need to devise such a mechanism within SAARC wherein discussions on political issues and social and economic progress can go hand in hand. Dealing with each problem in isolation will not solve problems.

During the tenth SAARC Summit held in Colombo in 1998, the South Asian Heads of States or Government consulted informally on a range of international political issues. They agreed that their delegations would work closely in the ongoing negotiations for the reform and strengthening of the UN system, so that the Organisation could be more democratic, efficient and financially viable and responsive to the interests of its members especially developing countries. 38

In the January 2002 SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu, India and Pakistan leaders got another opportunity to meet informally even if for a short time. Despite India's repeated stressing prior to the Summit that Prime Minister Vajpayee would not meet Pakistan President Musharraf it was the Sri Lankan effort that paved the way for the meeting.

While Indo-Pakistan developments dominated the SAARC Summit it ended with a clear warning from other member countries to the two nuclear neighbours to get together and sort out their differences. Indeed, despite the lack of tangible political and economic achievements, Kathmandu demonstrated the utility of SAARC as a forum where the smaller South Asian countries could exercise some emotional influence over the larger neighbours ... At a time when tension between India and Pakistan is providing outside powers like the US and Britain with a handle to present themselves as brokers, the Summit provided a fleeting

38 op. cit. No. 35
glimpse of South Asia's own ability to generate compromise and dialogue.  

Confidence Building Measures in South Asia

South Asia need some confidence building measures under the aegis of SAARC. The publication of an annual report of military exercises is a good proposition. An agreement on prior notice of such exercises already exist between India and Pakistan. Even before this agreement, India's Brasstacks in 1987 and Pakistan's Zab-e-Momin in 1989 were publicised well in time. This would instil a habit of regular communication. Another transparency measure could be maintenance of a regional register on all weapons sale and procurement agreements and transfer of technology agreements on the lines of the UN arms register.

Initially, ASEAN was branded as an association limited to the ruling elite to legitimise their regimes. Later a determined campaign was undertaken to make the people of South East Asia aware of ASEAN, its aims and its utility. Today, we can see a sense of 'we-feeling'--a sense of ASEANness among the ASEAN members.

Track II Initiatives

ASEAN ISIS organises Annual Asia Pacific Roundtable. ISIS does much of the networking on security cooperation in the region. ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) in 1991 proposed 'Senior Officials Meeting' (SOM) comprising senior officials from ASEAN states and dialogue partners to support the ASEAN PMC functioning. The first SOM was held in Singapore in 1998 involving extensive discussions on issues like multilateral approaches to peace and security.

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39 Aunohita Majumdar, "Smaller Partners, too, have their Say at SAARC", *The Times of India*, January 2002, New Delhi.
preventive diplomacy, conflict management, non-proliferation of arms, ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ. The second SOM was held in Bangkok in May 1994. A process of inter-secessional SOMs has also been initiated.

The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP): It was decided to establish CSCAP to provide a more structured regional process of a non-governmental nature to contribute to the efforts towards regional confidence-building and enhancing regional security through dialogues, consultation and cooperation. It involves government officials (in private capacity) to attract government resources. But institution is independent of official control. Official involvement was also vital for brightening the prospects of implementation of the ideas thus generated by the council. (CSCAP) is intended to support ASEAN PMC and SOMs on security issues. Four working groups have been established, including i) maritime cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region; ii) CSBMs and enhancing transparency; and iii) the concepts of cooperative and comprehensive security. At the 29th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Jakarta in 1996 the foreign Ministers lauded the close cooperation and efforts of these NGOS.40

In the SAARC region common man is not even fully aware of SAARC as a regional association. A.N. Ram writes, there is,

... an acute need to launch a concerted programme in each of the SAARC countries to educate and inform the people about the benefits of regional cooperation and more importantly, involving the people themselves in the implementation of programmes. In this important effort, the government can play at best a limited role; it is for the NGOs, media, businessman, scientists, administrators, parliamentarians and the representatives

of grassroot movements to spread the message of SAARC.41

At its Kathmandu Summit in 1987, call was given for increased people-to-
people contacts and greater participation of NGOs in the process of promoting socio-
economic and cultural development in South Asia. Certain guidelines and procedures
for granting recognition by SAARC to regional bodies have been framed. SAARC has
already extended recognition to the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians is another such NGO. German
Foundation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) set up coordinating group for studies on
South Asian Perspectives (CGSSAP) in 1991 to launch a multi-disciplinary search
programme to identify common problems of South Asian countries, to work out
strategies for intensification of cooperation in the region and to elaborate the benefits
of cooperation and costs of non-cooperation. In 1994 a conference on "Shaping South
Asia's Future: Role of Regional cooperation" was held in Kathmandu to disseminate
findings of the nine studies undertaken. It was decided to conduct workshops and
seminars to highlight benefits of cooperation in the region.

Independent Group on South Asian Cooperation (IGSAC), South Asia
dialogue, Committee for Studies on Cooperation and Development (CSCD) are other
academic groups working in this direction. Further, NGO's like the Association of
Management Development Initiatives of South Asia (AMDISA), South Asian
Federation of Accountants (SAFA) are helping in developing common perspectives

41 A.N. Ram, “SAARC Missed Opportunities” World Focus, No. 250-51, October –
on problems of the region. The SAARC institutions and individual states must recognise these efforts and create the necessary institutional mechanisms and environment to further deepen and strengthen regional cooperation through direct involvement of the people in the region. Citizen’s Commission for South Asia met for the first time in Kathmandu in December 2000. The main objectives of the Commission are to increase public awareness regarding South Asian cooperation and the need to intensify the same. They also urged the governments, and the civil society of the SAARC states to reaffirm their political will to work collectively for peace and progress in South Asia. On the same lines the Indo-Pak Peoples’ Forum organised Joint Convention for Peace and Democracy in April 2000 at Bangalore. In Kathmandu in January this year journalists from SAARC states pledged to work for free flow of information and free movement of media personnel in the region. The meeting took place under the auspices of the South Asian Free Media Association.

Often, the non-governmental organizations are in a better position to work with the community at large and elicit support from the informal sector. They are a tangible expression of the will of the public opinion. Therefore, on operational plane, subject-specific NGOs should be encouraged to form apex bodies and, thereafter, their constructive interaction with official SAARC bodies should be promoted and encouraged. Thus SAARC will be able to draw upon the knowledge and experience of NGOs and they, in turn, will be kept fully informed of the SAARC perspective.42

42 Kant Kishore Bhargava et al. (eds) Shaping South Asia’s Future: Role of Regional Cooperation (New Delhi: Vikas, 1995).
Regional Nuclear Security

Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice 1996 in its unanimous decision also said, "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."

The idea of setting up a nuclear weapon free zone in South East Asia was first enunciated at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1971. It was decided that the establishment of the South East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone would be an essential component of ZOPFAN. However, in the following years not much progress has been made on the issue. The issue also got sidetracked due to the ambivalent attitude of ASEAN members. Thailand and the Philippines were tied to the US defence system through bilateral treaties. Malaysia preferred a non-aligned regional framework.

Till the early 1990s, the Indochina crisis prevented the conclusion of a treaty on Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in South Asia. With the end of Cold War, withdrawal of US troops from the Philippines and assertiveness of China all contributed to renewed ASEAN effort in this direction. A working group was setup by ASEAN to do the preparatory work. During the 1995 NPT Extension conference, the Philippines delegation called for the signing of the South East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone treaty, particularly by the nuclear weapon states. SEANWFZ treaty was finally signed in Bangkok in December 1995 by the ASEAN member states.

The Treaty clearly states that nothing in the treaty prejudices the right of the state parties to use nuclear energy for their economic development. However, prior to
embarking on their peaceful nuclear energy programmes, state parties shall subject
their programmes to rigorous nuclear safety assessments, conforming to guidelines
recommended by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The parties are
prohibited from developing, testing, manufacturing or otherwise acquiring, possessing
or having control over nuclear weapons. 43

Each party also undertakes not to dump at sea or discharge into the atmosphere
anywhere within the zone any radioactive material or waste. 'Stationing', defined as
deploying, installing, stockpiling, or storing nuclear weapons is the South East Asian
Zone is prohibited.

A Commission for the South East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone comprising
all state parties, is to be established to oversee the implementation of the treaty and
ensure compliance with its provisions. The decisions of the Commission and its
subsidiary organ the Executive committee are to be taken by consensus or by a two-
third majority of members present and voting. 44

Under the protocol annexed to the Treaty and open for signatures by the five
nuclear weapons states, the signatories are not to violate the treaty, not to use or
threaten to use nuclear weapons against any state party to the treaty and in general
within the zone. The protocol is of permanent nature but each state may withdraw in
case of extraordinary event jeopardizing its interests.

43 ASEAN, South East Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), Bangkok,
44 Ibid.
The United States expressed concerns that because of the geographical extent of the Zone regular movement of naval vessels and aircraft through the Southeast Asia would be restricted. China expressed displeasure over the inclusion of South China Sea in the treaty. The first round of discussions between Malaysia as Chairman of SEANWFZ and representatives of the nuclear weapon states were held in 1996, second in 1997.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers in 2000 meeting also welcomed the Chinese announcement at the PMC in Singapore 1999 of its readiness to accede to the protocol and called on the other Nuclear Weapon states to exercise greater flexibility in the consultations on the Protocol.45

On the SAARC front discussions on the threat of nuclear weapons and the need for disarmament have always been part of summit agenda. The 1987 Kathmandu Summit called for the early conclusion in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. They declared their resolve to support every effort to conclude a treaty prohibiting vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. In the 1990 Male Summit, the Heads of States expressed the hope that the talks between the two super powers on arms control would culminate in the conclusion of an agreement for substantial reduction and ultimately total elimination of nuclear weapons. At the 1998 Colombo Summit, all nuclear weapon states, whether party or non-party to the NPT have been asked by South Asian leaders collectively to engage constructively through a transparent and credible process of negotiations on a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory international instrument prohibiting

45 op. cit. No. 31

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the use or the threat of nuclear weapons as well as eliminating such weapons in existing arsenals.

The ARF meeting held in Singapore in 1999 to give impetus to global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament called upon the multilateral Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to conclude negotiations for banning the production of fissile material for the explicit purpose of making atomic weapons. It called upon "all states to exercise restraint in the development, testing and export of ballistic missiles" in regard to deployment and use of nuclear weapons.

Indian and Pakistan Nuclear Tests

On May 11, 1998 India conducted three underground nuclear explosions. Two tests were conducted on May 13. Since then India has declared itself a nuclear weapon's state. Pakistan conducted five tests on May 28 and one more on May 30. These developments evoked responses from world over. The US condemned the tests and imposed sanctions on India and Pakistan. Russia though critical of the tests, did not favour the sanctions. China also criticised the tests. SAARC Chairman Abdul Gayana called upon SAARC members to contain situation arising out of the tests and begin informal consultations to develop a peaceful environment. Non-Aligned Movement endorsed the Indian stand and condemned nuclear weapon states for maintaining nuclear arsenals and called for a non-discriminatory agreement for total elimination of nuclear weapons. In joint communique on India and Pakistan Nuclear Tests the five permanent members of the UN Security Council condemned the nuclear tests and urged India and Pakistan to resume dialogue on all outstanding issues. It further called upon India and Pakistan to stop nuclear weapons development
programmes and sign Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban (Treaty) without delay and without conditions.\textsuperscript{46}

India and Pakistan are now nuclear weapons states irrespective of whether they are granted the status or not by the other five nuclear weapons states. India's primary objective, as stated in the draft nuclear doctrine put forth by the government for a countrywide debate to provide an "effective, credible nuclear deterrence and adequate retaliatory capability should deterrence fail."\textsuperscript{47} The Indian decision on the CTBT now must take into account the kind of nuclear force structure it aspires to build and whether that would require any further testing. See Atomic Energy Installation in India (Map 7.2).

On 27 May 1998, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee stated in Parliament, "We do not intend to use (nuclear) weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country, these are weapons of self-defence, to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. We do not intend to engage in an arms race". On 15 December 1998, he spelt out the principal elements of Indian nuclear policy in a statement in Parliament. India's resolve to preserve its nuclear independence minimum nuclear deterrence, nuclear independence, minimum nuclear deterrence, no first use, non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states and a firm commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. India had earlier declared a voluntary moratorium on further nuclear testing and was ready to engage in negotiation for an FMCT and offered to discuss no first use agreement with

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{46} U.N. Information Service, Joint Communique on Indian and Pakistan Nuclear Tests by the Permanent Members of Security Council, 4 June, 1998.
\end{footnotesize}
Map 7.2
ATOMIC ENERGY INSTALLATIONS IN INDIA

Pakistan. Pakistan's rational for its nuclear weapons in not only to deter the threat of India's nuclear weapons but also to counter India's conventional military superiority.

The nuclear weapons in South Asia have added another dimension to the regional security environment. But certainly South Asia does not face any additional danger than any other region with Nuclear Weapons states. It is usually argued that the absence of proper command and control structure could lead to nuclear exchange. The two states might be lacking in experience on nuclear control but certainly they are alert to these types of dangers. As India has adopted a no first use policy, it does not require to deploy nuclear weapons. India has long and healthy tradition of civilian rule. But in Pakistan, military has been in command and in control of nuclear weapons. In spite of the adventurous behaviour of the Pakistan military regime it is definitely going to be sensible on this issue.

In contrast to the Indian position that nuclear weapons should not be employed in combat, Pakistan seeks greater dividends from its nuclear weaponry and thus resorts to regular threats. As is well known, Pakistan nuclear weapons programme has been aided and abetted by China. It is Chinese policy to keep India tied to South Asia and club it with Pakistan. This also helps Pakistan to overplay Indo-Pak nuclear threat to keep the US and other powers engaged in the region.
Nuclear CBMS

Agreement on the Non-Attack on Nuclear facilities has been signed between India and Pakistan in 1988. The Lahore declaration signed by Prime Minister Vajpayee and his then Pakistan counterpart Nawaz Sharif in 1999 was undone by Pakistan's Kargil misadventure. Nuclear-related CBMs negotiated at Lahore included-exchange of documents on nuclear doctrines and security concepts, an MoU to give advance notification on ballistic missile tests, MoU to inform the others of unexplained nuclear accidents, work towards improving control over their own nuclear arsenals, establishing a new hotline in addition to the existing hotline between the two Directors General of Military Operations. The two sides also agreed to abide by their unilateral moratorium on conducting nuclear tests except in extraordinary situations.

Bilateral Military Cooperation and Cooperation with Extra-Regional States

Bilateral disputes do exist among ASEAN states like over Natuna Islands between Indonesia and Vietnam, Celebes Sea Islands between Indonesia and Malaysia, Pulau Batu Putih Island between Malaysia and Singapore, overlapping maritime boundaries between Malaysia and Vietnam, continental shelf claims in the Gulf of Thailand between Thailand and Vietnam, Sabah between Malaysia and the Philippines and overlapping maritime boundaries between Malaysia and Thailand. These seem to be far less dangerous flashpoints than the disputes that exist in South Asia. The Joint Border Commissions facilitate conflict management and resolution among ASEAN members.

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On 2 September 1996, the Philippines government and the Muslim rebels signed a peace pact to end armed conflict in the Southern Philippines. It took three years of negotiations between the two sides to reach this agreement. Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas who helped broker the accord also signed the accord. Alatas said, "it will have a profound and positive impact on the economic stability and progress of South east Asia". In 1978, Malaysian Prime Minister Hussein had said, "it is the determination of Malaysia and Indonesia to make efforts to assist the Muslims in Southern Philippines and the Philippines government solve their differences peacefully". Thus the agreement was seen as the capacity of ASEAN to peacefully resolve problems in the region.

On the bilateral level, Vietnam share some military relations with other ASEAN members. It maintains military contact with Laos at the highest level. It has also sought to normalise relations with Cambodia. With Malaysia, it has started joint exploration of petroleum in areas of overlapping claims. Vietnam and Thailand have signed a border demarcation agreement.

The Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA)

It binds the South East Asian States of Malaysia and Singapore with external states of the UK, Australia and New Zealand. It has contributed to the air defence of Singapore and Malaysia through the Integrated Air Defence System. It has also acted as CBM mechanism between Malaysia and Singapore. They were able to hold joint military exercises along with the alliance partners despite their political problems. Indonesia is not very comfortable with the alliance being conceived as a deterrent to its regional ambition. ASEAN maintains that this
military relations with the extra-regional powers in no way means the abandonment of ZOPFAN.

Other Cooperative Efforts

The US-Malaysian Bilateral Training and Consultative Group (BITAC) was established in 1984 but its existence was not revealed for a long time. As most of the South East States are apprehensive of China's military modernisation and disputes over South China Sea, they have negotiated military and naval access arrangements with the US. The Philippines has Visiting Forces Arrangement to expand military cooperation with the US under which it has provided the US with maintenance of war reserves, ocean facilities, refuelling and transit arrangements to ensure the US ability to operate militarily in the region. It also conducts joint military exercises with the US. Malaysia supports continued US presence in Asia and makes available naval and air maintenance and repair facilities. Brunei too had military relations with the US. Singapore in 1989 offered military facilities to the US. In 1990, it signed MoU with the US which provided for the deployment of American aircraft and military personnel in Singapore. In 1992, two states reached an agreement on the relocation of a major naval logistics facility from Subic bay to Singapore. There is also a change of perception in Indonesia which has fully agreed to Singapore offer of military facilities to the US and also to conduct joint exercises with US forces. Singapore in 1998 announced building up of a large naval base which will be available to US naval combatants and includes a pier to accommodate American aircraft carriers. The US is also engaged in low-key military diplomacy with Vietnam.
In the SAARC region Indo-US Defence Policy Group met for the third time in December 2001. It was decided that the Executive Steering Group of the three Services of the two countries would meet in 2002 to plan and review military cooperation. These include combined special operations training, small unit ground/air exercises, combined training exercises between US Marines and Corresponding Indian forces. 49

China has emerged as the single largest supplier of military equipment to Pakistan Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. This is one of the irritating factors in the Sino-Indian relations which have not been very smooth. Some CBMs do exist between India and China. Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas was signed in 1993. In 1996, limited military CBMs in the form of Agreement on CBM in the Military Field along the LoC in the India-China Border Areas was signed. This stipulates that military measures would not be resorted to for solving boundary dispute and a reduction in the number of surface-to-surface missiles to a level mutually agreed upon. However, even after several rounds of Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings progress is rather slow.

Conclusion

ASEAN follows a process of interaction, consultation, cooperation that has evolved over the years to develop national and in turn regional resilience. Thus, the ASEAN way is all about containing and managing conflicts. ASEAN has emerged as a successful diplomatic community. Conflicts are not allowed to hinder cooperation in other areas. ASEAN not only allows regular contacts among Heads of Governments

and officials but also allows people to people contact, thus creating a 'we feeling' in the region. The association tries to accommodate interest of all members. The process of consensus-building usually takes time but eventually pays off. The ASEAN states realised that intra-regional conflicts hamper the progress and draw external powers into the region. Moreover, they also recognised the benefits of dealing with external powers collectively. While dealing with the Indo-China crisis, members did not let their divergent perceptions adversely affect ASEAN solidarity.

In the post-Cold War period as members realised, it is difficult to keep external powers from interfering in the region, they devised the way of constructive engagement. ARF and ASEAN-PMC are the culmination of this mode of thinking.

On the SAARC front, though bilateral and contentions issues are not allowed in the proceedings of the Association, it did play a vital political role. International political issues have been part of its Summit agenda from the very beginning. Moreover, informal summits along the side of Summit-meetings have been useful in discussing important political bilateral conflicts. The SAARC has provided a forum for regular contact among members which is no mean achievement given the differences among the member states. A common threat perception, a common external enemy, provided the much needed impetus to ASEAN to move forward. These are lacking in the case of SAARC where members have divergent threat perceptions. Pakistan's attitude shows its frustration in gaining parity with India in military and economic fields. Moreover, there is also a feeling that post-Cold War period has provided India with opportunities to move to larger arena of the Asia-Pacific region. It is also time that the people-to-people contact, the civil society in India and Pakistan be more assertive in quest of stable relations between the two
states. Finally, perhaps it is also time that SAARC should gradually introduce political and contentious issues in its agenda through the amendment of the Charter. But as said earlier, it has to be done in a steady and phased manner given the divergent views and perceptions of the member states in this regard.