

Critical Perspective on ASEAN Security Community under ASEAN Political and Security Community

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Abstract

Despite economic integration challenges, ASEAN faces greater security challenges. It is obvious to assert that a stable economic development requires a secure regional atmosphere. The traditional and nontraditional threats encounter ASEAN home land security. The most probable threats portraying ASEAN are hostile foreign entities infiltration, intra and inter states disputes, radical religious movements, human trafficking, drugs and narcotics smuggling, and even cybercrimes. To this point, ASEAN has taken constructive measures such as establishing consultative forums, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting (ADMM) and ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crimes (AMMTC). In 2009, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Political and Security Community. One of its stated purposes is to share security responsibility of each ASEAN member through constructivist approach. However, APSC has far of being success to achieve its ideal mission. Therefore, this piece would critically examined the fundamental questions: how does ASEAN security policy through APSC meet its interest to secure ASEAN region? To search for the answer it would apply constructivism approach. Constructivism ponders the significance role of regional security institution such as APSC in security structure. It suggests that regional security community should be build based on shared values among states in a region. Constructivist's regional security model will be used as the explanatory model for APSC case. While the Regional Security Complex (RSC) theory would be employed to analyze the security dynamic is ASEAN. It argues that the APSC is able to create pivotal security forums but lack of confidence in tactical level. It also suggest that APSC's policies are laid in triangular basis; rely on dialogue, establishing forums and innitiatives, and rely on non-legal binding principle.

Keywords: APSC, regional security, constructivism,

Introduction

The leaders in Southeast Asia have been aware of the potential security threats to the region. It may hail from inner and outer region, traditional and nontraditional, state and non-state. The narration of colonialism, borders claims, minority question, and nontraditional menace are the highlight of all. Fierce clashes among major kingdoms in Southeast Asia in the past before the arrival of European entities were the dominant depiction of the region. The remaining of these clashes still gave effect until 1990's especially in continental Southeast Asia (Weatherbee, 2009).

Most of Southeast Asian nations were suffered during colonialist occupation. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, The Philippines, and Vietnam were occupied by European colonialist. The European colonialist descended one protracted intra state conflict, the territorial disputes. The Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia disputes over the territorial claims has been prolonged until the year 2000's. Some of these conflicts escalated to arms contact among their military apparatus. The Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and The Philippines disagreement on their territorial sphere also connected to territorial formation by the colonialists (Gee, 2013).

At the end of colonialist occupation, Southeast Asia became the battle ground of other Western power during the 2nd World War time. The United States Pacific military campaign

against Japanese imperial and communist ideology caused the Vietnam war and let US to establish military base in The Philippines which was closed down in 1991. The Vietnam War is the vivid depiction of the fragility of Southeast Asia region from foreign intervention. As indicated by Muni (2013), the foreign intervention to domestic or regional disputes may result to prolonged conflicts.

Other internal popular security threats encircling Southeast Asia are the radical terrorist movements, human trafficking, drug smuggling and haze problem. The radical terrorist movements probably the most perilous threat in the region and even the world. The so called terrorists in this sense is the religious (Islam) led radical network groups that operates without state borders. Al Qaida was the one that claimed by the world as the most responsible group for almost all terrors happened in five continents. The emergence of this radical movement for some experts is motivated by oppression of Muslim communities worldwide and 'spiritual bankruptcy of the west' (Kiras, 2011).

Despite those security challenges, Southeast Asia region is considered as a peaceful region. After the cold war there was no significant interstate conflict that may interrupt the stability of the region. Albeit interstate conflict, intra state conflict overshadowed the future security. The main locomotive of Southeast Asia's stability is its single regional organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN is the institutionalization of Southeast Asia nation's willingness to establish a peaceful and prosperous region. In its 48 years, ASEAN has enlarged its member states and its program activities. Recently, ASEAN has added five new member states and heading to an ASEAN Community.

In 2003, ASEAN leaders agreed to establish ASEAN Community in 2020 as declared in Bali Concord II. The Declaration states that ASEAN Community comprises of three pillars, the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The APSC is ASEAN's effort to attain its political and security agenda. Under the banner of APSC there are six forums to join; the foreign ministries, defense ministries, and law ministries of ASEAN member states and other ASEAN partners. One pivot forum of the APSC is The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). ARF formed as a consultative forum concerning defense and security issues, and contributing to confidence building and preventive diplomacy. This forum said to be effective in making the concept of security stability surrounding ASEAN and its neighbor. However, the ARF and APSC's efforts to secure ASEAN region have lack of confidence in territorial disputes (Son, 2011). This significance territorial issue is not only intra-ASEAN challenge but also inter-ASEAN problem. The South China Sea territorial disputes for instance, would become potential "battle field" for the contrasting parties if the peace talks fail to offer permanent solution (Hongfang, 2011). Therefore it is worth to address a question : how does ASEAN security policy through APSC meet its interest to secure ASEAN region from traditional security threats? It suggests that ASEAN should evaluate its security policy under APSC auspice.

The Concept of Security

Security, in the term of academic context became one of popular international issues raised in the aftermath of World War II (Williams, 2013). In his earliest publication, Buzan notes that security is 'the pursuit of freedom from threat' (Buzan, 1983) and correspond to moral paradigm (Strachan, 2005). The threat is commonly derived from state's military actions (Sulovic, 2010). This narrowly conception of threat emphasizes states as the epicenter of security and insecurity. In this context, security policy is the domain of state to secure its people from any hostile states. This bring security study onto state-centric study as promoted by Waltz (2001). Unfortunately, the traditional definition of security is paradox. If states pursue the utmost freedom and secure for its people from hostile military raids then why majority of the states build up its armaments? This circumstance is better described as security dilemma (see

Collins, 2000). Moreover, there are greater concern in security beyond the state which leads into evolution of security.

The evolution of security is in accordance with the transformation of threats. In 1900's until 1990's, inter-state wars were the primary object of security. In the after math of 9/11, terrorism was the main menu of security analysis. A comprehensive narration of security evolution by Buzan & Hansel (2009) laid down the logic of this evolution. It started by posing four critical questions on state's capacity as the 'referent object'; the inclusion of external and internal threats, extension of security beyond military raids, and inseparability of security with the 'dynamic of threats, dangers and urgency'. The critics on traditional concept of security sprung broadening aspects of security such as human security (Newman, 2010) and environmental security. The debate on securitization and desecuritization has resulted two major schools; the Copenhagen School and Welsh School (Floyd, 2007, Sulovic 2010).

The Copenhagen School broadened the term of security beyond traditional state-centric and military heavy. It defines security as 'to be social and inter-subjective construction' (Floyd, 2007). It leads to the concept of securitization. Securitization is the 'extreme model of politization' that requires 'inter-subjective establishment of existential threats' (Buzan at. al, 1998). Simply put, threat is not a given phenomenon but more on social construct. Alexander Wendt, a modern constructivist accentuates the importance of social construction on international politics (Went, 1999). On the other side, the Welsh school is considered as the proponent of traditional security. It argues that the central role in security lies in the hand of state and directed by state. Therefore, any international or regional security organization is not too significant in changing international security structure.

ASEAN and ASEAN Political-Security Community

The primary reason of ASEAN integration in 1967 is security (Rools, 2012). Further explanation of ASEAN integration can be described in theoretical manner. There are three dominant theoretical framework to explain the integration of Southeast Asian nation into ASEAN namely; neo realism, neo liberalism, and constructivism (Simon, 2008). New realism favors states as the core actors in IR. It reduces the role of international institution in managing world security. For neo realist, institution such as ASEAN is the continuation of major power's interests (Shaun, 1998). Neo liberalism emphasizes on the maximization of politics and economics cooperation to attain 'absolute gain'. In other words, the cooperation of Southeast Asia's states were merely motivated by economic gain. While the constructivism sees the foundation of ASEAN is ground of 'we feeling' where they share norms and values (Archarya, 2001).

Moreover, Archarya (2001) distinguishes four forms of security cooperation, the security regime, security community, collective defense, and collective security. The separation of those forms is characterized by the perception of external threat, the capacity to avoid war, the basis of commitment, and member's obligations. Accordingly to him security community is characterized by two fundamental elements. The first element is the absence of war and the second is no significant preparations for war among member states (Archarya, 2001). ASEAN has a high confidence on the first element but it left critical question to the second element. Since APSC formation there was no military engagement equals to interstate war happened in Southeast Asia. There were intra state conflicts erupted in some states like in Myanmar and The Philippines. On the other side, ASEAN countries, especially Indonesia are now building its defense capability. It includes procurement of new armament and development of domestic defense industries. The program as such may lead to regional arms races.

ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC) is a case of international institutionalization of political and security efforts involving particularly the ten ASEAN states and other ASEAN partners in greater Asia, such as Australia, China, Japan and, the United

States. International institution such as ASEAN is claimed to provide conducive fora for state's interaction and dialogue (Phan, 2014). The consideration to establish APSC is based on Indonesia's proposal to form ASEAN Security Community. However, in the Bali Concord II it was agreed to combine political aspect to the community.

Regional Security Complex Theory and Traditional Security Threats

Regional Security Complex (RSC) theory defends the pivotal role of regional security to international structure. The RSC sees that the dynamic of international security pattern is influenced by the regional security dynamic. It also suggests that security issues are interlinked to its process, as Buzan and Waever imply RSC is 'a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another' (Buzan & Waever, 2003). Thus, the RSC develops further its theory by mapping the world into some regional security complexes. The unity of these complexes formed what RSC called as supercomplex. In its identification, Southeast Asia region is develop into RSC. Together with South Asia RSC and Northeast Asia RSC it builds the Asian Supercomplex which represents the complexity of Asia's security structure. RSC then, is best to describe regional security model in any regions. The RSC in South East Asia is greatly influenced by the dynamic of South China Sea territorial disputes.

The South China Sea disputes jeopardizes ASEAN security in two ways. The first is the possibility of Chinese military intrusion to ASEAN members (primarily on Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines) territorial sovereignty. Weighting from Chinese strategic stance that put South China Sea as its core interest with its nine dash lines and other rhetoric, the prospect to settle the disputes in the short coming time is still gloomy. As its core interest, Beijing would not offer many options to other claimants. Chinese recent provocative action in land reclamation and military presence surrounding conflicting zones has raised the tension and challenge ASEAN solidity. The second threat as the effect of South China Sea disputes is the possible disruption of ASEAN's member solidity. It was the Chinese who played the card to drag the South China Sea issue into bilateral level. In 2009 Chinese Ambassador to ASEAN stated that the territorial dispute in South China Sea is the matter of China and individual South China Sea coastal states.¹ This diplomatic strategy has lured ASEAN nerves tension and managed the Philippines to conduct unilateral action.

Critics on APSC Policy

1. Rely on Dialogues

Dialogue has become ASEAN's mode of achieving political accords. The dialogue itself is part of ASEAN's way in building trust based relations internally and externaly. ASEAN reliance on dialogue is adopted almost in every issue from regular to complex issue such as South China Sea disputes. In responding to South China Sea issue, ASEAN relies on dialogue among its members and between ASEAN and China. The aim of these dialogues is in compliance of ASEAN's core principle to promote peace and stability through peaceful manner. In practical basis the dialogue approach attained its success in bringing all disputes on the table. However, the dialogue approach tends to time consuming and requires multiple meeting in which sometimes ended without vibrant solution. The South China Sea disputes is one of the primary sample of 23 years dialogues which is still looking for the permanent conclusion.

ASEAN has established various dialogue with its wide range state and international organization partners. To strengthen its external relations, ASEAN recognizes some status of dialogue such as Sectorial Dialogue Partner, Development Partner, Special Observer, Guest, or

¹<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1238965216?accountid=62100> accessed on 15 May 2015

other status.²By seeing these status, ASEAN tries to categorize its dialogue partner based on their significance role. However, the dialogue established with various strategic states mostly on economic substance. ASEAN dialogue with China for instance is dominated by economic topic and 'undermine' other issues including security. It is no surprise to find that the progress of economic and security go in different ways. The recent dialogue with the US which was held in May this year for instance concluded with US reinforcement collaboration to press global, regional, and transnational issues that may affect Asia Pacific region. The issues identified were climate change, illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and South China Sea issue.³

The ASEAN ways of dialogue are mostly conducted through formal multilateral meetings. The conclusion of the meetings are expressed in written document which full of declaration and statements. In some circumstances it will be followed with press release after the meetings. However, in some cases those conclusions remain as statements without firm action. For instance since 1992 until 2011, ASEAN had at least released more than 60 related statements (declaration, statement, joint communique, and press release) in accordance with South China Sea issue.⁴ Annually, ASEAN has made up 4 until 8 statements related on South China Sea disputes. Therefore, these various types of dialogue have only able to bring all interested parties on the table but have not been able to achieve legal binding mechanism.

2. More Forums and Initiatives

The APSC basically is a forum to provide wider dialogue concerning security. Interestingly, APSC was established after the foundation of ASEAN's regional security building forum, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Before the APSC, ARF was the foremost forum for ASEAN to connect all states in wider Asian region to build confidence and trust each other on security matter. Since its initiation in 1993, ARF has 27 members including the states in South Asia states, East Asia, and the United States. ARF its capacity in broadening security aspects from traditional to nontraditional issues, ARF proved impotent in responding to South China Sea disputes and failed to play significant role in security crisis such as the Thai-Cambodia territorial dispute and Timor Leste problem.

The exclusion of South China Sea issue and growing concern on nontraditional security issues reflect ARF's focus shift onto un-sensitive and nontraditional security challenge in wider Asia Pacific region. ARF's focus shift also reflects APSC's strong attention to nontraditional issues. This policy navigation is taken on the assumption that there is little possibility of interstate arms conflicts in South East Asia and its surroundings. The most tangible threats for South East Asian region at present and future will be coming from non-state offenders such as terrorism, natural disasters, human rights violation, and environment degradation. Right now APSC has various forums to tackle those issues, it includes ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, ASEAN Foreign Minister Meeting, ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting, ASEAN Law Minister Meeting, and ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime.⁵ It might be true that non-traditional security threats are more tangible than traditional security, but this traditional security threats persist as state's major concern in formulating its defense policy. This assumption is reflected on state's military modernization which is developed to counter foreign military intrusion.

²<http://www.asean.org/asean/external-relations> accessed on 1 May 2015.

³<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1682438544?accountid=62100> accessed on 1 May 2015.

⁴List of the document can be found at <http://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Documents-on-ASEAN-and-South-China-Sea-as-of-June-2011.pdf>. accessed on 1 May 2015.

⁵<http://www.asean.org> accessed on 1 May 2015

3. Non Legal Binding Norms

It is believed that ASEAN and its communities are managed to attain unprecedented solidity based on shared norms and values among its members. The fundamental norms and values of ASEAN can be found in its Treaty and Amity Cooperation in South East Asia (TAC) 1976 which stated:

1. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations;
2. The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;
3. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
4. Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner;
5. Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and
6. Effective cooperation among themselves.⁶

These norms and values are considered as the fundamental principles for ASEAN. These principles have guided ASEAN to sail in troubled times which is still practices until today. Despite its idealistic language these principles in some cases become the constraint for the member of ASEAN.

The non-interference principle arguable is the most problematic principle governing ASEAN. It may not take further negligence to understand this principle, but it can turn into some sort of disappointment. An obvious example is on 2014 Rohingya crisis in Myanmar. During the period between July and August Rohingya people were forced to flee from their homes as the result of prolonged conflict between them and Myanmar government and people. Supposedly, ASEAN should lead the way to halt the crisis and not to wait until it escalated. Other issues were concerning Indonesia and Malaysia territorial dispute over Sipadan and Ligitan Island near Borneo. The lack of ASEAN 'positive' intervention had forced both parties to address the dispute into international tribunal level. This could be happened when the dialogues had failed and no constructive approach made by ASEAN to settle the dispute which resulted Indonesia's loss of those islands.

Conclusion

The APSC with its six main forums are the crucial security pillar not only for ASEAN but also for wider Asian region. Like many other regional and international forums, APSC has a burden to confirm its capacity in securing ASEAN by maintaining constructive relations with other nations especially with the United States and China. The failure of APSC in doing so would bring ASEAN into distrust feeling and worries. It is therefore significance for APSC to conceptualize a more constructive dialogue and forum.

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⁶<http://www.asean.org/asean/about-asean> accessed on 1 May 2015

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