Preventive Diplomacy: 
Issues and Institutions in the Asia Pacific Region

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Introduction

The term "preventive diplomacy" has found prominent usage as a key element in the UN's role in international peace and security in the post-Cold War era. (Issraelyan, 1989; Kanninen, 1991; Schechter, 1992; Knight and Yamashita, 1993) This paper seeks to ascertain whether the concept could also form the basis of a new security architecture for the Asia Pacific region. Briefly stated, the paper has two major aims: (1) to discuss the origin and meaning of preventive diplomacy and to elaborate on its operational requirements in a changing international context, and (2) to offer a policy-relevant discourse on the potential of existing and emerging regional institutions in the Asia Pacific to develop a capacity for preventive diplomacy as part of their contribution to regional security.

Definition, Origins and Scope

As a term suggesting pro-active, rather than reactive, responses to international crises, preventive diplomacy seems to be firmly enshrined in the contemporary global collective security arrangement. The UN Charter states that the goal of the organisation is "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace..." (Article 1, paragraph 1 of the UN Charter). The concept of "peace observation" practiced by both the UN and its predecessor, the League of Nations, was "an international instrument to prevent or end hostilities", while its successor notion, "peacekeeping", is defined by the International Peace Academy as "the prevention, containment, moderation and termination of hostilities between or within states..." (Rikheye, 1984:1-2) In this broad sense, as Inis Claude notes, the "development of the theory and practice of preventive diplomacy" is one of the most original contributions of the UN system to the maintenance of international peace and security. (Claude, 1984).

In reality, however, the usage of the term has been considerably imprecise and dependent on the prevailing international climate. The first specific and consistent usage of the term is attributed to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjold. For Hammarskjold, whose name is associated with preventive diplomacy much in the same way as
Woodrow Wilson's is associated with collective security, the simple goal of preventive diplomacy was to keep local conflicts from being entangled in superpower rivalry. (Larus, 1965; Knight and Yamashita, 1993:284) The twin objectives of preventive diplomacy were to keep "newly arising conflicts outside the sphere of bloc differences", and "in the case of conflicts on the margin of, or inside, the sphere of bloc differences...to bring such conflicts out of this sphere through solutions ...[aimed at] their strict localization." (Cited in Cordier and Foote, 1975:131) Hammarskjold's concept envisaged a number of instruments, such as "hotlines", risk-reduction centres and transparency measures, that would help "to recognize and fill any vacuum of power [in conflict situations]...to avoid action by one or the other of the superpowers that might lead to escalation and nuclear confrontation." (Boutros-Ghali, 1993a: 324)

While the end of the Cold War removed the rationale for preventive diplomacy developed by Hammarskjold, the concept was resurrected and given a new definition by the present UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In his landmark report: An Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General defines preventive diplomacy as "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur." (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:5) The new notion of preventive diplomacy is specifically distinguished from other types of UN action, such as "peacemaking", "peacekeeping" and "peacebuilding". The Agenda for Peace defines "peacemaking" as "action to bring hostile parties to agreement", while "peacekeeping" involves "the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well". "Peacebuilding", a major innovation of the Agenda for Peace, is "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict". (Boutros-Ghali, 1992)

The very attempt to separate preventive diplomacy from other approaches, especially peacekeeping, suggests an important rationale behind the former in the post-Cold War era. As peacekeeping operations become more numerous (in May 1994, about 70000 peacekeepers from
70 countries were serving in 17 missions around the world, *The Globe and Mail*, 2 May 1994, p.A13) and complex, imposing severe resources constraints on the UN, preventive diplomacy seems to be a more cost-effective alternative in much the same way as medical science views prevention to be better than cure. The political, financial and logistical problems encountered in several recent UN peacekeeping operations, (James, 1990; Goulding, 1993; Diehl, 1993, Berdal, 1993) have led to a certain amount of disillusionment with the very notion of peacekeeping. Greater emphasis on preventive diplomacy is thus one of the options that could, in the long-term, reduce the need for expensive and politically more difficult peacekeeping operations in many parts of the world. Thus, an obvious factor behind the Secretary-General's advocacy of preventive diplomacy is to evoke greater legitimacy and support for the UN's role by measuring it against a broader framework than mere peace-keeping functions that are so susceptible to periodic setbacks.

Moreover, to a much greater extent than peacekeeping operations, the exercise of preventive diplomacy could be decentralised, i.e., undertaken by agencies other than the UN. As will be discussed latter, regional organisations could have an important role in preventive diplomacy. Some advocates of preventive diplomacy have argued that non-governmental organisations are particularly useful for preventive action in internal conflicts and humanitarian situations because they possess valuable information on, and contacts with, broad sections of the society in conflict-prone areas. (Issraelyan, 1989; Ramcharan, 1991) The exercise of preventive diplomacy can also be undertaken by individual countries with the requisite political will and resources. It has been suggested, for example, that "Middle Powers" may be particularly suitable for a preventive diplomacy role. (Cordovez, 1987:169) In addition, preventive diplomacy might be a more acceptable mission for countries like Japan and Germany whose involvement in conventional peacekeeping operations is subject to severe constraints imposed by domestic political arrangements and international sensitivities. Because preventive diplomacy relies primarily on non-military instruments, it provides opportunities for greater burden-sharing within, and decentralisation of, international peace and security arrangements.

Thus, preventive diplomacy can be applied to a broad range international security
problems (both traditional and non-traditional) by a number of agencies acting preferably, but not necessarily, within a multilateral framework. Preventive diplomacy is not limited to the use of diplomatic instruments alone, nor does it depend exclusively on the UN mechanism. The broader notion of preventive diplomacy underlying this paper builds upon, but expands and clarifies, the definition provided by the UN Secretary General: Preventive diplomacy is diplomatic, political, military, economic and humanitarian action undertaken by governments, multilateral (the UN as well as regional groups) organisations and international agencies (including non-governmental actors) with the aim of:

- preventing severe disputes and conflicts from arising between and within states;
- preventing such disputes and conflicts from escalating into armed confrontation;
- limiting the intensity of violence resulting from such conflicts and preventing it from spreading geographically;
- preventing and managing acute humanitarian crises associated with (either as the cause or the effect) of such conflicts;
- as part of the immediate response to a crisis or pre-crisis situation, initiating measures that might contribute to the eventual resolution of the dispute.

The instruments of preventive diplomacy vary widely, from a simple telephone conversation during a crisis to the deployment of military units, from the peacetime monitoring of events in potential trouble spots to the dispatch of fact-finding and goodwill missions at the onset of a crisis. The various measures of preventive diplomacy, outlined below, can be usefully divided into two broad categories: peace-time and crisis-time responses. (The distinction is not rigid or static, however, since many peace-time measures could form the basis for crisis-time responses.)

**Measures for Preventive Diplomacy**

**Peace-time Responses**

1.a. **Confidence-building** "attempts to make clear to concerned states, through the use of a variety of measures, the true nature of potentially threatening military activities." (Macintosh, 1990:2) Typically, confidence-building measures include transparency and information exchanges, advanced notification of military exercises and deployments and monitoring of regional arms agreements.
1.b. **Institution-building** refers to formal or informal ways of organising attention, expertise and resources in pursuit of a common set of interests or objectives. Institutions develop principles of conduct, generate regularised consultations and build trust. In the long-term, institutions constrain unilateral preferences and actions of actors and promote cooperation. Institution-building need not be an overtly formal affair with a charter and bureaucratic apparatus. Regular consultative gatherings could be more desirable in certain circumstances where actors might wish a degree of informality and flexibility. A key aspect of institution-building is "norm-setting", or inducing rule-governed behaviour among the actors. Such norms could include multilateralism, non-interference and non-intervention and pacific settlement of disputes. In its broad sense, institution-building might be helped by consultations and dialogue initiated primarily by non-governmental actors, but attended by government officials (who may profess to participate in their "private" capacity). Such "Track II" processes could serve as testing grounds for ideas concerning more formal and inter-governmental norm-setting and cooperation.

1.c. **early-warning** involves monitoring of developments in political, military, ecological and other areas (such as natural disasters, refugee flows, threat of famine and the spread of disease) that may, unless mitigated, lead to outbreak of violence or major humanitarian disasters. In recent years, considerable international interest in early-warning has been developed in relation to human rights violations and refugee movements (Beyer, 1990; Gordenker, 1990)

1.d. **preventive humanitarian action** is concerned primarily with preventing and managing the humanitarian costs of political conflicts as well as the political and humanitarian consequences of naturally-occurring phenomena. For emergencies "which result from long-term economic deterioration, or slow-moving natural disasters such as drought, early humanitarian preventive action can save thousands of lives and millions of dollars in subsequent remedial action." (Boutros-Ghali, 1993b:101) This is an area in which NGOs, bilateral and multilateral development agencies and regional organisations could play an important role as agents of preventive diplomacy.

**Crisis-time Responses**

2.a. **fact-finding** involves the collection and analysis of timely and reliable information on conflict situations. (Knight and Yamashita, 1993) Fact-finding is clearly linked the notion of early-warning described earlier, and could be undertaken on a "peace-time" basis, but it is more specific to a given crisis situation. Fact-finding must be comprehensive, covering domestic, regional and global aspects of a conflict and investigating the social, economic, strategic and political factors underlying it.

2.b. **good offices and goodwill missions** are usually undertaken before or at the onset of a crisis and involve the dispatch of senior official/s, such as the UN Secretary-General (Elabray, 1987) or his personal envoy/s. The aim of such missions is not necessarily to engage in
serious mediation efforts, but rather to express the concern of the international community as well as to promote a climate of trust and to establish the areas of agreement between the parties to a conflict.

2.c. **crisis-management** aims at reducing the immediate possibility of violent action in a conflict situation and may require measures such as reconciliation, mediation and arbitration that would help in diffusing tensions.

2.d. **preventive deployment** illustrates the difference in orientation between preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping. Peacekeeping involves separation of rival forces who have mutually consented to such action following a settlement of their conflict. Preventive deployment involves dispatch of units to trouble-spots to prevent the widening/escalation of a conflict with or without the mutual consent of the rivals. Thus, preventive deployment, unlike peacekeeping, might not be a strictly neutral exercise. It could be undertaken with a view to support the likely victim by deterring the actions of the likely aggressor. Preventive deployment could also involve the establishment of demilitarised zones which would create a physical barrier between the antagonists.

**Preventive Diplomacy in a Regional Context**

In his *Agenda for Peace*, Boutros-Ghali noted that preventive diplomacy may "be performed by the Secretary-General personally or through senior staff or specialized agencies and programmes, by the Security Council or the General Assembly, and by regional organizations in cooperation with the UN." (emphasis added) Yet, few studies have specifically explored the requirements of preventive diplomacy in a post-Cold War regional context. (for a discussion of preventive diplomacy in Africa, see Salim, 1990)

This is a subject that deserves serious attention, given the new context of cooperation envisaged between the UN and regional organisations in the post-Cold War era: In the past, regional arrangements often were created because of the absence of a universal system for collective security; thus their activities could on occasion work at cross-purposes with the sense of solidarity required for the effectiveness of the world Organization. But in this new era of opportunity, regional arrangements or agencies can render great service if their activities are undertaken in a manner consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter...What is clear...is that regional arrangements or agencies in many cases possess a potential that should be utilized in serving the functions [of]...preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. Under the Charter, the Security Council has and will continue to have primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, but regional action as a matter of decentralization, delegation and cooperation with the United Nations efforts could not only lighten the burden of the Council, but also contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and
democratization in international affairs. (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:36-37)

While the role of regional organisations in the maintenance of peace and security is not new, (Yalem, 1973; Ispahani, 1984; Acharya 1994a) in many cases, their peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding functions are constrained by lack of resources. (Wiseman, 1984; Brown, 1986; Sesay, 1989; MacFarlane and Weiss, 1992-93) The resources required for a preventive diplomacy role are, however, not beyond their reach. Given their greater familiarity with peace and security problems in their neighbourhood, regional organisations are well-placed to specialise in certain aspects of preventive diplomacy such as early-warning and pacific resolution of disputes (the latter function involves provision of good offices, mediation, investigation and conciliation and is authorised by the UN Charter under Article 52, Chapter VIII). Despite an inconsistent record in conflict-control, regional organisations have in the past demonstrated an ability to compensate for the deficiencies in the UN system and create "islands of peace" by isolating conflicts from Great Power intervention. (Nye, 1975; Haas, 1986)

The regionalisation of preventive diplomacy has important implications for the Asia Pacific region. In recent years, this region has seen an intensified search for new security concepts and efforts to establish regional security dialogues and institutions. (Evans, 1994) Can preventive diplomacy provide a useful conceptual tool for organising this search? This very question has been the basis of a landmark series of workshops organised by the Thai Foreign Ministry (in collaboration with the Institute of Policy Studies in Singapore). These workshops on "ASEAN-UN Cooperation in Peace and Preventive Diplomacy" have provided valuable insights into the nature and scope of preventive diplomacy and the role of Asia Pacific regional institutions in promoting it. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, 1993a, 1993b and 1994; Pfennig, 1994)

In the absence of a comparable grouping in Northeast Asia, ASEAN represents an original and authentic regional vehicle for the exercise of preventive diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region. While ASEAN's contribution to the management and resolution of the Cambodia conflict is well known, it is first and foremost an instrument for conflict prevention, especially in so far as disputes
among its members are concerned. (Weatherbee, 1984) Though a formally-constituted regional institution, much of ASEAN's role in conflict prevention is informal in nature. Strict adherence to intra-ASEAN norms such as non-interference (by one member in the internal affairs of another) and non-use of force in inter-state relations, as well as the time-honoured practice of consultations and accommodation have enabled ASEAN members to virtually eliminate the possibility of any serious military escalation of intra-mural disputes. As Noordin Sopiee put it, these norms and practices have "created a sturdy structure of trust, confidence and goodwill between the member states" and contributed to ASEAN's role in "sublimating and defusing conflicts as in actually resolving them." (Sopiee, 1986:227, 228)

Contrary to a popular belief, ASEAN's role in regional security affairs predates the end of the Cold War. (Malik, 1975, Ghazalie Shafie, 1975; Jorgensen-Dahl, 1982; Sopiee, 1986; Wiseman, 1992) Its response to the Sabah dispute (1968-69), its initiative on a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia, (based on the Kuala Lumpur Declaration of 1971) and its Treaty of Amity, Friendship and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (1976) were milestones in ASEAN's role in preventive diplomacy during the Cold War period. Among the grouping's more important post-Cold War initiatives that fit into this mould are the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea (1992) and the ongoing workshops hosted by Indonesia on "Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea".

The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) is of particular significance, since it has functioned well as a normative framework committing the ASEAN members to self-inhibiting and peaceful conduct in inter-state relations. The Treaty established a "code of conduct" governing relations among the Southeast Asian countries, which in turn contributed to a habit of conflict-avoidance. The treaty also provides a legal basis for the pacific settlement of disputes consistent with the UN charter provisions. (Ho, 1994) Although its provision regarding the establishment of a "High Council" for intra-regional dispute-settlement has never been invoked, ASEAN policy-makers offer no apologies, since it testifies to the effect of ASEAN in reducing intra-mural conflicts to such an extent that formal
measures are deemed unnecessary. In this sense, the treaty is more credible as an instrument of preventive diplomacy than of conflict-resolution in the conventional sense.

It has been suggested that the Treaty's usefulness could be enhanced if it is opened to accession by other countries in the Asia Pacific region. But such a move might be politically problematic. While ASEAN members welcome accession by other Southeast Asian countries, including the three Indochinese states and Myanmar, they are reluctant to open it up to non-Southeast Asian states. In 1987, ASEAN decided on a Manila Protocol to allow accession to the Treaty by countries "contiguous" to Southeast Asia. Papua New Guinea was then accepted as a signatory. But it is far from certain that ASEAN would allow a similar request by other contiguous or otherwise interested states outside the ten nations of Southeast Asia. The case for expanding the Treaty's coverage rests on the premise that peace and stability in Southeast Asia can be best promoted through the constructive participation of "outside" powers. The case against such a move, argued mainly by Indonesia, is based on a fear that external powers might abuse the Treaty's provisions relating to pacific settlement of disputes to "interfere" in the region's affairs. ASEAN members need to carefully consider whether the Treaty can be provided with adequate safeguards against such abuse and then promoted as the basis for a wider system of preventive diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region.

In any case, the advent of the ASEAN Regional Forum already represents a practical step towards applying the norms of ASEAN to a broader regional context. Indeed, the first meeting of the ARF in Bangkok in July 1994 saw agreement by the member nations to "endorse the purposes and principles" of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia "as a code of conduct governing relations between states and a unique diplomatic instrument for regional confidence building, preventive diplomacy and political and security cooperation." (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, July 28, 1994, Part 3 Asia - Pacific, FE/2059/B). The ARF brings together 18 countries including the six ASEAN members, their seven dialogue partners (the US, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the European Community), two consultative partners (Russia and China) and three countries with observer status in ASEAN (Papua New
Guinea, Vietnam and Laos). As a regional security forum, the ARF has the necessary credentials to develop a strong preventive diplomacy role. Politically, the ARF's roots are "indigenous"; it is not considered to be an implantation of foreign "models" of multilateralism such as the CSCE. It is more "inclusive" than any other existing regional political forum, including the ASEAN-PMC process on which it is based. Unlike the latter, the ARF is not a dialogue among the like-minded; it envisages positive interaction among the regional actors which might have different and perhaps conflicting perspectives on regional security issues. In this sense, the ARF has been characterised as a "confidence-building mechanism of the first order" which could help end regional cleavages and promote a open and transparent regional order in the Asia Pacific region. (Ho, 1994)

But as with any new institution, there are uncertainties about how the ARF will develop. (Acharya, 1994b) At the ASEAN-UN workshops, the ARF was characterised as a "dog which does not bite now, but which may do so later". The ARF does not have any specific road map or blueprint for success. While the ASEAN members of the ARF want it to develop in an evolutionary and non-legalistic manner, the ARF's eventual record will be judged on the basis of its ability to provide practical solutions to regional security problems. Mere holding of security consultations or prescription of abstract norms would not suffice. ASEAN's preference for informal and non-legalistic methods might set limits to the development of concrete measures for preventive diplomacy within the ARF. At the very minimum, the ARF needs to develop concrete measures on a number of areas which was submitted by various members to its first meeting in Bangkok. These include measures in the area of "confidence and security building, nuclear nonproliferation, peacekeeping cooperation including a regional peacekeeping training centre, exchanges of nonclassified military information, maritime security issues and preventive diplomacy". (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, July 28, 1994, Part 3 Asia - Pacific, FE/2059/B)

Another question about the ARF is whether it can effectively deal with security issues which are more specific to Northeast Asia. Some analysts have argued that the sheer diversity of security concerns within the Asia Pacific region diminishes the utility of macro-regional
approaches. (Segal, 1991) An ARF which is closely tied to the ASEAN process and which holds its annual sittings in Southeast Asia might seem ill-equipped for handling the Korean Peninsula problem. This leads to the question: is there a need for a Northeast Asian security forum? In Northeast Asia, the prevailing mode of conflict management and security cooperation continues to be based on bilateral relationships. While some measures for preventive diplomacy, including CBMs, can be developed on a bilateral basis, a subregional multilateral institution in Northeast Asia or at least a local crisis-reduction centre might send a stronger signal of the commitment of the regional actors to preventive diplomacy. In this context, Seoul's promotion of the idea of a Northeast Asian Security Dialogue, which would devote itself to security issues that are more specific to the subregion, is of considerable significance. (Lee, 1994:36)

Both the ASEAN and the ARF are supported by Track-II dialogues and fora on regional security. While the ASEAN Institutes for Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) played a key role in pushing ASEAN in the direction of a formal process of security dialogue, the newly formed Council on Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific (CSCAP) might be expected to provide similar inputs into the ARF. Both have initiated studies on confidence-building and crisis-management measures; for example, a recent ASEAN-ISIS study has proposed measures ranging from national defence white papers, a Southeast Asian arms register, greater regional cooperation in arms purchases, exchange of intelligence information, mutual invitation to observe force manoeuvres, notification of forthcoming military exercises, exchange of information and comparison of estimates of military strengths, establishment of a procedure for crisis management based on the provisions of ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and the launching of a "Security of Southeast Asia Symposium Programme" for facilitating contacts among senior and middle level officers in the region. (ASEAN-ISIS, 1993) The ASEAN-PMC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) has also initiated a study of regional confidence and security building measures. These studies and action based on their recommendations will be a valuable contribution to preventive diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region, especially in dealing with the problem of weapons proliferation. (Acharya, 1994c)
In discussing concrete measures for preventive diplomacy, the ASEAN-UN workshops debated proposals concerning the establishment of an ASEAN peacekeeping centre (Wanandi, 1994) as well as a regional information and resource centre. (Dhavernas, 1994) A peacekeeping centre could be used to train ASEAN and other regional personnel for UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. But it could also be perceived as the military arm of ASEAN, thereby stroking longstanding sensitivities within the region against multilateral military cooperation. In addition, deploying an ASEAN peacekeeping force in intra-ASEAN contingencies would be highly problematic given lingering inter-state suspicions within the grouping. A regional information and resource centre, on the other hand, could serve as a useful device for early warning if tasked with the collection and dissemination of data on such issues as regional defence expenditures and arms proliferation. To minimise government sensitivities, such a centre could be initially established on a non-governmental basis (perhaps through CSCAP), which would then make the information available to the ARF and the UN.

Turning to the humanitarian aspects of preventive diplomacy, it is noteworthy that the principal organising concepts for a new Asia Pacific security architecture, such as the notions of "Common", "Cooperative" and "Comprehensive" security, stress the need to include non-traditional threats into the security agenda, (Dewitt, 1994) At the ASEAN-UN workshops, there was a consensus that security issues in the Asia Pacific region could no longer be conceived in purely military terms. While territorial conflicts and arms proliferation received attention as the traditional areas of concern, natural resource competition, illegal migration, environmental degradation and human rights violations constitute examples of non-traditional issues. (Lamb, 1994; Ahmed, 1994) Both sets of issues are closely linked and should form part of any multilateral mechanism for preventive diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region. It is in this context that the first ARF meeting agreed to "study the comprehensive concept of security, including its economic and social aspects, as it pertains to the Asia-Pacific region". (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, July 28, 1994, Part 3 Asia - Pacific, FE/2059/B)

There are a number of ways in which regional institutions including ASEAN, ARF and, to
a lesser extent, APEC, could contribute to non-military aspects of preventive diplomacy. ASEAN's existing programmes on emergency energy and food sharing could be broadened and imbued with a humanitarian mission, especially to deal with natural disasters and refugee problems.

Intra-ASEAN cooperation on environmental issues could be enhanced to include prevention and management of natural disasters that are often related to environmental degradation. While preventive action against conflicts involving human rights abuses and generating cross-border refugee movements is constrained by ASEAN's doctrine of non-interference (as evident in ASEAN's response to the political situation in Myanmar), the idea of a regional human rights watchdog, already considered by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, might be a useful starting point.

The ARF could define the scope of its "security" deliberations broadly to cover humanitarian issues which have the potential to affect security relationships within the wider region. APEC could supplement the ARF's role in preventive diplomacy by providing information and early-warning on environmental degradation, natural disasters and refugee flows. On the issue of human rights, there exists no consensus on how this might be incorporated into a system of preventive diplomacy. The positions of the ASEAN states (acknowledging intra-ASEAN differences) on human rights are marked by a common preference for "cultural relativism", an emphasis on economic over political rights and a belief in the prior importance of societal goals over individual liberty (communitarianism). Thus, the ASEAN countries as well as China would be wary of any Western move to develop preventive measures against human rights abuses within ARF/APEC.

Until regional institutions in the Asia Pacific region overcome resource and political constraints in developing adequate measures for preventive diplomacy, increased cooperation between these groupings and the UN will be particularly helpful. The ASEAN-UN workshops have provided a number of ideas about enhancing cooperation between ASEAN and the UN, measures which could also apply to the ARF. (Pibulsonggram, 1994; Perkin 1994). These include: 1) securing observer status for ASEAN in the UN; 2) establishing formal links between ASEAN and the UN Secretariat; 3) inviting the UN Secretary-General to attend ASEAN Ministerial and
Post-Ministerial Meetings and seeking UN participation in regional meetings in ASEAN; 4) initiating regular meetings between ASEAN and members of the UN Security Council and the Secretariat; 5) UN action in sending periodic fact-finding missions to the region; 6) encouraging special efforts by PMC/ARF members who are also members of the UN Security Council to act as a bridge between the two organisations; 7) enhancing the level of cooperation between ASEAN and the UN Regional Commissions; 8) organising seminars and workshops involving ASEAN and UN participation; 9) developing a voluntary early-warning role for ASEAN in bringing to the attention of the UN any developments affecting regional peace and security; and 10) establishing cooperation between ASEAN and the UN in providing public information on the concept and practice of preventive diplomacy for both the general public as well as for diplomats and officials.

Conclusion

Preventive diplomacy is an important and workable objective for regional security institutions in the Asia Pacific. Indeed, one might argue that in view of existing political and material constraints on regional security cooperation, preventive diplomacy is a more realistic basis for organising a new regional security architecture than conventional peacekeeping and conflict resolution functions.

The task of building a system of preventive diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region should begin with the peace-time measures outlined earlier. These include steps towards confidence-building, security dialogues at governmental and Track-II levels, early warning and preventive humanitarian measures. Crisis-time measures of preventive diplomacy will require more time and political commitment on the part of the regional actors. But regional institutions like the ASEAN, the ARF and the APEC could play an important role in developing these measures.

Until the further evolution of regional institutions in Asia Pacific, one could envisage a useful division-of-labour between the UN and regional institutions in developing a system of
preventive diplomacy. While regional institutions (ASEAN, ARF or a Northeast Asian
subregional grouping) could take the lead in developing peace-time measures, the resources and
expertise of the UN might be called upon to provide the lead in formulating crisis-time responses.
Appendix

Preventive Diplomacy and the Sabah Dispute: 1968-69

Between April 1968 and December 1969, relations between Malaysia and the Philippines worsened considerably over the latter's claim to Sabah, a state within the Malaysian federation. Though the origin of the dispute dates back to 1961, the immediate spark for the bilateral crisis were reports appearing in the Manila press in March 1968 that a secret army was being trained on the island of Corregidor in preparation for an impending invasion of Sabah. While the government of the Philippines denied its involvement in any such plan, its reaction to the so-called "Corregidor affair" showed a renewed pursuit of its claim on Sabah. The affair not only plunged Manila's relationship with Kuala Lumpur into a crisis situation, but also threatened the very survival of ASEAN, barely six months after its creation in August 1967.

At first, other ASEAN members carefully avoided publicly voicing any views on the dispute that might be construed by the disputants as an indication of partiality. Their neutrality deprived Manila of the kind of international diplomatic support it needed to effectively pursue its claim. It might also have discouraged further action by President Marcos in escalating the dispute.

Although Thailand and Indonesia offered their good offices in urging the two sides to reach a negotiated settlement, both shied away from directly mediating in the dispute. Initially, the rest of the ASEAN members tried to keep the Sabah issue separate from ASEAN, hoping that this would limit the dispute's damaging effects on the fledgling organisation. But as bilateral talks between Malaysia and the Philippines in June 1967 failed, followed by the severance of their diplomatic relations and Malaysia's refusal to take part in any further ASEAN meetings where the Philippines might raise the Sabah issue, the linkage between ASEAN and the Sabah dispute could no longer be avoided.

In a bid to contain the crisis, ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting in Jakarta in August and in Bangkok in December 1968 persuaded the two sides to minimise their public airing of the dispute and accept a "cooling off period". Statements by Thailand and Indonesia urged restraint on both sides for the sake of ASEAN. Until their suspension, various ASEAN ad hoc and standing committees provided crucial channels of communication between the two sides when none other existed.

In March 1969, Manila agreed not to raise the Sabah issue at future ASEAN meetings, thereby indicating a new flexibility and meeting a key Malaysian demand. It was an ASEAN committee meeting in Indonesia in May 1969 which brought the two countries together for the first time since in eight months. (excluding the ad hoc December 1968 Foreign Ministers meeting) The softening of Manila's stand was partly due to the ASEAN factor, since the hitherto suspension of all ASEAN meetings had deprived Manila of a major channel to pursue its claim and threatened its relations with other ASEAN members -- Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

At an ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting in December 1969, Malaysia and the Philippines agreed to resume diplomatic relations, and thereby effectively putting the issue in the back-burner. This episode gave ASEAN a new confidence and sense of purpose. The avoidance of any further
escalation of the Sabah dispute was all the more significant because it took place at a time when the degree of economic interdependence within the region was not significant enough to act as an incentive against inter-state tensions. In the words of the joint communique of the December ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting, the resumption of diplomatic ties was possible "because of the great value Malaysia and the Philippines placed on ASEAN".

To be sure, ASEAN did not and could not resolve the Sabah dispute, which continues to elude a decisive settlement. Neither did ASEAN play the role of conflict mediator/manager in a formal and legalistic sense. But ASEAN members, through direct and indirect measures of restraint, pressure, diplomacy, communication and trade-offs, did succeed in preventing any further escalation of the crisis that might have led to armed hostilities and destroyed the organisation. The Sabah dispute is thus a classic case in ASEAN's role in preventive diplomacy. (Jorgensen-Dahl, 1982; Lau)
Participants in the three workshops on "ASEAN-UN Cooperation in Peace and Preventive Diplomacy" held to date included senior officials and academic experts from the UN, the ASEAN states, Myanmar, the Indochinese countries, and several other countries of the Asia Pacific region. Despite some inevitable overlap, the organisers, led superbly by Thailand's Sarasin Viraphol and Singapore's Tommy Koh, were able to give each of the workshops a distinctive focus. The first workshop, organised by the International Studies Centre of Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and held during 22-23 March 1993, drew more than 60 participants and about 25 observers. In setting the agenda for the workshop series, the first workshop "look[ed] into the past and present records of multilateralism in Southeast Asia, and define[d] the prospects and limits of preventive diplomacy from various perspectives - in comparison with the European experiences, from the UN Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace" standpoint, and from ASEAN as well as individual countries vantage points". The second workshop, held in Singapore during 6-7 July 1993, and attended by 40 participants and some 25 observers, covered more specific ground, including case studies in regional conflict (e.g. Cambodia, competition over natural resources and territorial and boundary disputes) and mechanisms that could be used for handling them. A key area of interest was to evaluate the importance of ASEAN's Treaty of Amity, Friendship and Cooperation as a framework for preventive diplomacy. The Third Workshop, held in Bangkok during 17-18 February 1994, set out to identify, in very specific terms, "enabling mechanisms" to operationalise cooperation between ASEAN and the UN in preventive diplomacy measures. The discussion was structured around several key issues, including (1) emerging threats to peace and stability in the region such as mass movement of people, arms proliferation and dispute over islands and boundaries, (2) Cambodia as a case study in peace-keeping and peace-building, and (3) the idea of a peace-keeping training centre for the region.
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