WITHER THE ASEAN SECURITY COMMUNITY? SOME REFLECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The paper argues that a security community remains an object rather than a reality among the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. This notwithstanding, ASEAN institutions, processes and structures in the security regime have multiplied manifold over its 38 years of existence. Theoretical work on ASEAN suggests that a realist-institutional understanding of ASEAN should now be supplanted by what could be called "state-centric constructivism". However, the paper argues that such a theoretical development fails to fully account for the political construction of a security community based on some measure of civil society engagement albeit in the highly state-driven ASEAN formation. It is the understanding of this writer that the agency for change emanating from civil society forces still remains generally under-theorised.

The evolution of literature on ASEAN seems to bear a strong correspondence with the shifting discourse on security and regionalization in Southeast Asia. Early work in ASEAN was dominated by the realist school of thought but by the 1980s and 1990s, neo-functional and institutional approaches to ASEAN began to gain much discursive ground. There is now also some work which uses the discourse and language of conflict resolution and peace research. Such a shift has come along with a constructivist and more reflexivist approach to understanding ASEAN.

The paper suggests that the embedded diplomatic and security culture of the "ASEAN way" is increasingly becoming counter-productive to the construction of a genuine security community. It examines how state-civil society engagement in the area of human rights, clearly an important aspect in the quest for a security community, remains largely on a national or domestic level (if at all in some states) rather than on an regional plane.

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Despite many ASEAN countries' acceptance and adherence to various human rights conventions and the emergence of several national human rights commissions, the ASEAN approach to human rights remains hesitant and non-commital. This is due largely to ASEAN consensual decision-making targeted at the lowest common denominator and its principle of on-interference in internal affairs of member-states. However, the appearance of a Working Group on an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism and a civil-society-driven NGO such as ALTSEAN does augur well for continuing and further engagement of civil forces with the ASEAN formation. Such engagement could help to deepen processes and structures for human security in ASEAN.

ASEAN SECURITY DISCOURSE – THE RELEVANCE OF STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY DYNAMICS

The literature on ASEAN security has become rather voluminous but recent writings have clearly witnessed a shift from rationalist–realist, institutional and transactional approaches to those that broadly come under the rubric of "constructivism" or are influenced by the constructive turn in international relations theory propounded by Alexander Wendt. He states his theory of constructivism plainly as making the following claims:

1. States are the principal units of analysis for international political theory;

2. The key structures in the states system are intersubjective, rather than material; and

3. State identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures rather than given exogenously by the system by human nature or domestic politics (Wendt, 1994: 385).

   Wendt seems to have inspired a spate of more critical ASEAN studies which put the accent on the relationships between ideas, identities and interests through the agency of the generic "ASEAN state". In applying Wendtian theorising, it could be argued that an ASEAN "pluralistic security community" has resulted through statist construction rather that through the older notion

of transactional flows propounded by Karl Deutsch and others. In the language of Wendtian constructivism these relationships have evolved along with socially and politically constructed structures which are not exogenous givens of the anarchical international order. The developments are themselves constituted by the social actors within particular social groupings and contexts with their particular notions, identities and interests. In this brief literature review, let me take a few recent examples of constructivist or constructivist-inspired writings on ASEAN and then relate this to the state of security discourse and practice in ASEAN. In the process, I will also develop my own understanding of constructivism as it appertains to ASEAN.

The work of Acharya (1999, 2001) seems to bear the strong influence of constructivism. The latter work cited above which is titled *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia* clearly bears the hallmark of constructivist theorizing. Thus, the book examines the interplay between norms and socialization, such as the "ASEAN way" as well as the regulatory and constitutive effects of ASEAN, its various self-generated processes and institutions, in its quest to become security community. In my view, the flavour and thrust of Acharya's enlightening work falls largely within the broad sphere of state-centric constructivism, more or less in keeping with Wendtian theory.

Another author, Jürgen Rüland, in a self-consciously critical engagement with the constructivist literature examines the Asian crisis of 1997/1998 and its implications for ASEAN's brand of regionalism. He suggests that at the end of the day, "ASEAN's policy mix is closer to the realist than institutionalist pole." (Ruland, 2000: 443). He further argues that the "institutional and constructivist requiems for realism were premature", looking at ASEAN's handling of the financial crisis. Yet another work on ASEAN's diplomatic and security culture (Haacke, 2003) falls squarely within a state-centric paradigm while adopting only some of the language of constructivism. The author suggests that the core of the ASEAN security culture, known famously as the "ASEAN way" can be decomposed into the following elements, namely:

- Sovereign equality
- Non-recourse to the use of force
- Non-interference and non-intervention
- Non-involvement of ASEAN in bilateral conflict

- Quiet diplomacy
- Mutual respect and tolerance

Haacke's argument that such a culture was the basis of all of ASEAN cooperative ventures begs the important question of how such a culture has provided the constructivist tenets for success or effectiveness of the regional body, or indeed, whether such a culture is even an impediment to the attainment of a full-fledged security community.

My own work on ASEAN (Saravanamuttu, 1999) has tried to steer analysis away from a state-centric paradigm and falls under another rubric of constructivism. Taking the cue from Falk's notion of "geo-governance" (Falk, 1995), I have argued that in ASEAN and Asia-Pacific regionalism, there emerged a plethora of competing visions and missions stemming from state and non-state actors. ASEAN security processes and agendas have however remained profoundly state-centric. Quite often the non-state visions with their "alternative" discourses were mirror images of their state counterparts with paradigms verging on a total rejection of the statist visions for regional order (Saravanamuttu, 1999: 108). The essay ends with a call for a dialogic interaction between civil society and state to fashion more non-violent, humane approaches to geo-governance.

What then could be the relevance of state-civil engagement for the development of security discourse in ASEAN in a constructivist vein? William Tow's essay on "Alternative Security Models: Implications for ASEAN" (2003) provides some fruitful answers. Tow avers that "constructivism invites policy-makers and analysts alike to delve beneath perceived (or misperceived) interest and intentions of potential opponents." Positing that the "human security model" poses the most significant challenge to traditional security referents he states:

> *Ultimately, security is about all of us and each of us, regardless of how we may choose to organize institutions or instruments at a given time to achieve it. This model supplants the collective human rights concept.* (Tow, 2003: 304)

He further calls for a linking of traditional and alternative security perspectives and agendas. Taking the area of conflict prevention as an example, he suggests that time-honoured

strategies to achieve regional stability could converge with the attempts of alternative security proponents "to discern and eradicate the root causes of conflict, based on economic deprivation, social cleavages and human suffering". (*Ibid*: 308). If I could further extrapolate from Tow's essay, the agency for such a convergence would be the engagement with the state of civil forces, groups and NGOs whose work is indeed focused on issues and questions of human security. State-civil society dynamics could therefore be seen as an important plank for new constructions of regional security agendas which are in greater sync with societal concerns and problems.

We will now turn to look at the engagement of civil society elements in the human rights issue-area of ASEAN. While Tow may be correct to suggest that human security encompasses human rights and it may be germane nonetheless to examine in some detail the agency of the "ASEAN state" and non-state actors working in a specific *security* issue-area in order to derive some practical and theoretical outcomes.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ASEAN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISM

ASEAN's track record on human rights as a regional body and in terms of individual member countries has been less than stellar. No ASEAN country has ratified all the main international instruments of human rights and only two countries, the Philippines and Cambodia, have ratified the six major conventions. Cambodia alone has ratified all human rights related conventions (see Table 1). Brunei has only ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which therefore sees unanimous ASEAN approval while only three countries, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines, have ratified the Convention against Torture (CAT).[1]

In the 1993 Vienna UN Conference on Human Rights, the ASEAN states adopted a united stand based on the Bangkok Governmental Human Rights Declaration, 1993. ASEAN is evidently not comfortable with the emphasis on the universality of human rights and the emphasis on civil and political rights over development and basic needs. This could have spurred the idea of promoting a regional rather than a global regime for human rights.

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[1] For a more extensive discussion the prospect for a human rights legal regime to cohere in ASEAN, see Maznah Mohamad, 2002: especially, pp. 232–236.

Thus at the ASEAN 26th Ministerial Meeting in Singapore in that same year, ASEAN governments along with their parliamentarians (AIPO) who were meeting in Kuala Lumpur, declared the willingness to set up regional human rights mechanism (Medina, 1999).

Starting in 1995, the LAWASIA (Law Association for Asia and the Pacific) Human Rights Standing Committee organized a series of meetings among representatives of national human rights institutions, parliamentary human rights committees, and human rights NGOs in the region to discuss proposals for a human rights mechanism in Southeast Asia. The meetings eventually led to the formation of the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism in 1996.[2]

TABLE 1
ASEAN COUNTRIES RATIFYING MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS
CONVENTIONS AND COVENANTS (2003)

Six major conventions and covenants	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Laos	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
ICERD (International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) *1965*		Y	Y	Y			Y			Y
ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) *1966*		Y		Y			Y		Y	Y
ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) *1966*		Y		Y			Y		Y	Y

(continued on next page)

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[2] Organizations providing support for the initiatives were the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, the Asia Foundation and the Southeast Asia Fund for Institutional and Legal Development (SEAFILD) of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

TABLE 1 – *(Continued)*

Six major conventions and covenants	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Laos	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) *1979*		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
CAT (Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment) *1984*		Y	Y				Y			
CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) *1989*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Other Conventions										
Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining 1948 *Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (87)*		Y	Y			Y	Y			
Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining 1949 *Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (98)*		Y	Y		Y		Y	Y		

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TABLE 1 – *(Continued)*

Six major conventions and covenants	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Laos	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
El Compulsory Labour 1930 *Forced Labour Convention (29)*		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Elimination of Forced and Compulsory Labour 1957 *Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (105)*		Y	Y		X		Y	X	Y	
Elimination of Discrimination in Employment and Occupation 1951 *Equal Remuneration Convention (100)*		Y	Y		Y		Y		X	Y
Elimination of Discrimination in Employment and Occupation 1958 *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (111)*		Y	Y				Y			Y
Abolition of Child Labour *1973* *Minimum Age Convention (138)*		Y	Y		Y		Y			
Abolition of Child Labour *1999* *Worst forms of Child Labour Convention (182)*		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y = Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature
X = Ratification denounced

Source: *Human Development Report 2003* (2003).

The Working Group is composed of human rights advocates from government institutions and NGOs who represent their respective national working groups. National working groups have been set up in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines with the aim of eventually having national working groups in each ASEAN state consisting of representatives of the government, parliamentary human rights committees, the academe, and NGOs.

The Working Group has met with ASEAN foreign ministers in 1996 (Jakarta), and with senior officials in 1997 (Kuala Lumpur), in 1998 (Manila) and in 1999 (Singapore) on the proposal for an ASEAN human rights mechanism. National working groups have undertaken related activities within their respective countries.

According to the Working Group's Secretary-General, Carlos P. Medena, ASEAN's response to the initiative has been encouraging. In its Joint Communiqué of the occasion of the 31st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on 25 July 1998 in Manila ASEAN states that:

The Foreign Ministers recalled the decision of the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held on 23–24 July 1993 in Singapore to consider the establishment of an appropriate mechanism on human rights and noted the establishment of the informal non-governmental Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism. The Foreign Ministers noted further the dialogues held between the Working Group and ASEAN officials in Jakarta during the 29th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and in Kuala Lumpur during the 30th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. They recognized the importance of continuing these dialogues and took note of the proposals made by the Working Group during its dialogue with ASEAN held in Manila on 22 July 1998.

Likewise, in the Joint Communiqué of the 32nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Singapore, ASEAN once more recognized the need for continuous dialogues concerning the formation of a human rights mechanism in ASEAN:

We recalled the decision of the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held on 23–24 July 1993 in Singapore to consider the establishment of an appropriate regional mechanism on human rights and noted the establishment of the informal

non-governmental Working Group and ASEAN officials have met regularly since the 29th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta, most recently in Singapore. We recognized the importance of continuing these dialogues. (Medina, 1999)

There have also been meetings among the ASEAN Governments, national human rights commissions and the Working Group, the first held in Jakarta in 2001, the second in Manila in 2002 and third in Bangkok in 2003. In the third workshop, a "Roadmap for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism" was proposed by Vitit Mantarbhorn, which encouraged the establishment of working groups between representatives of the governments, national human rights institutions and civil society and the establishment of the Eminent Persons Group whose work is to provide comments or information for the Working Group. There was also an ASEAN-ISIS colloquium on Human Rights held in February 2002 in which the "ASEAN Human Rights Scorecard" would be linked to the Southeast Asian Human Development Report for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This is still ongoing at the time of writing.

In his concluding remarks at the 3rd Workshop on the ASEAN Regional Mechanism on Human Rights, Bangkok, 27–29 May 2003. Saneh Chamarik, chair of Thailand's National Human Rights Commission made the following interesting remarks:

To get the ball rolling, the national human rights commissions, academic communities, and civil society groups are to be mobilized into networking. Mind you, this is not just for the purpose of facilitating contacts or exchange of ideas and experiences for their own sake, but for real, concrete and relevant action. One would rather not to go into lists of activities involved here. But, to serve as the basis for human rights capacity building, a certain common groundwork could very well be looked into here, taking into account the perceived common needs of the Southeast Asian peoples. (Chamarik, 2003).

As can be gathered from this brief narrative of the activities of the ASEAN Working Group on Human Rights, while it appears that the group is progressing well with its work, in point of fact, not much have been actually achieved by way of concrete results. By and large, the group has acted so far only as the "human rights

conscience" of ASEAN (Maznah, 2002: 237). Much of the actual work and engagement of civil forces with the ASEAN on human rights is conducted at the national rather than at the regional level through the mechanism of national human rights commissions.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS[3]

In ASEAN today, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have established their own National Human Rights Commissions (NHRCs). NHRCs are in theory responsible for maintaining human rights standards but enforcement is ultimately the responsibility of national states. The principles used to guide and establish national human rights institutions are known as the "Paris Principles". The Paris Principles include the notion of a comprehensive mandate to deal with any violation of human rights including those specified in international conventions not ratified by national governments, having a membership composition that is independent from a broad spectrum of civil society, and the assurance that national commissions function without government interference.

Philippine Commission on Human Rights

In the Philippines, as is to be expected from its longer history, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) has become deeply embedded in both the operation of government and society, having developed far-reaching networks through years of active coordination and cooperation on different projects. In addition to extensive cooperation and coordination with civil society and government, the CHR has also established a wide ranging regional network of subsidiary organizations, including regional offices and a system of local *Barangay* Human Rights Action Centres to extend its presence down to every village. However this ambitious plan is plagued by a lack of resources, as there is no budget to support the centres, and the CHR is either unable or unwilling to supervise these bodies effectively. Out of 40,000 villages, so far only 14,000 have established these Human Rights Action Centres.

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[3] This discussion of the work of the national human rights commissions is derived from Maznah Mohamad (2002: 237–245).

Indonesia's Komnas HAM

One of the biggest reasons for the early successes of Indonesia's Komnas HAM, was ironically, Suharto's strong centralized control and his endorsement of the institution. This had allowed for the smooth coordination among government agencies to the advantage of Komnas HAM. However, the range of investigation that the commission could undertake was severely constrained by that same power. Now the situation is completely reversed, as political liberalization has greatly expanded the range of options open, while the fragmentation of power, lack of coordination and institutional decay (corruption) has seriously constrained the effectiveness of all government institutions, including Komnas HAM. While some civil and political rights have improved for many, some of the most basic rights - to life, freedom from fear, to a home – are more tenuous than ever for countless others. Indeed, calls have recently been made by a coalition of prominent NGOs for the entire Komnas HAM commission to resign *en masse* for their failure to deal with some of the worst atrocities of the Suharto era and the transitional period after he stepped down.

The limited prosecution of past human rights violations remains one of the biggest failures of the post-Suharto era. President Megawati's own commitment to human rights remains uncertain. While she recently endorsed the need to settle gross violations of human rights in regions of armed conflict and allowed the prosecution of offences in East Timor she is close to a number of prominent military figures. Up until 2001, only 19 of 33 East Timor rights violators identified by Komnas HAM have been accepted by the Attorney General's Office as "candidate suspects". Furthermore, despite the setting up of the Human Rights court in January 2002 to try at least 18 army leaders and militiamen, there has been criticism at the decision by the attorney-general's office not to prosecute the then defense minister and armed forces chief General Wiranto, alleged by human rights groups to be morally responsible for the violence.

Malaysia's SUHAKAM

Malaysia's situation is different from that of the Philippines and Indonesia. One might expect that the National Human Rights Commission SUHAKAM could also benefit from the efficiencies of authoritarian rule as Komnas HAM did in Indonesia in the mid-

1990s. However, SUHAKAM was created at a time of political ferment in Malaysia, when the government was actively repressing its political opposition while putting former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim on trial for suspect charges. In this context, it was difficult for the commission to ignore all of the government's controversial actions, and thus it found itself quite vocally criticizing the latter.

Despite initial fears that SUHAKAM would be nothing more than window dressing to restore the credibility of the government while it dealt with Anwar, some NGO activists have acknowledged that the commission has done a commendable job given its difficult circumstances. However, the very issue of Anwar's trial, and the detentions of other dissidents brings out an important point in the Commission's powers – it cannot address or investigate any issue which is, or has been before the courts. The commission has had some modest success in putting out frank reports critical of the government's use of the ISA, limitations on freedom of speech and most recently freedom of assembly.

SUHAKAM's recommendations following its first open inquiry into allegations of police brutality in a massive 5 November 2001 protest rally along the Kesas highway have been welcomed by the public but met with government stonewalling and condemnation of the report as being influenced by 'western thinking' and not in the interest of the nation. But one of the commissioners reported that such an action had helped change the attitudes of law enforcers, as some policemen are now conscious of SUHAKAM's possible rebuke if complaints from the public, no matter how trivial are not recorded down. However, the fallout of September has seen the commission retreating from its own purpose. Soon after September 11, the then chairman of the commission, Musa Hitam uttered the unfortunate statement that in light of the fight against terrorism, "human rights must take a backseat".

Thailand's National Human Rights Commission

Thailand's National Commission was slow in getting started, taking nearly four years from the 1997 constitutional mandate to the opening of their offices in 2001. This was due to the fierce debate over the enabling laws necessary to establish the commission. Academics, business people and civil society activists aligned against conservative politicians and bureaucrats over the

exact character of the body. The independence of the commission became a central issue, as conservatives sought to make it an easily controlled, minor bureaucratic office in contrast to the activists' vision of an independent, vocal and effective body. Using the media as their platform and threatening to blacklist politicians supporting conservative proposals in an upcoming election, the activists were successful in forcing a compromise, making it possible for an enabling bill to be passed, with the commission coming under the Senate for its first five years, and then have the option to become independent.

The complex procedure used for selecting National Commissioners, which sought to build a broad-based social consensus involving all sectors of society directly concerned with the promotion and protection of human rights, delayed the start-up date of the commission. Commissioner Saneh Chamarik advocates a local definition of rights, with strong emphasis on the protection of traditional "way of life" as communities seek to regain some degree of autonomy after decades of rigid centralization. Others argue for the use of international standards, in turn criticized by nationalists resentful of foreign domination. The Office of the National Commission and its staff are considered "an agency of the National Assembly", leaving control over hiring and funding in the hands of professional politicians, many of whom still operate according to more traditional clientelist patterns. Within the context of Thailand's rapidly changing political landscape, it remains to be seen what impact such constraints will have.

Maznah Mohamad observes:

Clearly, a human rights culture is not inimical to the realities of local conditions. The biggest stumbling block remains the nature of the modern nation-state itself. Human rights mechanisms enhanced by international instruments are persistently seen as a threat to national sovereignty. Furthermore, the identity of Southeast Asian nation-states is crafted upon its ability to deliver economic welfare which is in turn peddled by the state as predicated upon the preponderance of public security and order. Thus, while the battle for the promotion of human rights may win the approval of the public, the war against the tyranny of the nation-state has yet to be won by the proponents of a

universal normative cause such as that of human rights.
(Ibid: 247).

ALTERNATIVE ENGAGEMENT: THE CASE OF ALTSEAN–BURMA

The Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (ALTSEAN) was set up on 30 October 1996 at the conclusion of the Alternative ASEAN meeting on Burma at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. The meeting attracted some 90 participants from 46 organizations in 20 countries. At this inaugural meeting, a "peoples' reclamation of ASEAN" was declared and the Alternative Declaration on Burma was adopted. By 1997, this declaration has been endorsed by some 200 organizations and key individuals in Southeast Asia.
   The objectives and work of ALTSEAN include the following:

- Initiate and implement a range of activities to support human rights, democracy and peace in Burma, and ultimately, in the rest of Southeast Asia.

- Campaign work to pressure member states of ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum to facilitate positive reforms in Burma in the direction of a restoration of democracy, cessation of human rights violations, including an end to the oppression of Burma's ethnic minorities.

- Advocacy for the Burma cause at local, national, regional and international levels though information dissemination, workshop and other means.

- Internship programme aimed at increasing interaction and understanding among activists from Burma and ASEAN member states.

- Producing resources in the form of books, videos, reports, posters, t-shirts and the like for the Burma cause.

   The structure of ALTSEAN is that of a network of organizations that is open to participation from a wide range of NGOs and individuals. It is managed by a Steering Committee made up of representatives from Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand which meets once in six months. A

smaller Executive Team located at Bangkok meets monthly. Among the interesting resources produced by ALTSEAN is the "Report Card" of April 1999 carrying a message from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to the 55th Session of UN Commission of Human Rights. The particular Report Card also contains succinct assessments on international relations, the human rights situation, relations with religious and ethic groups, relations with the democracy movement, drugs and HIV/AIDS, situation of refugees, health and safety for women, education and economy.[4]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is clear from the paper that in ASEAN, the issue-area of human rights, and by extrapolation human security in general, continues to come under the domineering purview of national governments. The ASEAN mechanism for human rights regime remains inchoate and non-functioning despite the stalwart efforts of the ASEAN working group on human rights. National human rights commissions that have been formed remain weak. On the regional plane in ASEAN, the engagement of civil society in human rights issues and matters, let alone participation in the implementation of human rights standards, remain low-level or non-existent. Much more occurs in civil society engagement with national human rights commissions although this is still one step removed from an actual engagement with the state or national governments as such.

Apart from the above 'mainstream' forms of civil society engagement with the state, there is also the 'alternative' form represented by ALTSEAN-Burma. Some of the monitoring work is of great importance but remains outside the purview of ASEAN officialdom.

It's still a long road to an ASEAN 'security community' from a civil society perspective whichever way one looks at it. Statist constructivism in ASEAN may have engendered the minimalist conditions for such a security community (most famously through the pacific settlement of conflict and the 'ASEAN way') but in so far as it fails to incorporate the involvement of civil society, which is

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[4] See ALTSEAN Report Card: "The Stakes are Raised in Burma", April 1999. Another Report Card: "The Situation of Women in Burma" was also produced in April 1999 for the same UN Human Rights Commission session.

the main constituency of human security, the project must falter. In fact, not only does the instrumental functioning of a security community depend on civil society but its very legitimacy rests on it.

On a theoretical level, the hypothesized agency of the "international state" in Wendtian constructivism does not truly apply to the 'ASEAN state', which remains weak (and, in many portions, undemocratic) with processes and structures which tend not to deepen aspects of human security. Furthermore, the character of ASEAN diplomatic and security culture (the 'ASEAN way') tends at times to be an impediment rather than an enhancer or agency for human security.

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