

China's Evolving Regional Security Strategy

---China and the ASEAN Regional Forum

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Summary

This thesis explores China's evolving security strategy through the case study of the changes in its position regarding the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since the mid-1990s. In so doing, this thesis demonstrates the evolution of China's involvement in the regional multilateral security cooperation over the years. During this period, there were similar changes in China's position towards some other international organizations and arrangements. All these changes reflect adjustment of China's grand strategy. China has gradually learned to make use of multilateral regimes for its national interests. Multilateral diplomacy has now occupied a more important position in China's strategic thinking than ever before.

This study has also demonstrated that the theory of realism, despite its utilities, has been weak in explaining China's proactive behaviour in the ARF and its support for multilateralism. This study points to the need for a modified realist framework that takes into account "Chinese characteristics" in reading China's diplomacy and strategic thinking.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AMM	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BFA	Boao Forum for Asia
CBMs	Confidence Building Measures
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CNP	Comprehensive National Power
CRM	Conflict Resolution Mechanism
CSCE	Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe
FTA	Free Trade Area
GNP	gross national product
IGO	Inter-governmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISG	Inter-sessional Support Group
ISM	Inter-sessional Meeting
JCC	Joint Cooperation Committee
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NMD	National Missile Defence
NPCSD	North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
OPCW	Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
PMC	ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMIC	Regional Maritime Information Centre
ROC	Republic of China
SARS	severe acute respiratory syndrome
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SEANWFZ	Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
TMD	Theatre Missile Defence

UN	The United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
U.S.	The United States
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the utility of multilateral mechanism has gained more attention in the Asian-Pacific region. The states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have manifested a clear preference for multilateral approaches towards regional security. This preference arises primarily from their concern over the uncertainty in the regional security environment. The emergence of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) reflected this concern.

But not every regional power has the same interest in multilateralism as ASEAN states do. Big powers usually prefer bilateralism to multilateralism. China is no exception. Moreover, Beijing used to view multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific region as an attempt to encircle and contain China as a rising power. Hence, its initial reaction to the emergence of the ARF was one of suspicion and hesitancy. For instance, during the first ARF Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Bangkok in May 1994, when Australia, with Canadian support, took the initiative to promote confidence-building measures (CBMs) by establishing working groups among senior officials, China, however, resisted the move and any other concrete measures for security cooperation. But China soon became confident and cooperative in the ARF. During the second working

session of the ARF in Brunei, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen noted that his government and those of ASEAN states had discussed and reached consensus on how the ARF ought to proceed.¹ It was also during this meeting that China, for the first time, expressed its endorsement for this multilateral enterprise and associated itself with the Chairman's Statement that referred to a collective concern over competing claims to sovereignty.² By 1997, it had become an active participant both in the ARF and the so-called "track-two" - the unofficial dialogue process that complements official deliberations in the forum.³ In March 1997, it co-chaired with the Philippines an ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures (ISG on CBMs) in Beijing. It has since then played an active role in the regional security cooperation within the framework of the ARF. These changes signal a shift in China's regional security strategy.

While this shift has been observed by some scholars,⁴ it is nonetheless an interesting topic deserving more attention. Particularly, considering the ARF's

¹ Michael Leifer, "China in Southeast Asia: Interdependence and Accommodation", CAPS Papers, no. 14 (Taipei: the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, January 1997), p. 13.

² Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum — extending ASEAN's model of regional security* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996), p. 43.

³ Rosemary Foot, "China in the ASEAN Regional Forum: Organizational Processes and Domestic Modes of Thought", *Asian Survey*, vol. 38, no. 5 (May 1998), p. 426.

⁴ For example, see Alastair Iain Johnston, "Socialization in International Institutions: The ASEAN Way and International Relations Theory", in Ikenberry, G. John and Michael Mastanduno (eds.), *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 107-162; Evelyn Goh and Amitav Acharya, "The ASEAN Regional Forum and US-China Relations: Comparing Chinese and American Positions", submitted for the Fifth China-ASEAN Research Institutes Roundtable, (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 2002); and Rosemary Foot, op. cit.

unique position as a platform for multilateral security dialogue in Asia Pacific and China's important role in the regional security environment, this author believes that it is necessary to conduct a full investigation of China's behaviour in the ARF. As there is so far no major scholarly work that focuses on detailed examination of China's behaviour in the ARF, this thesis makes a contribution by undertaking such a detailed study for a better understanding of China's regional security strategy.

Literature Review

Many China scholars in the West are upset about China's rising power and its regional security strategy and stress the need to contain China.⁵ For instance, in his article "Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy after Deng",⁶ Allen S. Whiting distinguished three types of nationalisms: affirmative, assertive and aggressive. He concluded that assertive behaviour was likely to implement assertive rhetoric in future Chinese policy as China's military strength increased. Samuel S. Kim in "China as a Great Power"⁷ argued that China's creeping maritime expansionism had extended beyond coastal waters in the 1990s and that Chinese leaders were shifting from the pretence of being a global power to

⁵ For a widely cited statement of this perspective, for example, see Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, distributed by Random House, 1997).

⁶ Allen S. Whiting, "Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy", *The China Quarterly*, no. 142 (June 1995), pp. 295-316.

⁷ Samuel S. Kim, "China as a Great Power", in *The China Reader: the Reform Era*, edited by Orville Schell and David Shambaugh (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), pp. 449-459.

actually becoming a dominant regional military power in Asia. Gerald Segal viewed China as a powerful, unstable non-status quo power and believed that economic interdependence had bought no protection from the forces of Chinese nationalism. Thus, he suggested a policy of “constraint” to deal with China.⁸ Likewise, Denny Roy argued that a burgeoning China posed a long-term danger to Asia-Pacific security. He noted: “a stronger China will be subject to the same pressures and temptations to which other economically and militarily powerful countries of recent history succumbed. Each sought to dominate the part of the globe within its reach.”⁹

These interpretations are mainly based on Western experiences. Many international relations theorists in the West tend to see a rising China as a disruptive element in the current international system. They are concerned that China’s rapid rise will lead to conflicts that could threaten regional security and world order.

The hegemonic-instability theory claims that incongruity between a rising power’s growing capabilities and its continued subordinate status in an international political system dominated by an erstwhile hegemon will result in

⁸ Gerald Segal, “East Asia and the ‘Constraint’ of China”, in Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds.), *East Asian Security* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 159-187.

⁹ For detailed arguments, see Denny Roy, “Hegemon on the Horizon? China’s Threat to Eastern Asian Security”, in Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds.), *East Asian Security* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), p. 124.

conflicts that are typically resolved through war.¹⁰ Based on this reasoning, the theory expects that a rising China that seeks greater benefits and influence in the international affairs will challenge the world's reigning hegemon. The balance of power theory¹¹ also predicts a determined Chinese effort to counter the United States as an unchecked power though it does not indicate the inevitability of war. Moreover, the theory's core argument about balancing behaviour suggests that China's increasing capabilities are likely to trigger a reaction among those most concerned about the uses to which its power can be put. The theory of "security dilemma"¹² also expects that China's increasing power will contribute to growing international conflict. All the three theories base their arguments on the structure and dynamics of shifting power in the international relations, and emphasize on the circumstances and consequences associated with the rise and fall of the dominant powers. They often overemphasize the challenge of a rising China to regional and global security and stability.

¹⁰ For a broader understanding, see Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

¹¹ The major assumptions of the theory include: 1) There is a natural tendency for states to seek regional/global hegemony; 2) Other states will seek to prevent hegemony by strengthening themselves or entering anti-hegemonic alliances with other threatened states; 3) A balance of power is desirable because it preserves the independence of countries and creates an equilibrium that promotes order and peace. For further readings of this theory, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979) and *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987).

¹² This theory is closely related to the balance of power theory. It asserts that unavoidable uncertainty about others' capabilities and intentions, combined with the difficulty of establishing binding commitments under anarchy, means that each state's effort to enhance its security poses a potential threat to which others are likely to respond. For in-depth explanations, see John H. Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma", *World Politics*, vol. 2, no. 2 (January 1950); Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma", *World Politics*, vol. 30, no. 2 (January 1978); and Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics", *World Politics*, vol. 36, no. 4 (July 1984).

The institutionalist approach¹³ emphasizes on organizational practices which, according to the theory, can shape the regional security environment and, thus, affect each individual state's regional policy. The institutionalists doubt the weak institutional security arrangements in the Asia-Pacific region are sufficient to constrain the behaviour of an increasingly powerful China. Compared with above theories, the economic interdependence theory¹⁴ and the "nuclear peace" theory¹⁵ offer a benign scenario of China's rise. China's current rapid economic growth is fuelled by increased in-flow of huge foreign investment. The economic interdependence theorists note that China's behaviour could thus be constrained due to its need for foreign trade and investment to sustain its growth, which is necessary for its emergence as a great power. In other words, they view China's overall strategy as also being economically motivated. In the view of the "nuclear peace" theory, the devastating cost of nuclear confrontation among

¹³ The institutional perspective depicts formal and informal organizational practices that mitigate the effects of anarchy, dampen conflict, and enhance the prospects for cooperation. For further readings of this perspective, see Stephen D. Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995); and John Gerard Ruggie (ed.), *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ The theory identifies incentives for states to contain their international disputes when the costs of conflict are great (because one alienates valued economic partners) and the benefits from the use of force are small (because the foundations of modern economic and military power depend less on assets like labour and natural resources that conquerors can seize and more on knowledge and its technological fruits). For further readings of this theory, see Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977); and John E. Mueller, "The Obsolescence of Major War", in Richard K. Betts (ed.), *Conflict after the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1994).

¹⁵ The theory asserts that among the great powers the nuclear revolution has resulted in relationships of mutual deterrence that provide not only robust buffers against general war, but also strong constraints on both limited war and crisis behaviour. For further readings of this theory, see Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1973); Kenneth N. Waltz, "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities", *American Political Science Review*, vol. 84, no. 3 (September 1990), pp. 731-745; and Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds.), *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), esp. Part III.

nuclear powers leads to their mutual deterrence. Consequently, each of them is highly constrained when making regional security approaches. Furthermore, uncertainties out of China's increasing power will be overshadowed by certainty about the unacceptable damage that even a small nuclear exchange could engender. Table 1 lists the main arguments of above-discussed theories regarding China's rise.

Table 1 Theories on China's Rise

Theory	Core arguments	Predictions of China's policy change
Hegemonic-instability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Incongruity between a rising power's growing capabilities and its continued subordinate status in an international political system dominated by an erstwhile hegemon will result in conflicts that are typically resolved through war. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ With increasing capabilities, China will try to gain regional hegemony and it will result in rivalry with regional big powers.
Balance of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ There is a natural tendency for states to seek regional/global hegemony; ✧ Other states will seek to prevent hegemony by strengthening themselves or entering anti-hegemonic alliances with other threatened states; ✧ A balance of power is desirable because it preserves the independence of countries and creates an equilibrium that promotes order and peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Regional hegemony is the motivation for China's security decision-making. ✧ China's rise could pose the dangers identified as the risks of balancing, especially hostile overreaction.
Security dilemma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Unavoidable uncertainty about others' capabilities and intentions, combined with the difficulty of establishing binding commitments under anarchy, means that each state's effort to enhance its security poses a potential threat to which others are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ China will endeavour to increase its strength for ensuring vital interest in defending national sovereignty. ✧ In turn, China's such efforts could worsen the intense regional security situation.

	likely to respond.	
Institutionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Formal and informal organizational practices mitigate the effects of anarchy, dampen conflict, and enhance the prospects for cooperation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Weak institutional arrangements in Asia Pacific have not yet provided sufficient constraints on the international behaviour of an increasingly powerful China.
Economic interdependence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ The foundations of modern economic and military power depend less on assets like labour and natural resources that conquerors can seize and more on knowledge and its technological fruits, but states will contain their international disputes when the costs of conflict are great and the benefits from the use of force are small. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Economic consideration is a very important factor in the formation of China's security strategy.
Nuclear peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Nuclear weapons revolutionize international politics by fundamentally altering the costs of conflict among the great powers; ✧ Thus, the nuclear revolution has resulted in relationships of mutual deterrence that provide not only robust buffers against general war, but also strong constraints on both limited war and crisis behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ The powerful nuclear constraints on policy-making will apply for Chinese decision makers.

These theories, despite their utilities, cannot convincingly explain the change in the behaviour of China's diplomacy and its regional security strategy since late 1990s. In order to understand China's external behaviours, we have to look into its domestic consideration to see how it affects its external behaviour.

In the study of China's involvement in multilateral organizations, many Western scholars subscribe to the theory that China is pursuing a calculative

strategy,¹⁶ or realpolitik. For example, Alastair Iain Johnston argued: “China has historically exhibited a relatively consistent hard realpolitik or *parabellum* strategic culture that has persisted across different structural contexts into the Maoist period (and beyond).”¹⁷ Thomas J. Christensen also wrote: “China may well be the high church of realpolitik in the post-Cold War world.”¹⁸ Rosemary Foot held a similar opinion and pointed at realpolitik as behind China’s multilateralist behaviour. She noted that realpolitik made it “particularly difficult for China to give up relative gains for absolute ones and rendered it prone to adopt narrow self-interested behaviour and be intolerant and wary of temporary imbalances in benefit”.¹⁹

Indeed, China calculates the costs and benefits of joining a multilateral organization, but so do many other countries. Generally speaking, when China at first resisted joining to multilateral mechanisms, it was out of the calculation of relative gains as the history tells that big powers always prefer unilateralism in order to gain advantage over small powers. When China later changed its

¹⁶ Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis referred to China’s current grand strategy as the calculative strategy. One important character of this strategy was an expanded involvement in regional and global interstate politics and various international, multilateral fora, with an emphasis, through such interactions, on attaining asymmetric gains. For more details of this analysis, see Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China’s Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2000).

¹⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston, “Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China”, in Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 217.

¹⁸ Thomas J. Christensen, “Chinese Realpolitik”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 5 (Sept/Oct 1996), p. 37.

¹⁹ Foot, op. cit., p. 436.

attitude towards multilateralism, this could also be explained as a calculative effort based on its comparison of benefits and costs of its participation.

However, a deeper analysis is needed beyond a simplistic description of China's strategy as "calculative" and "realpolitik". To explore China's security strategy and its calculations to participate in multilateral organizations, it is necessary, first of all, to study its overall national development strategy and agenda. Many scholars choose to emphasize China's military development, drawing an analogy with Wilhelmine Germany or post-Meiji imperial Japan. However, the world after the Cold War is a different normative structure compared with previous era. These scholars largely overlook the essential determinant of China's foreign policy: experiential and learning effects. In another word, they suffer from the fallacies of undifferentiation.

Going through the German history, Harold James identified a connection between the surge of the German nationalism and the German national-identity dynamic and its specific historical environment. German nationalism quickly withered after its defeat of World War II while its previous defeats in 1806 and 1918 had only fuelled its more aggressive nationalism. Harold James explained this puzzle by examining the changing international norms that had moulded

German national role expectations.²⁰ Using this reasoning, we can see China's current international environment is different from those where Wilhelmine Germany and post-Meiji Japan were in. China's priority today is economic growth, but not military expansion.²¹

Central Research Questions

Based on the above review of relevant studies, this thesis addresses the following questions. What are the changes in China's regional security strategy? How and why did China change its initial attitude towards multilateral organizations? Are these changes a temporary adaptation or a constant cognition? To answer these questions, this study focuses on China's behaviour at the ARF, but also touches upon its position on other multilateral organizations as a comparison for a better demonstration.

Why choose the ARF as the case study? First, the ARF is a regional multilateral security forum, which fits tightly with this study. From the beginning, the ARF has been constructed as a venue for multilateral dialogue on

²⁰ Harold James, *A German Identity: 1770 to the Present Day* (London: Phoenix Press, 1994).

²¹ In *China's National Defence in 1998*, for example, when generalizing the international security situation, it stated that in international relations, geopolitical, military security and ideological factors still played a role that cannot be ignored, but the role of economic factors was becoming more outstanding. See "The International Security Situation", in *China's National Defence* (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, July 1998). [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/whitepaper/2\(1\).html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/whitepaper/2(1).html)

security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Secondly, the ARF is the first inclusive security arrangement in the Asia-Pacific region, and its membership includes, in addition to the ASEAN countries and China, other major Asia-Pacific powers, such as the United States, Japan, Russia, Republic of Korea, Australia and India. The Forum is an instrument to share information, promote confidence-building measures and enhance the practice of transparency. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for regional powers to defuse tensions that may arise from various crises. For example, the second annual ARF session was held against the background of deteriorating China-U.S. relations, after Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui was issued a visa to visit the United States in June 1995. Consequently, the ARF meeting in late June provided an avenue for Washington and Beijing to initiate a process of diplomatic dialogue to defuse the tension.

For the purpose of analysis, this study adopts a behaviour-centred approach. It is a way to minimize the ambiguity and mystique of state behaviour by focusing on discrete, observable, and empirical units, such as the diplomatic activities of political leaders in various contexts and issue areas, national statements and documents. Thus, China's security strategy can be explored through its external behaviours designed to affect the international situation or actions of other international actors in the pursuit of national interests or values.

Furthermore, as realists argue that national interest²² is the most important element in deciding a state's policy, it is particularly important to identify Chinese leaders' perception of the country's national interests before exploring its external behaviours and strategic thinking. The collapse of the Soviet Union greatly influenced Chinese leaders' perception of power. Ideological differences do not carry the same pre-eminence in the leaders' strategic thinking as before. The underlying basis of power and security has shifted towards an emphasis on economic strength at the expense of more single-minded pursuits of military strength. This shift is observed not only from China's public statements, but also from its diplomatic behaviours. Economic issues are given a higher priority in Chinese strategic thinking than at any other time since 1949. Consequently, China's foreign policy and regional strategy are subject to this shift. As confirmed by Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, "the top priority of China's foreign policy is to maintain a stable peripheral environment so as to safeguard normal economic circumstances at home."²³

²² The "national interest", on the one hand, refers to the overall common good of an entire society, which necessarily looks inward to the basic principles of the domestic regime. On the other hand, it also covers the discrete objects of value over which states bargain in world politics. Therefore, a state's national interest is multi-faceted. Primary is the state's survival and security. Also important is the pursuit of wealth and economic growth and power. For detailed discussion, see W. David Clinton, "The National Interest: Normative Foundations", *The Review of Politics*, vol. 48, no. 4 (1986), pp. 495-519.

²³ Michael Leifer, "China in Southeast Asia: Interdependence and Accommodation", in David S. G. Goodman and Gerald Segal (eds.), *China Rising: Nationalism and Interdependence* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 156.

Chinese perception of power can be best understood by the term “comprehensive national power” (CNP), which refers to the combined overall conditions and strengths of a country in numerous areas. CNP is the aggregate of a variety of factors, such as territory, natural resources, military force, economic power, social conditions, domestic government, foreign policy, and international influence.²⁴ It differs from the traditional perception of power that emphasizes predominantly on military power. China’s assessment of CNP is made both qualitatively and quantitatively. Its CNP is not only evaluated in general discussions of the country’s strengths and weaknesses, but also measured by the use of formulas to calculate numerical values of CNP. In particular, it rejects using gross national product (GNP) indexes or the measurement methods of national power as used in the United States. Instead, Chinese analysts have developed their own extensive index systems and equations for assessing CNP, and their analytical methods are not traditional Marxist-Leninist dogma or Western social science but something unique to China.²⁵ The Chinese pursuit of this power, i.e. CNP instead of a simple military strength, obviously affects its designing and pursuit of its regional security strategy and its behaviour at the ARF.

²⁴ For further explanation of CNP, see Huang Shuofeng, *Zonghe Guoli Xinluun: Jianlun Xin Zhongguo Zonghe Guoli [New Theory on Overall National Strength: also on China’s Overall National Strength]* (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1999).

²⁵ For elaborate descriptions of Chinese assessments of CNP, see Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment* (Washington, DC: National Defence University Press, 2000), pp. 204-258.

Theoretical Framework

In the study of international relations, rationalism and constructivism provide two major points of contestation.²⁶ In the study of China's strategic thinking and foreign policy, many scholars, as noted above, adopt rationalism. All rationalists rely on the assumption of rationality to provide the crucial link between features of the environment – power, interests, and institutional rules – and actor behaviour.²⁷ But due to different emphasis on the features of the environment, the rationalists are divided into many strands. Among them, realist and liberal arguments are the two dominant thinking, and they are some of the most basic frames of thinking to explain and understand world politics that has withstood the test of time.

Realism

Realism is a broad theoretical school, embracing a variety of authors and works. It could be divided into two general schools: classical realism and modern realism. Classical realism can be traced back as far as Thucydides. The definitive treatises of the classical realist school of thought are E. H. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939* and Hans Morgenthau's *Power Among*

²⁶ For detailed discussion, see Peter J. Katzenstein, Robert O. Keohane, and Stephen D. Krasner, "International Organization and the Study of World Politics", *International Organization*, vol. 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1998), pp. 645-685.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 679.

Nations.²⁸ Raymond Aron is also an outstanding scholar in classical realism.²⁹ But some of the ideas they offer have been modified by newer members of the realism school and serve to prompt new theoretical research.³⁰ For example, Morton Kaplan depicts several types of international systems by drawing partly on game theory.³¹ Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* is the most prominent effort to build up a precise and parsimonious model of modern realism.³² Sharing Waltz's core assumptions of modern realism and focusing on the dynamics of system change, Robert Gilpin's *War and Change in World Politics* is also a significant study in modern realism.

Major realist assumptions can be condensed as following:

- (1) Realists are pessimistic about human nature. There are several limitations in the extent to which political reform or education can alter human nature: Humankind is evil, sinful, and power seeking. The

²⁸ E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1964); Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, distributed by Random House, 1985).

²⁹ Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Publishing, 1966), translated from French by Richard Howard and Annett Baker Fox.

³⁰ For a thorough observation of changes and continuity in realist thought, see the appendix to Ashley J. Tellis, "Reconstructing Political Realism: The Long March to Scientific Theory", in Benjamin Frankel (ed.), *The Roots of Realism* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1996), pp. 3-100.

³¹ See Morton Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics* (New York: John Wiley Publishing, 1957).

³² See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

international conduct of states is largely shaped by certain immutable factors, such as geography and the nature of human behaviour.

- (2) Nation-states are the key actors in the international community and all other actors in the world are of lesser significance. The politics of the world make up an international anarchy of sovereign states. Anarchy causes states to undertake self-help measures: no other states can be relied upon, especially for security. International relations are basically conflictual and would be ultimately resolved by war.
- (3) From the view of realists, international politics are “power politics”. The goal, means and uses of power are the central preoccupations of political activities. The conduct of foreign policy is an instrumental activity based on intelligent calculation of one’s power and interests against the power and interests of rivals or competitors.
- (4) Realists have a high regard for the importance of national security, state survival, and international order and stability. They usually believe that there are no international obligations - in the moral sense of the word - between independent states.
- (5) Realists hold that there are gradations of capabilities among nation-states --- greater powers and lesser powers --- in the decentralized international system. The most important states in world politics are the

great powers. International relations are primarily struggles among the great powers for domination and security.

- (6) Realists believe that domestic politics can be clearly separated from foreign policy. The foreign policy of a state is primarily a response to external forces.
- (7) The realists place a great deal of importance on the traditional theory of “balance of power” and often use it to describe international security situations and power management of states.

Nevertheless, no theory about international relations is without its critics.

Realism is not an exception:

- (1) As globalisation and regional integration make great progresses, the clearly defined separation of domestic politics and foreign policy assumed in realism becomes blurred. In the making of a state’s foreign policy, domestic politics are becoming as important as, if not more important than, external issues.
- (2) The use of the term “balance of power” in realists’ writings is fraught with inconsistent meanings. This confusion derives from

the traditional theory of “balance of power” itself.³³ But realists also cannot give an exact definition of this term.

- (3) Realists cannot adequately explain the trend of integration in the contemporary world and collective global problems, such as famine, environmental degradation and human rights abuses.

Liberalism

Liberalist thinking is closely connected with the rise of the modern constitutional state. Similar to realist theories, the liberalist school comprises of several strands, such as republican liberalism, interdependence liberalism, cognitive liberalism, sociological liberalism and institutional liberalism.³⁴ And the major liberalist works include Karl Deutsch, David Mitrany, Earnst Haas, Edward Morse, Richard Cooper, Robert Keohane, and Joseph Nye.³⁵ As major challengers to realism, liberalists have converged on another set of explanation on international politics.

³³ Ernst Haas uncovered eight different meanings of the phrase “balance of power”, while Martin Wight found nine. For the discussion of various definitions, see Michael Sheehan, *The Balance of Power: History and Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 1-23.

³⁴ For a detailed description of these strands of liberal theories, see Mark W. Zacher and Richard A. Matthew, “Liberal International Theory: Common Threads, Divergent Strands”, in Charles W. Kegley Jr. (ed.), *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), pp. 121-137.

³⁵ Karl W. Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area, International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); David Mitrany, *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966); Earnst Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State: Functionalism and International Organization* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964); Edward S. Morse, “The Transformation of Foreign Policies: Modernization, Interdependence and Externalization”, *World Politics*, vol. 22, no. 3 (April 1970), pp. 371-392; Richard Cooper, “Economic Interdependence and Foreign Policies in the 1970s”, *World Politics*, vol. 24, no. 2 (January 1972), pp. 159-181; and Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, op. cit.

- (1) Liberals generally hold an optimistic view about human nature. Although humans are self-interested and competitive up to a point, they also share many interests and can thus arrive at mutually beneficial cooperation. Conflict and war are not inevitable.
- (2) Both the individual and collectives of individuals are focuses of liberalist analyses. The aims of the state, as do the aims of the individual, go beyond security to the protection and promotion of individual rights.³⁶ But the prime directive of state behaviour is to meet the economic and social needs of individuals.³⁷ The state must always be the servant of the collective will.
- (3) Although states live under international anarchy, meaning the absence of a global government, they do not experience a general state of war.³⁸ The process of modernization enlarges the scope for cooperation across international boundaries and increases the level of interdependence between states.
- (4) Liberals believe that international institutions can achieve the desired ends of global welfare and peace. Institutions alleviate

³⁶ Michael W. Doyle, *The Ways of War and Peace* (New York: Norton Publishers, 1997), p. 211.

³⁷ John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 64.

³⁸ Doyle, op. cit., p. 211.

problems concerning lack of communication and trust between states and thus they reduce states' fear of each other.

With the development of regional cooperation and the increasing importance of international institutions, liberalism has gained salience among international relations experts. But liberalism is also not a perfect explanatory tool. Economic interdependence that is emphasized in liberalism is not new and in the past it has done little to prevent wars between states. One classic example is the relationship between Britain and Germany on the eve of World War I, when "economic ties were more extensive and significant than at any time before or since".³⁹ But this interdependence failed to prevent Germany from pursuing an expansionist policy that eventually led to war. Moreover, the principle of free trade enunciated by liberals is often non-reciprocal and used as a tool by leading actors to regulate the economic development of subordinate societies. This tendency, together with fundamental changes to the structure of the world economy and the forms of international trade, casts some doubt on the extent to which liberals can explain the globalisation of the world economy solely on their own terms.⁴⁰

³⁹ Papayouanou, Paul A., "Interdependence, Institutions, and the Balance of Power: Britain, Germany, and World War I", *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996), p. 42.

⁴⁰ For an elaborate assessment of the principles of free trade, see Scott Burchill, "Liberalism", in Scott Burchill (ed.), *Theories of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 56-59.

Theory Selection

To study China's regional security strategy and its ARF policy, this thesis adopts the realist approach for two reasons. First, realism is an appropriate tool for analysing the security issues among sovereign states in an international anarchy, which this study is concerned with. Also, realism's emphasis on national interest is the most powerful explanation of the motive of sovereign states' diplomatic activities, which is the focus of this thesis. China's attitude towards the ARF as a multilateral mechanism is the outcome of calculations based on its national interest. For instance, China's initial reluctance to participate in the ARF was due to its fear of being constrained by the multilateral framework and as a result, losing the advantage that it had vis-à-vis individual ASEAN member states. After all, compared to ASEAN states, China is a big power and stands to benefit on a bilateral basis compared to a framework based on multilateralism. But China also feared that its absence could result in the ARF adopting policies that could seriously undermine China's interests. Hence, a better choice was to become a member of the institution and influence its decisions from inside.

Second, from the beginning, the idea of the ARF itself was based on realist premises. As noted earlier, realists argue that there is an international hierarchy of power among states, and small powers seek to align with others when faced against threats from large powers. ASEAN is composed of relatively weak

states that are not confident of their capabilities of maintaining regional security. Thus, by applying the realist principle of balance of power, ASEAN hopes to maintain a peaceful and stable regional order. This arrangement would encourage a continued U.S. presence in Southeast Asia, also allow Japan to play a limited role on security issues and encourage China to behave according to those norms that had consistently served the general interests of the ASEAN states.⁴¹

Methodology and Data Collection

This thesis adopts case study and content analysis approaches within a qualitative framework. It takes China's behaviour in the ARF as its case study. China's behaviour in every ARF meeting will be carefully examined and so will be relevant background and particular events related to China's such behaviour at the ARF meetings. Moreover, it will also discuss how each ARF meeting evaluates China's role in regional security environment. Such evaluations demonstrate regional states' attitudes towards China and they are also important evidence of China's shifting security strategy.

⁴¹ Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum*, p. 19.

Apart from the change in its attitudes towards the ARF, China has also changed its strategy in other regional and global forums and organizations. This thesis also discusses these changes as comparison to China's changes in its ARF policy so as to reinforce the argument raised earlier to help readers understand better China's evolving security strategy.

Materials and data are mainly collected from: (1) Academic publications, scholarly journals and other research papers, which help to provide valuable insights to the topic and lay the framework for this study. (2) Governmental publications, official documents and newspapers, which help to support the arguments of this study. (3) Some specialized websites, which provide detailed reports on the recent foreign behaviours of China.

Chapter Outline

This introductory chapter precedes four other chapters in this thesis.

Chapter 1 provides a historical background of the ARF's formation. The end of the Cold War has brought about great changes in the structure of international relations. The ARF was initiated against this background. The

motivations of countries to participate in the ARF are different, with China having its own considerations. These will be explored in this chapter.

Chapter 2 introduces China's historical experience with multilateralism and explores its behaviours at the ARF. Its initial reservation towards the ARF and its subsequent changes in attitude will also be discussed. The reasons for these changes are examined. For China, acquiring the means to manoeuvre the ARF to Beijing's advantage and influence the ARF's policies from the inside is considered a more palatable option than being isolated in the region.

Chapter 3 provides an in-depth explanation of China's regional security policy in relation to its grand strategy. The change in China's attitude towards the ARF is not an isolated occurrence in Chinese diplomacy. Such a change is also noted in China's attitude towards other international organizations. The reasons are examined, which include China's strategic consideration in its policies towards the United States, Japan and ASEAN.

The concluding chapter summarizes the findings of previous chapters. It emphasizes that economic development is China's top priority and that its security strategy is tuned accordingly in pursuit of this goal. As for the application of international relations theories to explain China's security

strategy, the explanations of realism and liberalism are highlighted. It also suggests the adoption of a new theoretical framework for explaining China's security strategy. Finally, the study concludes by listing some essential factors that will influence China's security strategy and its role in the Asia-Pacific region in future.

Chapter 1

The Formation of the ARF

To assess China's behaviours in the ARF, it is necessary to study the formation of the ARF, which is a process that reflects security concerns of regional states and the development of regional security cooperation after the Cold War. This chapter also analyses the evolving overall strategic environment in the Asia-Pacific region in the post-Cold War era, among which, the rise of multilateralism in the region will be examined as it promoted the establishment of the ARF. Finally, this chapter also highlights the security interests of ASEAN, the United States and Japan, which played significant roles in the formation of the ARF, and their roles and intentions were a major part of China's security concerns.

The Regional Security Outlook after the Cold War

The launching of the ARF in July 1994 represented a significant structural adjustment to the post-Cold War security environment in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, when exploring the ARF's emergence, it is necessary to analyse the regional security context in Asia-Pacific after the end of the Cold War.

First, as a result of the end of the Cold War, a new quadrilateral relationship

involving the United States, Russia, Japan and China came to dominate Asian security affairs in the early 1990s, instead of the triangular relationships between the Soviet Union, the United States and China. Due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the United States emerged as the sole superpower in the world and it attempted to play the leading role in the Asia-Pacific region. However, Russia, as the principal successor of the Soviet Union, continued to be influential in regional political-military affairs. At that time, Japan, as the second biggest global economy, had great influence in the economic development of East Asia. Based on its economic power, Japan also attempted to gain more political influence on regional affairs. With further reforms and opening to the outside world, China improved its “comprehensive national power” greatly and played a more important role in the Asian-Pacific region. The four major powers exerted dominant influence on regional affairs during the immediate period after the Cold War.

Second, as the old alliances of the Cold War era were fast disappearing, new Asia-wide security systems did not emerge in time to fill the vacuum. Various powers were in the process of regrouping with new structures set to emerge. But no single power had taken the leadership in the reconstruction of the regional security system. Though the United States was the only superpower left, its domestic difficulties had become more prominent, thus distracting its overseas

attention and forcing it to look inward.⁴² Furthermore, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and the eruption of the Gulf War attracted international attention from Asian affairs. Thus, the United States did not put Asia on its priority. Russia was obsessed with its domestic problems, especially its difficult transformation from a command economy to a free market economy. Daily necessities became scarce with the prices skyrocketed, making life difficult for many Russians. Hence, Russia had to focus on its internal problems with little attention on Asian affairs. Although Japan was strong economically, the history of its invasion of other countries and its defeat in World War II remained to be high hurdles for its political expansion, let alone playing a leading role in the formation of the new security structure of Asia Pacific. As for China, faced with the economic sanctions from the West because of the Tiananmen incident of 1989, it adopted a new strategy of *Juebu Dangtou* [never become the leader].⁴³

Third, in the immediate post-Cold War era, some old conflicts remained while new regional tensions emerged. Several issues leftover by the Cold War still threatened the regional security in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the situation in the Korean Peninsula, unresolved territorial and maritime disputes,

⁴² For detailed discussion, see Chen Qimao, "New Approaches in China's Foreign Policy: The Post-Cold War Era", *Asian Survey*, vol. 33, no. 3 (March 1993), pp. 239-240.

⁴³ Zhao Quansheng, "Chinese Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era", *World Affairs*, vol. 159, no. 3 (Winter 1997), p. 114.

the Taiwan issue, nuclear proliferation, and internal insurgencies. At the same time, new regional security concerns started to emerge, which included the increased defence spending, and acquisition of advanced weapons by many Southeast Asian countries, to improve their military strength in the light of various uncertainties in the regional security environment. The United States began scaling down its military presence in East Asia and its security umbrella could no longer be taken for granted. China's rise and Japan's bid to be a strong political power also concerned Southeast Asian countries. Finally, the strong economic growth in East Asia prior to the 1997 economic crisis made a regional arm race tenable. Other regional concerns included the reconstruction of Cambodia, constructive engagement of Myanmar, the extended maritime jurisdictions under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and some non-traditional security issues such as drug trafficking, illegal migration and environmental degradation.

Thus, the security situation in the Asia-Pacific region after the Cold War pressed countries in the region to seek ways for regional stability and peace. A chaotic and turbulent East Asia was not in the interest of any regional country or interested power, especially after the long confrontation of the Cold War.

The Rise of Multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific Region

Multilateralism is “the practice of co-ordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions”.⁴⁴

With diverse implications for the nature of cooperation amongst member states, multilateralism exists in great varieties. Based on the pattern of inter-state relations and the degree of institutionalisation, there are four types of multilateralism: hegemonic cooperation, guided dialogue cooperation, concert-type cooperation, and open dialogue cooperation.⁴⁵

“Hegemonic cooperation” defines a kind of multilateralism that is dominated by a hegemonic state that possesses sufficient power to accord a place to other states within the framework, determine the mode of interaction amongst states, and impose the distribution of the costs and benefits upon other states.⁴⁶ The hegemonic power manages this type of multilateral arrangement for its own interest and purposes. The Warsaw Pact dominated by the Soviet Union during the Cold War and the U.S.-dominated North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) fall into this category.

⁴⁴ Robert Keohane, “Multilateralism: an Agenda for Research”, *International Journal*, vol. 45, no. 4 (1990), p. 731.

⁴⁵ Jörn Dosch, “Asia-Pacific multilateralism and the role of the United States”, in Jörn Dosch and Manfred Mols (eds.), *International Relations in the Asia-Pacific: New Patterns of Power, Interest and Cooperation* (New York: LIT and St Martin’s Press, 2001), p. 89.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91. Also see David Kang, “Hierarchy and stability in Asian international relations”, in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno (eds.), *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 166.

“Guided dialogue cooperation” refers to multilateralism that is usually under the leadership of a great power. The degree of domination by the great power is less than under hegemonic cooperation. Nevertheless, the great power or hegemon may instigate guided cooperation dialogue in order to deepen its influence over a group of major and small powers in a region. Usually, interaction is mediated via relatively tight diplomatic dialogue between the great power and others. Although it involves some elements of hegemonic cooperation too, the overall design of governmental interaction in the West approaches this type of guided dialogue diplomacy. For example, Pan-Americanism that was born out of the Washington Conference (October 1889 – April 1890) and materialized in the Organization of American States and the Rio Treaty (Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, signed on 2 September 1947), U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s concept of the League of Nations, and the early process of European community-building initiated and managed by France and Germany fall into this category.⁴⁷

“Concert-type cooperation” refers to the multilateralism that has a group of states assuming relatively equal distribution of responsibilities for organizing the cooperative framework and its operations. The Concert of Europe in the

⁴⁷ Dosch, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

nineteenth century is an example. At present, there is a broad range of cooperation schemes aspiring to this format, such as the Group of Eight and the reign of the permanent members in the United Nations (UN) Security Council.

“Open dialogue cooperation” describes a type of multilateralism under which member states do not have hierarchical relationship and assume launching more informal regulations and “soft” institutions than the other three types. It is the most broadly or loosely defined category of multilateral arrangement. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and the ARF fit the type of this framework.⁴⁸

This typology provides a conceptual tool for exploring more effectively the conventional claims concerning the development of multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific region. With this categorization, we can better understand how the end of the Cold War has influenced Asian countries’ attitudes towards multilateral cooperation.

During the Cold War there were few meaningful multilateral security frameworks in Asia Pacific. This was due to the U.S. policy preferences in the region and the regional strategic diversity. Aimed at containing the Soviet Union

⁴⁸ For detailed explanation, see Dosch, *op. cit.*, p. 93, pp. 98-99.

and China, the U.S. regional strategy focused heavily on forging security arrangements with a collective defence function, rather than inclusive organizations geared to the pacific settlement of intra-regional conflicts. The multilateral scheme was not perceived necessary by the United States since it was the strongest Pacific power and dominant global institution-builder. Thus, most alliances that the United States built during that period were bilateral in nature. Although there were some U.S. attempts to establish multilateral security mechanisms, they were finally “thwarted by the sheer diversity of security challenges (such as the salience of internal security concerns in Southeast Asia versus the more direct Soviet and Chinese threat in Northeast Asia) facing the region’s pro-Western countries”.⁴⁹ The only successful multilateral security framework, and one not overtly designed for this purpose originally, was ASEAN. Because it did not want to provoke its Indochina’s adversaries, ASEAN downplayed its security functions during the period of Cold War.

As the Cold War ended, multilateralism began to attract greater attention from the regional states for the following five reasons: First of all, the end of the Cold War left the Asia Pacific with a window of strategic opportunity for multilateral institution building.

⁴⁹ Amitav Acharya, “Making Multilateralism Work: The ASEAN Regional Forum and Security in the Asia-Pacific”, in Amitav Acharya, *Regionalism and Multilateralism: Essays on Cooperation Security in the Asia-Pacific* (Singapore: Eastern University Press, 2003), p. 186.

Secondly, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the United States lost ideological justification for its crusading abroad while its economic difficulties at home constrained its military expenditure. Although the actual U.S. military retrenchment was not significant, there continued to be a general perception of the relative decline of the United States in a regional security milieu marked by the rise of several competing centres of power. The fact that the U.S. security umbrella could no longer be taken for granted fuelled a search for alternative security strategies.⁵⁰ Thus, multilateralism rose as a necessary “insurance policy” by regional states with anticipation of a steady decline in the U.S. regional military presence.

Thirdly, the end of East-West confrontation brought about the decline of ideology as a factor in international relations and economic development emerged as the principal preoccupation of nearly all states whether developed or developing. Thus, the world became more interdependent, due to a combination of high technology, rapid communications, lower tariff barriers, and the economic leadership and tolerance of the United States.⁵¹ No region, including Asia Pacific, could escape this global trend. The growing economic

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 187.

⁵¹ Thomas W. Robinson, “Chinese Foreign Policy During and After the Cold War”, in Jane Shapiro Zacek and Ilpyong J. Kim (eds.), *Legacy of the Soviet Bloc* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 190-191.

interdependence between Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia also greatly contributed to the perceived need for multilateralism.

Fourthly, after the Cold War, major regional adversaries were searching for a common ground to bury the old hatchet. Multilateralism provided a desirable long-term alternative for realizing regional rapprochement. Also, regional security had become more indivisible than ever before since developments in one segment of the region could seriously affect the security of the other. There were a few problems such as the territorial disputes in the South China Sea transcending sub-regional dimensions. In view of this, bilateral and sub-regional approaches were deemed inadequate for ensuring regional stability.

Finally, the successful experience of multilateral cooperation in Europe, notably the CSCE enhanced the confidence of establishing a similar framework in the Asia-Pacific region. It provided the initial impetus for multilateral mechanisms in Asia, such as an Asia-Pacific Conference for Security and Cooperation as proposed by Australia and Canada.⁵²

⁵² Dosch, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

The Formation of the ARF

The end of the Cold War removed the overlay of superpower rivalry and presented regional states with opportunities to shape a new regional order. From the outset, there was common interest among the regional states and other relevant powers in developing regional security mechanisms. At the same time, regional policy-makers and scholars pointed out that traditional bilateral security arrangements were insufficient to address the pressure arising from increasing regional interdependence as well as to cope with the uncertain security environment in East Asia. Thus, there came the urgent need for establishing a multilateral framework for security cooperation, especially for the small states in Southeast Asia, which felt threatened by the security uncertainty.

Actually, there were already several calls for the establishment of a multilateral security mechanism to reduce superpower competition in Northeast Asia during the final stages of the Cold War. In 1986, the former Soviet Union (under Mikhail Gorbachev) called for a “Pacific Ocean conference along the lines of the Helsinki conference”⁵³ based on the CSCE model to discuss peace and security in the region. Three years later, Foreign Minister Gareth Evans of Australia described a future Asian security architecture involving “wholly new

⁵³ Trevor Findlay, “Asia/Pacific CSBMS: A Prospectus”, Working Paper no. 90 (Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Australian National University), p. 16.

institutional processes that might be capable of evolving in Asia just as in Europe, as a framework for addressing and resolving security problems”.⁵⁴ At the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMC) meetings in 1990, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, proposed a cooperative security model of multilateralism and called for the establishment of North Pacific Co-operative Security Dialogue (NPCSD). The proposal emphasized the retention of bilateral security arrangements while encouraging a gradual process of confidence building and dialogue.⁵⁵ But these proposals were not accepted. The United States regarded these proposals as undermining American naval predominance in Asia Pacific and weakening the U.S. bilateral security arrangements. Richard Solomon, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, directly addressed the doubts about the utility of a Helsinki-type institution for enhancing security or promoting conflict resolution.⁵⁶ Other Asia-Pacific countries responded coolly to these proposals as the ideas were conceived by those states situated on the periphery of the Asia-Pacific region.⁵⁷ They also questioned the utility of such a mechanism. Moreover, these proposals drew heavily from the European experience. The

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁵ Amitav Acharya, “ASEAN and Asia-Pacific Multilateralism: Managing Regional Security”, in Amitav Acharya and Richard Stubbs (eds.), *New Challenges for ASEAN: Emerging Policy Issues* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995), p. 185.

⁵⁶ Richard Solomon reiterated the principal elements of the U.S. Asian strategy, which included forward deployed forces, overseas bases, and bilateral security arrangements. He stressed that the U.S. alliance network would remain valid and essential to deal with the security challenges of the post-Cold War era. For more details, see Richard Solomon, “Asian Security in the 1990s: Integration in Economics, Diversity in Defence”, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, vol. 1, no. 10 (5 November 1990).

⁵⁷ Simon J. Hay, *ASEAN's Regional Security Dialogue Process: From Expectation to Reality?* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1997), p. 9.

direct applicability of the European model, implemented in a largely homogeneous Europe, to the politically, economically and culturally diverse Asia Pacific was considered a questionable venture.

Although these proposals failed to win immediate acceptance, they did succeed in contributing to the debate about the need for a new post-Cold War security structure in Asia Pacific, catalysing the change in regional attitudes towards security cooperation, and paving the way for the birth of the ARF.

It was under these circumstances that steps towards the formation of the ARF were gradually made. In 1990, the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies proposed to use the ASEAN-PMC as a forum for a regional security dialogue. At the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in July 1991, this proposal was discussed but no consensus was reached among ASEAN foreign ministers on the need for a regional security dialogue.⁵⁸ However, following the U.S. announcement in November 1991 of its forthcoming withdrawal from the Philippines and the Soviet Union's collapse in December, the ASEAN states agreed to address security matters through the ASEAN-PMC at the fourth ASEAN summit in January 1992.⁵⁹ After the 25th AMM in July 1992, the

⁵⁸ Tobias Ingo Nischalke, "Insights from ASEAN's Foreign Policy Co-operation: The 'ASEAN Way', a Real Spirit or a Phantom?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 22, no. 1 (April 2000), p. 97.

⁵⁹ In the field of political and security cooperation, the Singapore Declaration stated that ASEAN should intensify its external dialogues in political and security matters by using the ASEAN Post Ministerial

ASEAN-PMC began to discuss regional security matters on regular basis. Due to the tense situation in the South China Sea and the closure of the U.S. bases in the Philippines by the end of 1992, the ASEAN states felt the increasing urgency to launch a new multilateral security forum to include non-PMC members. In May 1993, the first ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (ASEAN-SOM) for the PMC was held in Singapore. The participants agreed on the need to form a multilateral process of cooperative security to promote cooperation in the region. Notably, the chairman's statement pointed out: "The continuing presence of the United States, as well as stable relationships among the United States, Japan and China, and other states of the region would contribute to regional stability."⁶⁰ This reflected ASEAN's intention to balance big powers in the forthcoming establishment of the ARF. The senior officials also expressed a willingness to engage China and other non-PMC members within an extended security dialogue, which led to the decision to invite the foreign ministers of China, Russia, Vietnam, Laos, and Papua New Guinea to a special session in Singapore in July 1993.

On 25 July 1993, the special session, which in effect was the inaugural meeting of the ARF, was held in Singapore, and attended by foreign ministers

Conferences (PMC). "Singapore Declaration of 1992", Singapore, 28 January 1992.
<http://202.154.12.3/5120.htm>

⁶⁰ Ralf Emmers, "The Balance of Power Factor in the ARF", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 20, no. 2 (August 1998), p. 281.

from eighteen countries. The three-hour meeting was deliberately left informal and unstructured, based on the belief that a relaxed style would get the new grouping off to a good start and make all participants comfortable with the idea of talking about security issues. Indeed, the mere gathering of so many states, including those who may see each other as potential rivals such as the United States, China, Japan, and Vietnam, was itself a great achievement, let alone discussing the sensitive security issues among them. The substantial outcome of this meeting was the agreement that the Forum's first meeting would be held in Bangkok the next year.

The first official meeting of the ARF was held in Bangkok on 25 July 1994, participated by the foreign ministers of ASEAN states, ASEAN's dialogue partners, consultative partners, and observers or their representatives.⁶¹ The meeting endorsed the purposes and principles of ASEAN'S Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia as a code of conduct governing regional relations between states. As the Chairman's Statement declared, "being the first time ever that high-ranking representatives from the majority of states in the Asia-Pacific region came to specifically discuss political and security cooperation issues, the

⁶¹ In 1994, ASEAN consisted of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. ASEAN'S Dialogue Partners were: Australia, Canada, the Europe Union, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and the United States. ASEAN's Consultative Partners were China and Russia. ASEAN's Observers were Laos, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam. See "Chairman's Statement of the First ASEAN Regional Forum", Bangkok, 25 July 1994. <http://www.aseansec.org/99.htm>

Meeting was considered a historic event for the region.”⁶² It was agreed that the Forum would meet annually.

Security Interests behind the ARF

From a realist viewpoint, the establishment of the ARF was a power-based process. In this interactive process, ASEAN, a grouping of small powers, played the initiating and central role. Other participants, such as the United States, Japan and China, also played an important role in the ARF’s formation. Their policies, as discussed below, also greatly influenced the development of the ARF.

The core objective of ASEAN in initiating the ARF was to “engage the United States, Japan and China in a structure of multilateral dialogue in order to promote a stable distribution of power in the Asia-Pacific”.⁶³ This aim was based on their assessment of the changed security situation after the Cold War. Previously, ASEAN was very sensitive and cautious about multilateral security cooperation. The change of ASEAN’s attitude was formally signalled by the Singapore Declaration of 1992. In January, at the end of its fourth Summit, ASEAN declared its interest in engaging in security cooperation with other

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ralf Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in ASEAN and ARF* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 116.

external powers and stated: “ASEAN should intensify its external dialogues in political and security matters by using the ASEAN-PMC.”⁶⁴ It should be noted that before this Summit the formal process of ASEAN-PMC dialogue had long confined to issues of economic cooperation.

What led to this change of ASEAN’s attitude towards multilateral security cooperation? First of all, post-Cold War security challenges made ASEAN states concerned about the changing balance of power and reassess their approach to regional security. Secondly, ASEAN was aware of the limitation of weak power politics and realized that “in order to avoid being ignored by the great powers, it must ensure its place as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) in that architecture.”⁶⁵ Thirdly, ASEAN hoped to preserve its post-Cold War relevance and consolidate its diplomatic position. Through the creation of new multilateral structure, ASEAN tried to develop, or further define, its stabilizing role in Southeast Asian affairs. The idea that the collective weak can win over the individual strong may not be a wishful thinking of the ASEAN. Actually, ASEAN seeking the leading position in the ARF, to a large extent, did reflect its desire for a new security role in the post-Cold War period.

⁶⁴ “Singapore Declaration of 1992”, The Fourth ASEAN Summit, Singapore, 28 January 1992. <http://www.aseansec.org/5120.htm>

⁶⁵ Tan See Seng et al., *A New Agenda for the ASEAN Regional Forum* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2002), p. 21.

The United States, usually preferring bilateral arrangements to manage regional security, began to change its policy towards multilateralism and became more constructive from the later stages of the First Bush administration. It began to support some flexible and ad hoc multilateral efforts in dealing with specific security issues.⁶⁶ The Clinton administration went further in expressing support for the scheme. In July 1994, the Clinton administration defined its own national security strategy as one of engagement and enlargement. One important facet of that policy was an explicit call for a policy that facilitated regional integration. The rationale for fostering such regional integration was that nations that would work together in the absence of the United States might be willing to coalesce around the United States in a crisis.⁶⁷ Moreover, there was also another factor leading to the shift of the U.S. policy. This was “a realization that regional countries viewed multilateralism not as a substitute for U.S. military supremacy and its bilateral alliances but as a necessary complement to the latter at a time of a rapidly changing regional balance of power”.⁶⁸

Japan played an active role in the formation of the ARF. In Japan’s view, without undermining the existing security arrangements like the U.S.-Japan alliance, the ARF was a vehicle to foster a sense of trust, however fragile, on the

⁶⁶ James A. Baker III, “America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community”, *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1991-92), vol. 70, issue 5, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Larry M. Wortzel, *The ASEAN Regional Forum: Asian Security without an American Umbrella* (PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1996), p. 14.

⁶⁸ Amitav, “ASEAN and Asia-Pacific Multilateralism”, p. 186.

basis of providing and sharing quality information about China, Japan, and the United States.⁶⁹ As early as July 1991, Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama proposed a multilateral security dialogue within the ASEAN-PMC framework, though it was rejected by ASEAN due to its fears of a more assertive Japan. However, as its foreign policy emphasized “the flexible application of multiplex mechanisms”⁷⁰ based on the conception of comprehensive security, Japan continued to advocate developing multilateral security mechanisms in Asia Pacific. Its motivation was to seek a greater political role in the formation of a new regional order, and the ARF might serve as a legitimising vehicle for it to expand its political and security influence.

What were China’s motivations in participating in the ARF? How did it behave in the ARF? What were the changes in China’s position? These questions will be dealt with in the following chapter.

⁶⁹ For an expanded discussion, see Tsuyoshi Kawasaki, “Between Realism and Idealism in Japanese Security Policy: The Case of the ASEAN Regional Forum”, *The Pacific Review*, vol. 10, no. 4 (1997).

⁷⁰ Yoshihida Soeya, “The Evolution of Japanese Thinking and Policies on Co-operative Security in the 1980s and 1990s”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 48, no. 1 (May 1994), pp. 88-89.

Chapter 2

China and the ARF: Policy and Behaviour

This chapter studies China's participation of the ARF. It looks into China's historical experience with multilateral organizations, which had greatly influenced its perception and approach to regional security institutions. It also analyses China's motivations for joining the ARF. Finally, China's behaviours in the eleven ARF meetings (1994-2004) and motivations will be examined.

China's Historical Experience with Multilateralism

China's initial attitudes towards the ARF were consistent with its traditional aversion towards multilateralism. China had an early and miserable experience with multilateralism since the early 1930s when the League of Nations acquiesced to Japan's invasion of China's Manchuria. During the Cold War period, international organizations such as the United Nations (before October 1971 when the UN General Assembly accepted the PRC to represent China at the United Nations) and regional groupings such as Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and ASEAN were perceived by China as being directed against it. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) also perceived the Soviet Union as attempting to control it through the guises of the Communist

International in the 1940s and the Soviet-controlled Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in the 1950s. For a long time after 1949, China was excluded from the United Nations and other international organizations. These experiences led to its belief that the West was using multilateral institutions to form blocs to thwart its legitimate interests. In other words, China perceived itself as a target or a victim rather than a participant in multilateralism. Even when it championed for the Third World issues, it never became a member of the Group of Seventy-Seven or the Non-Aligned Movement.

China's hesitation on multilateral security cooperation was also accounted by its two concerns. The first was its concern of "internationalisation" of both the Taiwan issue and the issue of the South China Sea, where China has territorial disputes with some ASEAN states. The second was its concern over the role and intention of the United States in any multilateral security arrangement in Asia Pacific. China believed that the United States would try to lead and dominate such arrangements. It is no surprise that China was suspicious of the ARF at first, and perceived the forum as a potential ploy by the United States to contain China.

China's Motivations for Participating in the ARF

Notwithstanding its distrust, China joined the ARF in 1994. What then, were its motivations? The fact that ASEAN was the initiator made it possible for China to agree to join in since any suggestion by other major powers, such as the United States, Russia or Japan, would have met immediate Chinese reluctance and even resistance as nothing more than an instrument of containing China.⁷¹ As the ARF was based on ASEAN principles, China could safely rely on support from the ASEAN countries to exclude debates on human rights and other sensitive political issues from the agenda. Furthermore, conflicting issues would not be discussed publicly and every participant would strictly respect the principle of non-intervention in other participants' domestic affairs, a basic principle that met the request from China's.

Also, China was aware of the shift in the power structure in the Asia-Pacific region after the Cold War. As early as in 1991, it realized that the triangular relationship between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China was evolving into a quadrilateral relationship between the United States, Russia, China, and Japan. The interactions among the four major players and the critical role played by the diplomatically shrewd ASEAN states culminated in the

⁷¹ Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996), p. 26.

formation of a multi-layered political, economic, and military structure in the region. A careful handling of this multi-layered relationship was of crucial importance to the establishment of a new political and economic order in the Asia Pacific.⁷² Following closely after the Tiananmen Square incident, China's participation in the ARF also rested on the consideration that Beijing did not want to provide the United States with an opportunity to influence other countries to levy trade sanctions against China for its human rights record.⁷³ With the concern of the strengthened U.S. bilateral diplomacy in the region, China calculated that it would be more beneficial to stay engaged with, even if only selectively, than to decouple itself totally from the ARF, since by so doing, China could at least exert some measure of influence and act proactively to head off potential troubles.

Another reason for China's participation in the ARF was that joining such a cooperative Forum would help to fight off the international fear of China's aspirations to regional hegemonism.⁷⁴ As a scholar noted: "... endorsement and participation in multilateral security could be a more effective means to dispel the perception of a 'China threat' than frequent reiteration of the pledge that

⁷² "Prospects for New Asian-Pacific Political Order", *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, JPRSCAR-91-030, 30 May 1991, p. 3.

⁷³ See, for example, "US Resolution Doomed", *China Daily*, 23 February 2000, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Bates Gill, "Limited Engagement", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 4 (1999); Robert G. Kaiser, "Imagining an Expansionist China", *International Herald Tribune*, 18/19 March 2000, p. 1, cont. p. 4.

China will not seek hegemony in the region.”⁷⁵ Chinese President Jiang Zemin had tried to reassure that China’s peace-oriented foreign policy was not “an expedient move but an inevitable choice made in line with the times and in view of the long-term interests of the people of China”.⁷⁶ In short, China’s participation, as opposed to abstention, would further reassure regional states of Beijing’s peaceful intentions based on the desire for continued stability to support its economic modernization drive at home. Based on these considerations, China joined as a consultative partner in the ARF.

China’s Reactive Behaviour as a Consultative Partner

The First ARF Meeting

In 1994, China joined the first ARF meeting as a consultative partner, which would not decide the working pattern of the ARF, but was nevertheless indicative of China’s strong interest to participate in the Forum.

The ARF Chairman’s statement, released at the end of the first working session, pointed out that the participants recognized “developments in one part of the region could have an impact on the security of the region as a whole”,⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Wang Jianwei, “Chinese Perspectives on Multilateral Security Cooperation”, *Asian Perspective*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1998), p. 118.

⁷⁶ “China’s Policy of Peace to Stay: Jiang”, *The Straits Times*, 12 November 1994.

⁷⁷ “Chairman’s Statement of the First ASEAN Regional Forum”, Bangkok, 25 July 1994.

and this recognition strengthened their commitment to the ARF. But to China, this concept of security interdependence was relatively new at this stage. Therefore, China's acceptance of this concept marked a break in its thinking, and it now conceded that events in China would affect the rest of the world and vice versa. This admission of security interdependence gave substance to the mutual cooperation of regional stability.

Another concession by China was its endorsement of ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). This was a stark departure from China's past reluctance to do so. The Treaty provides conflict prevention mechanisms that may, under certain circumstances, be invoked to apply to the South China Sea disputes. Similarly, China expressed support for the 1992 Manila Declaration on the South China Sea after its initial reservations. Also during the meeting, China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen extended an invitation to ASEAN countries to discuss regional issues in Beijing in April 1995.⁷⁸ He also reportedly told a group of journalists after the meeting that China was prepared to engage in defence cooperation with its neighbours, although the nature of such cooperation was unspecified.⁷⁹

<http://www.aseansec.org/3621.htm>

⁷⁸ *The Nation*, 27 July 1994.

⁷⁹ *International Herald Tribune*, 26 July 1994.

However, China was unwilling to go too far. Even after the creation of the ARF, China remained hesitant and defensive about further development of the multilateral security institution. It was not a particularly pro-active consultative partner at the time, but rather tried to justify omitting a number of ideas for further study at the next working session. This reluctance towards a stronger institutionalisation of the Forum led to a much weaker form of cooperation based on working groups with second-track personnel. Owing to China's objection, the term "security dilemma" was not used in the memorandum. Agreements on a regional weapons' registration system and a treaty on monitoring troop movements along common borders were also cancelled due to China's resistance.⁸⁰

China also insisted that the ARF develop in a way that every participant should accept its pace of development and outcome. Although one could argue that other Asian countries held somewhat similar positions and only left it to China to publicly express it, nevertheless, China's reservations were the strongest. For example, as the official *Beijing Review* commented, concrete measures for the solution of specific problems would induce the regional forum to leave its track and become uncontrollable.⁸¹ The first ARF Chairman's

⁸⁰ Jörn Dosch, *PMC, ARF and CSCAP: Foundations for a Security Architecture in the Asia-Pacific?* (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australia National University, 1997), p. 173.

⁸¹ *Beijing Review*, 4 February 1997, p. 10.

Statement expressed willingness, including that on China's part too, to court other internationally recognized alternatives of security cooperation. However, China was initially unwilling to allow the discussion of these ideas at inter-sessional meetings by government officials, presumably for fear of being tied to a process from which it could not back out. This straightforward opposition illustrated its reluctance to even court the unfettered (i.e., free trial without obligation) possibility of mutual interest in limited sovereignty.

The conflict over the South China Sea was often quoted as a test case for the ARF's capacity. Just prior to the first ARF meeting, China tried to make sure that the territorial dispute about the Spratly islands would not appear on the agenda. At the first ARF Senior Officials Meeting, China strongly opposed any attempt to develop tight time schedules for the implementation of security measures. China vetoed against discussing the Spratly issue at the ARF, and argued that an internationalisation of the issue would open doors for third parties to intervene and draw advantages of their own.⁸²

⁸² Julia Hurtzig and Eberhard Sandschneider, "National Interest and Multilateral Cooperation: The PRC and its Policies towards APEC and ARF", in Jörn Dosch and Manfred Mols (eds.), *International Relations in the Asia-Pacific: New Patterns of Power, Interest, and Cooperation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 228.

The Second ARF Meeting

The second ARF meeting in March 1995 set out the long-term objectives in its Concept Paper. The Paper describes an ASEAN's blueprint for charting the course of the ARF. Without specifying a time frame, it outlines three stages of evolution for the ARF as "from initial confidence-building, through preventive diplomacy, to ultimate conflict-resolution mechanisms".⁸³ An Inter-sessional Support Group (ISG) was formed and several Inter-sessional Meetings (ISMs) were convened to develop and implement the measures as envisaged by the different stages of the Concept Paper. This was a significant departure from the usual "ASEAN's way", where proceeding in an informal way at a pace comfortable to all. Initially, China objected to the formalization of such a paper, but under the institutionally logical pressure that a forum without an agenda had no reason to exist, the participating states pushed ahead with the paper under the guise of an academic exercise in order that the Forum would not fall at the first hurdle.⁸⁴

At the meeting in Brunei in August 1995, the ARF Chairman's Statement specifically alluded to the ARF goals as "to ensure and preserve the current environment of peace, prosperity and stability in the Asia-Pacific ... to reduce

⁸³ Leifer, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁸⁴ Thammy Evans, "The PRC's Relationship with the ASEAN Regional Forum: Realpolitik, Regime Theory or a Continuation of the Sinic Zone of Influence System?" *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3 (2003), p. 748.

the risk to security and ... recognize that the concept of comprehensive security includes not only military aspects but also political, economic, social and other issues".⁸⁵ For its intentions and purposes, the Chairman's Statement reflected the three-stage approach that was elaborated in the Concept Paper. However, Stage III, Conflict Resolution Mechanisms (CRMs), did not make it into the Chairman's Statement due to China's objection since this was an area of possible intervention from outside, especially in areas that China considered exclusively internal matters of jurisdiction, i.e., issues regarding Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang and the South China Sea.

At this meeting, China, for the first time, expressed its willingness to discuss the Spratly issue multilaterally. But this discussion was open only to ASEAN countries, and not within the ARF. However, the spokesman from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs later stated that the islands' sovereignty would be unimpeachable and the best way for conflict resolution would be to rely on bilateral negotiations.⁸⁶ The Spratly issue was China's dilemma in multilateral cooperation in the field of security policies. On the one hand, China tried to react to other ARF members' pressure for compromise, while it was, on the other hand, unwilling to concede on its own national interests. In order to

⁸⁵ "The Second ARF Chairman's Statement", Brunei Darussalam, 1 August 1995.

<http://www.aseansec.org/3617.htm>

⁸⁶ Amitav Acharya, "The ARF Could Well Unravel", in Derek da Cunha (ed.), *The Evolving Pacific Power Structure* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1996), p. 65.

prevent further isolation, China took a conciliatory position. This is because, as one ASEAN scholar noted, “for China, the political costs of defection from a multilateral security forum like the ARF have begun to outweigh the strategic benefits accruing from an uncompromising territorial posture.”⁸⁷

At the 1995 ARF meeting, the formalization of its goals and approaches managed to draw China further into the ARF process and thus into deeper regional and global forms of cooperation and dialogues. The inclusion of defence officers at this ARF meeting signified the importance assigned to the ARF by participating countries, especially in a region where foreign affairs were often bypassed by defence departments. Therefore, China could not ignore the huge impact of the ARF on regional affairs.

Nevertheless, at the 1995 ARF meeting, China also tried to slow down the potential “reckless” pace of the ARF towards institutionalisation⁸⁸ through formal mechanisms and sessional groups. It preferred that the ARF remained an informal dialogue mechanism rather than a formal security organization. It had no interest in seeing the ARF become an arbitrator of regional conflict.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

⁸⁸ Wang Jianwei, “Chinese Perspectives”, *Asian Perspective*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1998), p. 103.

⁸⁹ “Dialogue Key to Peace, Prosperity”, *Beijing Review*, 12-18 August 1996, p. 6.

At the first two ARF meetings, China appeared to have made concessions on the issue of security cooperation, as it was on paper, but China did not actively promote regional security cooperation and it, on most occasions, only reacted to various security cooperation initiatives.

China's Proactive Behaviour as a Full Dialogue Partner

In March 1996, in a letter to Ali Alatas, Chairman of ASEAN Standing Committee and Indonesia's Foreign Minister at the time, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen indicated in clear terms China's intention to become ASEAN's full dialogue partner. ASEAN responded positively on 24 June, when Alatas notified Qian in a letter about a consensus among ASEAN foreign ministers to upgrade China into a full dialogue partner. In July 1996, China attended the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting as a full dialogue partner for the first time,⁹⁰ which held out a great opportunity for bilateral friendship and cooperation. At this meeting, China, for the first time, proposed that "to establish a China-ASEAN partnership of good-neighbourliness and mutual trust, a partnership oriented towards the 21st century, should be the common objective for all of us."⁹¹ Accordingly, this upgrading marked China's greater

⁹⁰ Ren Xin, "Sino-ASEAN Relations Enter New Stage", *Beijing Review*, 19-25 August 1996, p. 10.

⁹¹ "Opening Statement by His Excellency Mr. Qian Qichen, Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China", presented at 29th AMM/PMC, Jakarta, 1996.
<http://www.aseansec.org/4347.htm>

participation in the ARF process and more proactive attitude towards regional security cooperation.

The Third ARF Meeting

At the third ARF meeting in Jakarta in July 1996, China's Foreign Minister Qian suggested that the ARF should start a dialogue on defence conversion and began discussions on comprehensive security cooperation.⁹² In terms of military cooperation, he offered several proposals on confidence building, such as notifying and inviting other ARF members to observe joint military exercises, and reducing to eventually eliminating military reconnaissance targeted at certain members of the Forum. Together with the agreement signed between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in April 1996, which included a series of military confidence-building measures along the border areas, China's actions reflected its new thinking of security cooperation. This new thinking was reflected in the new security concept raised by Qian at the same ARF meeting. What is noteworthy is that this was the first time that the Chinese government introduced the new security concept in the international community. China also agreed to co-sponsor with the Philippines the 1997 meeting on confidence-building measures in Beijing, which was the first official

⁹² Department of Policy Planning (DPP), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China (PRC) (ed.), *Zhongguo Waijiao (1997 Ban) [China's Foreign Affairs (1997 Edition)]* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1997), p. 750.

multilateral conference on security held by China. The voluntary acceptance to organize this conference was a clear indication of progress in China's attitude towards multilateral cooperation.

The Fourth ARF Meeting

At the fourth ARF meeting in Malaysia on 27 July 1997, China continued to increase its involvement in the multilateral security cooperation though not substantially in CRMs. The meeting went into some depth on the Track I and Track II activities of various ISGs and ISMs reflecting the advances that had been made in these areas. In his speech, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen confirmed the ARF's importance as a channel for regional security discussions and its contribution to building confidence and promoting peace and stability in Asia Pacific.⁹³ He emphasized that the ARF should not be established with the intention to defuse a common threat, but rather to achieve a common goal, which was peace and stability. Qian described the cooperation style of the Forum as equal participation, consensus-making, seeking common ground while shelving differences, and incremental progress.⁹⁴ About the issue of enhancing the role of the Chair, Qian noted that it was a useful measure for building confidence and that the Chair could mediate in the disputes during the meeting. However, he

⁹³ DPP (ed.), *Zhongguo Waijiao (1998 Ban) [China's Foreign Affairs (1998 Edition)]* (Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1998), p. 768.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 909.

pointed out that the conditions were not ripe for the Chairman to coordinate outside the confines of the ARF meeting. Regarding the development of the Forum, he suggested that it would be better for regional peace and stability to continue promoting confidence-building measures, rather than rashly enter the next stage of preventive diplomacy.⁹⁵ Despite its hesitance about moving into the next two stages, i.e. preventive diplomacy and CRMs, a significant change has occurred in China's position: It now agreed to talk about the competing claims in the South China Sea at the Forum. China previously preferred bilateral solutions to the dispute and refused to discuss it at the ARF. This flexibility illustrated its willingness to get well with ASEAN states and its sincerity on the constructive cooperation with the ARF, which were appreciated by other members.

The Fifth ARF Meeting

The fifth ARF meeting was held against the backdrop of the Asian financial crisis that started in July 1997. China was not totally unaffected by the crisis, but had withstood it better than many of its Asian neighbours. As the World Bank noted in the aftermath of the crisis, "China's growth is one source of stability for the region."⁹⁶ As its neighbours' currencies fell in value, China

⁹⁵ Su Hao, *Cong Yaling Dao Ganlan: Yatai Hezuo Anquan Moshi Yanjiu [From Dumbbell to Olive: Studies on the Approaches of Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific]* (Beijing: World Knowledge Press, 2003), p. 410.

⁹⁶ The World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects and Developing Countries, 1998/1999: Beyond Financial*

promised not to devalue its currency, Renminbi, and made efforts to help stabilize the precarious financial situation. It made several billion dollars in aid to those affected Southeast Asian economies. This positive response to the financial crisis helped its image in the Asia-Pacific region, and its relations with Southeast Asian countries improved greatly. As a result, during the first ASEAN-Plus-One Summit between the leaders of ASEAN states and Chinese President Jiang Zemin in Kuala Lumpur in December 1997, a joint declaration was released for establishing a good-neighbourly and mutual-trust partnership between China and ASEAN towards the twenty-first century.⁹⁷ In July 1998, China published its white paper on national defence on the same day as the report's submission to the ARF meeting. In the white paper, it elaborated the new concept for security cooperation, which included three principles. First, the relations among nations should be established on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence; i.e., mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.⁹⁸ Secondly, in the economic field, all countries should strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation, open up to each other, eliminate inequalities and discriminatory policies in economic and trade relations, gradually reduce the development gaps between

Crisis (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1999), p. 34.

⁹⁷ Wang Yong, "China, ASEAN Stress Peace: Summit Agrees on Approach", *China Daily*, 17 December 1997, p. 1.

⁹⁸ "White Paper on China's National Defence", Information Office of the State Council, People's Republic of China, 27 July 1998. <http://www.nti.org/db/china/engdocs/wpnatdef.htm>

countries and seek common prosperity.⁹⁹ Thirdly, all countries should promote mutual understanding and trust through dialogue and cooperation, and seek the settlement of divergences and disputes among nations through peaceful means.¹⁰⁰

At the ARF Ministerial Meeting in 1998, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan further elaborated China's new security concept and emphasized the mutual security. He pointed out that the act of creating imaginary enemies or fabricating threat directed at a third country would eventually harm others and more so oneself.¹⁰¹ Economic security was also mutual, and it was inadvisable to try to shift one's troubles onto others. About the ARF's development, China held that it was necessary to lay down the guiding principles for building confidence and conducting security dialogue and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, Tang noted: "the ARF should continue to make timely exploration of the overlapping subject matters of confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy as well as the ways and means of addressing them. When conditions are ripe, we can probe the theories and approaches of preventive diplomacy which are suited to regional features."¹⁰² Finally, China highlighted its support of ASEAN's leadership in the ARF. Other ARF

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "Address by H.E. Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC at the 5th ARF Ministerial Meeting", in ASEAN Secretariat (ed.), *Progress of the 5th ARF* (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 1998).

¹⁰² Ibid.

participants expressed their high appreciation of China's efforts in alleviating the tension in South Asia due to the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, and attached great importance to China's new security concept.¹⁰³ Furthermore, China was praised for its contribution to regional stability through its agreements at the sub-regional level with Russia, and other three Central Asian countries, and the agreement with India, both on settling the border demarcation and implementing CBMs in the border areas.¹⁰⁴

The Sixth ARF Meeting

The sixth ARF meeting was held in Singapore on 27 July 1999. In this year, China faced several security challenges: the U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, quite a few incidents happening in South China Sea,¹⁰⁵ and Lee Teng-hui's "two states" remarks. Before the ARF meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan met with the U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright. This was the first meeting between the two since the bombing of the Chinese Embassy. Tang pointed out that China-U.S. relationship had been seriously damaged by U.S. bombing. He urged the U.S. side to give full recognition to the serious nature of the bombing incident, give serious attention

¹⁰³ *Renmin Ribao*, 30 July 1998.

¹⁰⁴ See Point 8, in "Chairman's Statement of the Fifth Meeting of the ARF", Manila, 27 July 1998.
<http://www.aseansec.org/3595.htm>

¹⁰⁵ In June, Malaysia built constructions in the contested water in South China Sea. In July, a Philippines navy patrol boat chased and sank a Chinese fishing vessel, the second in the year, which led to the tension of the China-Philippines relationship.

to the Chinese demands and take practical action to remedy the serious damage to the China-U.S. relationship. Albright said that President Bill Clinton and other U.S. officials had repeatedly formally apologized to the Chinese side for the bombing and the United States was willing to take practical action to seek a proper settlement of the issue so as to return the U.S.-China relations to their normal track. She reaffirmed the U.S. government's commitment to the "one China" policy and said Washington would not change this policy.¹⁰⁶ This meeting signalled a resumption of China-U.S. bilateral relations.

At the same ARF meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan also stated China's viewpoints on regional and global security situation and emphasized the need for a new approach towards security cooperation. China agreed in principle to accede to the protocol to the treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ), and it would discuss with ASEAN about the code of conduct in the South China Sea.¹⁰⁷ It also showed willingness to join the TAC,¹⁰⁸ which requires its signatories not to use force in settling disputes in the region. China's positive attitude was welcomed by many ARF participants. Moreover, China, instead of refusing as it used to, agreed to discuss the issue and measures of preventive diplomacy and even the issue of

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ DPP (ed.), *Zhongguo Waijiao (2000 Ban) [China's Foreign Affairs (2000 Edition)]* (Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1998), pp. 658-659.

¹⁰⁸ "Renewed Hope for the ARF", *The Japan Times*, 31 July 1999.

conflict resolution, as an eventual goal of the ARF.¹⁰⁹ At the meeting, the Ministers attached great importance to the dialogue in the ASEAN-China Senior Officials Consultations, the regular exchange of views in the ARF, and the continuing work of the Informal Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea, which have enhanced confidence building.¹¹⁰ In an interview after the meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan noted that the ARF needed to conduct vigorous explorations on new security concepts and new security-seeking modalities.

The Seventh ARF Meeting

The seventh ARF meeting was held in Thailand in July 2000 against the background of rapid progress in East Asian cooperation, such as the signing of a border treaty between China and Vietnam in December 1999, which solved all the remaining land disputes between the two countries,¹¹¹ and the first summit between North and South Korea in June 2000.¹¹² As a result, North Korea was invited and attended the seventh ARF meeting.

¹⁰⁹ See Point 21 and 22, “Chairman’s Statement of the Sixth Meeting of the ARF”, Singapore, 26 July 1999. <http://www.aseansec.org/3587.htm>

¹¹⁰ See Point 11, in “Chairman’s Statement of the Sixth Meeting of the ARF”, op. cit.

¹¹¹ *Renmin Ribao*, 31 December 1999.

¹¹² China played a positive role in the meeting between the two Koreas. When Kim Jong Il, leader of North Korea, visited China in May 2000, Chinese President Jiang Zemin told him that China supported Korea’s peaceful reunification, and China also welcomed a summit between the two Koreas. For the detailed report of Jiang’s meeting with Kim Jong Il, see “Kim Jong Il Concludes Visit to China”, *Renmin Ribao*, 1 June 2000.

At the ARF meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan stated China's position and viewpoints on the situation in the Asia-Pacific region. He noted that, while the economy of East Asia was recovering and East Asian cooperation had made notable progress, the Cold-War mentality was still affecting the way some countries perceived world politics and international relations, and bilateral military alliances were consolidating.¹¹³ In particular, he noted that the U.S. Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) program in East Asia was against the tide of the times, and separatist forces were asserting themselves more aggressively. On the development of the ARF, Tang agreed to consolidate and deepen the confidence-building measures and, at the same time, explore and discuss the question of preventive diplomacy in the region. He pointed out that it was essential for the Forum to reach a consensus first on the concept and principles of preventive diplomacy.¹¹⁴

At the meeting, China also expressed its support in adopting a regional code on the conduct of the South China Sea.¹¹⁵ These efforts were appreciated by other participants as they also helped to improve the confidence by other

¹¹³ "Full Text of Chinese FM's Speech at the 7th ARF Meeting", *Renmin Ribao*, 27 July 2000.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ See Point 19, in "Chairman's Statement of the Seventh Meeting of the ARF", Bangkok, 27 July 2000. <http://www.aseansec.org/3576.htm>

countries on China's willingness to play a positive role in regional cooperation.¹¹⁶

The Eighth ARF Meeting

In July 2001, the eighth ARF meeting was held in Vietnam. Before the meeting, China went further in promoting regional cooperation. In December 2000, China and Vietnam signed the agreement on demarcation of territorial waters, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf in the Tonkin Gulf. In January 2001, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il paid an unofficial visit to China. In the bilateral talks, Chinese President Jiang Zemin expressed China's willingness to continue to support the active efforts made by both North and South Korea to improve relations for the eventual peaceful reunification.¹¹⁷ In February 2001, the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) launched its inaugural conference in China, attended by leaders from 25 countries. BFA was the first non-governmental regional forum located in China. In June, the presidents of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan jointly issued the declaration on the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Thus, the SCO, initiated by China and Russia, was formally founded in China. It was to develop a "Shanghai Spirit" featuring "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality,

¹¹⁶ For example, both Thai and Vietnamese Foreign Ministers spoke highly of China's active support to ASEAN and the important role it played in the regional political and security dialogue. See "Chinese FM Meets Thai, Vietnamese Counterparts", *Renmin Ribao*, 27 July 2000.

¹¹⁷ *Renmin Ribao*, 20 January 2001.

consultation, respect for different civilizations and common prosperity”.¹¹⁸ It was based on the above-mentioned new security concept as raised by China. These positive Chinese actions in international cooperation marked a development of China’s foreign policy from active participation to self-motivated initiation. Against this backdrop, China made great efforts in promoting regional security cooperation within the framework of the ARF. In September 2000, China hosted the Seminar on Defence Conversion Cooperation and the fourth Meeting of Heads of Defence College, Universities and Institutions. At the same time, China proposed to establish the ARF Regional Maritime Information Centre (ARF-RMIC), a proposal that was accepted by all participants.

The most important progress that the eighth ARF meeting made was the adoption of three documents: the paper on the concept and principles of preventive diplomacy,¹¹⁹ the paper on the enhanced role of ARF Chair¹²⁰ and the

¹¹⁸ “Shanghai Cooperation Organization”, 7 January 2004, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC.

<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/sco/t57970.htm>

¹¹⁹ The paper defined preventive diplomacy as consensual diplomatic and political action taken by sovereign states with the consent of all directly involved parties. Its objectives are: to prevent disputes/conflicts between states from emerging, to prevent such disputes/conflicts from escalating into armed confrontation, and to prevent such disputes and conflicts from spreading. Preventive diplomacy measures include confidence building Efforts, norms buildings, enhancing channels of communication, and role of the ARF Chair. Eight key principles of preventive diplomacy are: 1) It is about diplomacy; 2) It is non-coercive; 3) It should be timely; 4) It requires trust and confidence; 5) It operates on the basis of consultation and consensus; 6) It is voluntary; 7) It applies to conflicts between and among States; 8) It is conducted in accordance with universally recognized basic principles of international law and inter-state relations embodied, *inter alia*, in the UN Charter, the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and the TAC. For more details, see “ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy”, adopted at the 8th ARF, 25 July 2001. <http://www.aseansec.org/3571.htm>

¹²⁰ The paper was mainly focused on the role of the ARF Chair in the CBM stage, and outlined principles and procedures that could serve as a basis for further discussions. The enhanced roles of the ARF Chair in

paper on the terms of reference for ARF experts/eminent persons (EEPs).¹²¹ China illustrated its support for the three papers and the development of the Forum. Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan commended the adoption of the three documents, which signified an important achievement in the transitional process as the Forum moved from confidence-building measures to preventive diplomacy. In view of the growing concern of all sides over non-traditional security, he expressed that China was in favour of progressive development of dialogue and cooperation by the Forum in the non-traditional security field and stood ready to take an active part and play its due role. China continued to support ASEAN to play the leading role at the Forum. Meanwhile, given the diverse political, economic and security concerns in the region, Tang emphasized that the Forum should retain its nature as a political and diplomatic forum. It should also continue to work within the stage of confidence-building. Principles such as non-interference in each other's internal affairs and consensus-building that had taken shape and proved to be effective should continue to be observed.¹²² Furthermore, he described China's Asia-Pacific security strategy as being based on safeguarding national sovereignty, development, peace and

good offices and co-ordination in between ARF meetings are aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and promoting the continuity and efficiency of the ARF process. For more details, see "Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair (Shared Perspectives among the ARF Members)", adopted at the 8th ARF, 25 July 2001.

<http://www.aseansec.org/3572.htm>

¹²¹ The paper specified the rules of nomination on experts/eminent persons, contents of the register, management of the register, scope and procedure for activities of the EEPs, and funding. For details, see "Co-Chairs Paper on the Terms of Reference for the ARF Experts/Eminent Persons (EEPs)", adopted at the 8th ARF, 25 July 2001. <http://www.aseansec.org/3573.htm>

¹²² "Address by Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan at the 8th Foreign Ministers' Meeting of ASEAN Regional Forum", Hanoi, 25 July 2001.

<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/wjb/zzjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/1136/1138/t4546.htm>

regional security cooperation.¹²³ At this meeting, China and ASEAN also made progress in developing a code of conduct in the South China Sea.¹²⁴

It was worth noting that at the meeting, Tang stated China's position on the role of the United States in the region. He pointed out that China attached importance to its relations with the United States. China welcomed a positive, constructive role of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region and was ready to work with the United States to maintain peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. Meanwhile, the United States also should admit and respect China's security interest.¹²⁵ This marked an adjustment in China's U.S. policy. At this meeting, he also met U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, with the intention to stabilize and improve the China-U.S. relations that deteriorated following the EP-3 incident in May 2001.¹²⁶ Although they did not note the incident specifically, both of them acknowledged that the bilateral relations followed a period of difficulties. Tang also noted that some improvement had occurred in

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ It was noted in the Chairman's Statement. See Point 16, in "Chairman's Statement: the Eighth Meeting of the ARF", Hanoi, 25 July 2001. <http://www.aseansec.org/3560.htm>

¹²⁵ "Address by Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan at the Eighth Foreign Ministers' Meeting of ASEAN Regional Forum", op. cit.

¹²⁶ Here is necessary to introduce the EP-3 incident briefly. On 31 May 2001, a U.S. Navy EP-3 maritime patrol aircraft, which exercised a surveillance mission over the South China Sea, was intercepted by two Chinese fighter aircraft. There was contact between one of the Chinese aircraft and the EP-3, causing the missing of one Chinese pilot and his aircraft. The U.S. plane was also damaged and had to divert to an airfield on Hainan Island, China. The pilots and crew of the downed EP-3E ARIES II were taken by local officials. Following a nearly 11 days standoff between the United States and China, the U.S. aircrew were released. On April 11, the U.S. government expressed regret over the loss of the missing Chinese pilot, presumed dead, and his aircraft. And the U.S. government was also sorry that the damaged U.S. plane entered Chinese airspace to make an unauthorized emergency landing on Hainan. Then the American and Chinese governments agreed to hold an April 18 meeting to discuss the causes of the mid-air collision and possible recommendations to avoid such incidents in the future.

the bilateral relations, and to develop a constructive China-U.S. relationship was in the fundamental interest of the two peoples. Powell agreed and said that both sides could seek proper solutions to their differences in a frank and candid way, and that the United States needed to develop friendly ties with China.¹²⁷ The meeting was an important illustration of the warming up of the China-U.S. relationship. The ARF had served as a valuable venue for such a breakthrough.

The Ninth ARF Meeting

The ninth ARF meeting was held in Bandar Seri Begawan on 31 July 2002 against the backdrop of a changed world situation after the 9/11 terror attacks in the United States. Soon after the 9/11 event, the ARF issued a Chairman Statement on 4 October 2001 to make known, for the first time, its position on world affairs and its condemnation of the terror attacks.¹²⁸ In October 2001, the APEC meeting in Shanghai issued APEC Leaders Statement on Counter-Terrorism.¹²⁹ During the meeting, Chinese President Jiang Zeming met with U.S. President George W. Bush to express China's determination against terrorism and agreed to develop a constructive relationship of cooperation with

¹²⁷ For more details of this bilateral talk, see "China Ready to Enhance Cooperation with US in Maintaining Peace, Stability in Asia-Pacific: Tang", *Renmin Ribao*, 26 July 2001.

¹²⁸ "Statement by the Chairman of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on the Terrorist Acts of the 11th September 2001", Bandar Seri Begawan, 4 October 2001. <http://www.aseansec.org/16170.htm>

¹²⁹ *Renmin Ribao*, 21 October 2001.

the United States.¹³⁰ The danger of terrorism highlighted the necessity and urgency of regional cooperation.

China actively joined in the counter-terrorism campaign. On 12 November 2001, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan stated China's position at the UN Security Council meeting on terrorism.¹³¹ By the same time, China already acceded to nine of the existing twelve international counter-terrorism conventions.¹³² Meanwhile, China completed its domestic legal procedures for joining the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and was set to become a signatory to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.¹³³ On 7 June 2002, China signed the Agreement of SCO Member States on Regional Anti-terrorism Regime at the second SCO summit.¹³⁴

At the ninth ARF meeting, China made continued efforts on counter-terrorism. In his speech, Tang Jiaxuan stressed the new development in the

¹³⁰ *Renmin Ribao*, 20 October 2001.

¹³¹ He pointed out that terrorism had not only posed a major threat to international peace and security but had also inflicted severe damage on the world economy. The strike against terrorism should be clearly targeted and try to avoid injuring innocent people. China opposed linking terrorism to any specific religion or ethnicity and there should be no double standards with regard to counter-terrorism. The proper solutions to global issues such as poverty, regional conflicts and sustainable development would contribute to strengthening international cooperation against terrorism and to eradicating it. He noted that China had also been threatened by terrorism, namely the East Turkestan terrorist forces. For more details, see "Counter-Terrorism Committee: Security Council Meetings on Terrorism, 12 November 2001", the United Nations, pp. 4-5. <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1373/pv4413e.pdf>

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, "SCO Signed the Agreement on Regional Anti-terrorism Regime", 9 June 2002. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/wjb/zjzg/gjs/gjzzyhy/1128/1129/t4497.htm>

global security situation in which traditional and non-traditional security factors were intertwined, with the latter on the rise. He listed four dynamic changes as happened in the Asia-Pacific region. Firstly, non-traditional security issues were gaining importance in regional security affairs and there had been a greater desire among countries for joint efforts to address these issues. Secondly, traditional hotspot issues had been on and off, and most of them were moving towards resolution. Thirdly, multilateral security dialogue and cooperation had been more active. Fourthly, the question of development had become more prominent, with overwhelming majority of countries giving priority to their economic recovery and growth after the financial crisis.¹³⁵

Tang attached great importance to the ARF's positive role in maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. He reiterated China's support to the ARF in exploring and developing dialogue and cooperation in non-traditional security field, including counter-terrorism, gradually expanding the participation of defence officers in the ARF, and continuously adhering to the existing and effective modalities and principles, with confidence building at the core.¹³⁶ Tang had two suggestions for vigorous and effective cooperation within the ARF framework. First, non-traditional security issues would be a highlight for

¹³⁵ "Speech by Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan at 9th ARF Foreign Ministers' Meeting", Bandar Seri Begawan, 31 July 2002. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zjzg/gjs/gjzzyhy/2612/2614/t15320.htm>

¹³⁶ Ibid.

dialogue and cooperation in the ARF. He pointed out that multilateral cooperation was the only way to tackle these issues. Secondly, China stood in support for enhancing regional security dialogue and cooperation based on the new security concept with mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination at its core. Tang promised that China would participate in international and regional security dialogue and cooperation process with greater zeal and openness.¹³⁷

On the sidelines of the ARF meeting, Tang held talks with his counterparts from other countries. When meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, Tang reiterated China's positions on historical problems between the two countries and the issue of Japanese politicians' visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. He noted that the historical problems affected fundamentals of bilateral relations. But he also stressed that China treasured all the progress in bilateral ties and would continue to adopt the policy for good-neighbourliness and friendly cooperation with Japan. Kawaguchi said that she fully understood the importance and sensitivity of the historical problems affecting bilateral relations and was willing to make efforts to solve them appropriately.¹³⁸ At the bilateral meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, Tang raised the Taiwan issue and urged the U.S. side to stop arm sales to Taiwan and cut all its official and

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ "Chinese, Japanese FMs Exchange Views on Bilateral Ties", *Renmin Ribao*, 30 July 2002.

military contacts with Taiwan. Powell pledged that the United States would always adhere to the “one China” policy, which would not be affected by any words or actions from the Taiwan side. Both sides agreed to enhance bilateral anti-terror cooperation on a two-way and mutual-benefit basis. They also believed that it was necessary for the two countries to increase dialogue and cooperation while enhancing mutual understanding and trust, so as to keep their constructive and cooperative partnership moving forward continuously.¹³⁹ At the meeting with North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam Su, Tang stressed that China supported North Korea’s bid to improve inter-Korean relations and achieve self-determined peaceful reunification, and China noticed North Korea’s recent efforts for resuming inter-Korean dialogue, inviting a U.S. envoy to visit North Korea and holding bilateral talks with Japan, which demonstrated its strong will to maintain peace and improve surrounding environments.¹⁴⁰ Meeting his Indian counterpart Yashwant Sinha, Tang noted that China had kept a close eye on the situation in South Asia, but China had no selfish interests in the India-Pakistan dispute. He introduced China’s policy on the issue, which was to make peace and facilitate talks. China hoped that India and Pakistan would start dialogue to ease tensions on the subcontinent.¹⁴¹ In the bilateral meeting between China and Russia, both foreign ministers pledged joint efforts

¹³⁹ “China-US Cooperation Fits Common Interests: Chinese FM, Powell”, *Renmin Ribao*, 31 July 2002.

¹⁴⁰ “Chinese, DPRK FMs Vow to Enhance Traditional Cooperation”, *Renmin Ribao*, 31 July 2002.

¹⁴¹ “China Urges India-Pakistan Talks on Border Tensions”, *Renmin Ribao*, 31 July 2002.

to implement the Sino-Russian Good-Neighbourly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and to push the China-Russia strategic cooperative partnership to a new height.¹⁴² Tang also held bilateral talks with other foreign ministers who attended the Forum. In this connection, China took the ARF as a venue not only for multilateral diplomacy but bilateral one as well.

What should be highlighted is that at the meeting China submitted China's position paper on the new security concept. This document stated China's security conceptions and security policies that featured international dialogue and cooperation. It described the new security concept as essentially rising above one-sided security and seeking common security through mutually beneficial cooperation. Here, common security was raised as an essential element of the new security concept. In the paper, "the meaning of the security concept has evolved to be multifold with its contents extending from military and political to economic, science and technology, environment, culture and many other areas. The means to seek security are being diversified. Strengthening dialogue and cooperation is regarded as the fundamental approach to common security."¹⁴³ The paper elaborated four core ideas: mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, China

¹⁴² "China, Russia to Enhance Strategic Partnership", *Renmin Ribao*, 1 August 2002.

¹⁴³ "China's Position Paper on the New Security Concept", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, 31 July 2002. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/2612/2614/t15319.htm>

¹⁴⁴ Mutual trust means that all countries should transcend differences in ideology and social system, discard

maintained that cooperation under the new security concept should be carried out in flexible and diversified forms and models because of diversity of the world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. The document also summarized China's security practices in Asia Pacific and demonstrated its belief that "the key guarantee for Asian-Pacific security comes from a regional security framework featuring dialogue instead of confrontation."¹⁴⁵ Particularly, the importance of the ARF was emphasized for promoting regional dialogue and security cooperation. This position paper was a historic document that illustrated China's changing security perceptions and increasing emphasis on multilateralism.

The Tenth ARF Meeting

In February 2003, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) was first reported in Asia. Over the next few months, SARS spread to more than two dozens countries in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. The outbreak of SARS had brought about a multi-faceted impact on the political, economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region. For China, it was also a harsh test

the mentality of cold war and power politics and refrain from mutual suspicion and hostility. Mutual benefit means that all countries should meet the objective needs of social development in the era of globalisation, respect each other's security interests and create conditions for others' security while ensuring their own security interests with a view to achieving common security. Equality means that all countries, big or small, are equal members of the international community and should respect each other, treat each other as equals, refrain from interfering in other countries' internal affairs and promote the democratisation of the international relations. Coordination means that all countries should seek peaceful settlement of their disputes through negotiation and carry out wide ranging and deep-going cooperation on security issues of mutual concern so as to remove any potential dangers and prevent the outbreak of wars and conflicts. See Part III, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

for the new administration led by Hu Jintao. At the beginning, China was faulted for a lack of candour and not being more proactive in addressing the SARS outbreak. This undermined the Chinese government's credibility and damaged its international reputation as a responsible country.¹⁴⁶ Very soon, Beijing reacted strongly regarding SARS outbreak by punishing those officials who held back or distorted information. It cooperated with the World Health Organization (WHO), and released SARS-related information – data once held secret - daily. Amid this new wave of openness, China stunned the world by reporting a submarine accident in early May 2003,¹⁴⁷ which was once a state secrecy. The method of Chinese government chose to deal with such a fatal accident illustrated its efforts to redeem the promise of greater candour and accountability. Thus, the new Chinese administration led by Hu Jintao appeared responsible in the combat against SARS.

In late April, at the China-ASEAN leaders' special meeting on SARS, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao addressed: "All diseases, particularly new infectious diseases of unknown causes, are common enemies to mankind. The cross-boundary spread of SARS poses a common challenge to the world and to

¹⁴⁶ For example, see the following articles: "Battling SARS: China's Silence Costs Lives", *International Herald Tribune*, 3 April 2003; "SARS Crisis Needs Better Handling", *The Nation*, 6 April 2003; "SARS Could Doom China's Leadership role", *Asia Times*, 26 April 2003.

¹⁴⁷ According to the report of official Xinhua News Agency on 2 May 2003, seventy Chinese Navy sailors aboard a conventionally powered Navy submarine were killed in an accident in the water area east of Neichangshan. The No. 361 submarine was taking part in a drilling east of Neichangshan Islands, when mechanical problems caused the accident.

the region in particular.”¹⁴⁸ He briefed the meeting of the measures that China had taken to contain the disease and made several proposals for cooperation between China and ASEAN against SARS.¹⁴⁹ At the end of the special meeting, the leaders from China and ASEAN issued a joint statement, where the two sides claimed to develop and strengthen cooperation against SARS and take coordinated measures to reduce and eliminate its multi-faceted impact on the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁵⁰ China’s sincerity to cooperate with other countries and its efforts in taking effective measures to control the disease won back its international reputation.

Against this backdrop, the tenth ARF meeting was held in Phnom Penh on 18 June 2003. At the meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing noted that the mutually beneficial cooperation was deepening and the sense of seeking common security and development was growing. However, there were some

¹⁴⁸ “China Calls for Close Cooperation with ASEAN in Fight against SARS”, *Renmin Ribao*, 30 April 2003.

¹⁴⁹ These measures were: to establish a reporting mechanism with respect to epidemic and disease prevention and treatment; to carry out exchanges of experience and go for cooperated SARS research; to accelerate the bilateral health cooperation process; to coordinate border exit and entry control measures; and, to do everything possible to minimize the adverse effects of SARS, including the establishment of a China-ASEAN workshop to look into possible counter-measures. For more details, see “Premier Wen Jiabao’s Speech at the Special Meeting on SARS”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, 30 April 2003. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/wjb/zjzg/gjs/gjzzyhy/1136/1138/t24703.htm>

¹⁵⁰ In the statement, the Chinese side pledged RMB 10 million yuan (about 1.2 million U.S. dollars) to launch a special fund in support of China-ASEAN cooperation program on SARS control and prevention and the eradication of its multifarious impacts. Health ministers and other relevant officials of China and ASEAN members were directed to undertake the following measures: exchange information on the latest developments of SARS; appoint a focal/contact point in every country for the routine exchange of information as part of a "hotline" network to facilitate communication in an emergency; carry out cooperative research and training focusing on SARS spread patterns, pathology and care and treatment of severe SARS cases; jointly sponsor a high-level international symposium on SARS control and treatment in China as soon as possible; sponsor a special symposium to assess the political, security, economic and other possible impacts of SARS on this region; take rigorous measures for immigration and customs control to prevent the spread of SARS. For more details, see “ASEAN, China Issue Joint Statement on Fighting SARS”, *Renmin Ribao*, 30 April 2003.

traditional and non-traditional security issues unresolved yet, namely, the Korean Peninsula issue, the threat of terrorism and religious extremist forces, and the outbreak of SARS. One remarkable proposal he made was that the Forum should increase participation by defence officers. This would greatly enhance mutual trust among countries and contribute to regional peace and stability. In this context, he suggested that the ARF could sponsor a “security policy conference” at an appropriate time to be attended mainly by military personnel at an appropriate time.¹⁵¹ Finally, he promised that the new Chinese government led by Hu Jintao would continue to firmly implement the policy of building good-neighbourly relationships and partnerships with neighbouring countries, work closely with other Asia-Pacific countries to create a healthy and stable regional security environment, and make greater contribution to peace and development in this region.¹⁵²

The ARF meeting attached significance to China’s proposals. The Chairman’s Statement noted that the meeting welcomed China’s offer to convene the “security policy conference” and looked forward to China’s submission of a concept paper that was to be circulated to the ARF participants.¹⁵³ China’s cooperation with ASEAN on non-traditional issues was highlighted as well. The

¹⁵¹ “FM Stresses Asian Security Issues in ASEAN Forum”, *Renmin Ribao*, 19 June 2003.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ See Point 45, in “Chairman’s Statement of the Tenth ASEAN Regional Forum”, Phnom Penh, 18 June 2003. <http://www.aseansec.org/14845.htm>

ARF meeting expressed satisfaction with the fruitful discussions on the implementation of the declaration and statements at the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting with China.¹⁵⁴ At this ARF meeting, China proposed to co-chair with Myanmar the meetings of the ISG on CBMs in the next inter-sessional year,¹⁵⁵ and the participating Ministers accepted it.

At the same time, China became more active in cooperation with ASEAN on the issue of the South China Sea. It finally signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea at the sixth ASEAN-China summit on 4 November 2002.¹⁵⁶ This Chinese cooperation was highly appreciated at the tenth ARF meeting, which expected that the Declaration would contribute valuably to the security and stability of the Asia-Pacific and help create the conditions for the peaceful settlement of the disputes.¹⁵⁷ All this demonstrates that China had clearly evolved from its previous hesitance to a proactive participant with confidence.

The Eleventh ARF Meeting

The eleventh ARF meeting was held in Jakarta on 2 July 2004. At the meeting,

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., Point 18.

¹⁵⁵ The meetings of the ISG on CBMs in that inter-sessional year took place in Beijing on 20-22 November 2003 and in Yangon in April 2004.

¹⁵⁶ At this summit, China and ASEAN also released “The Joint Declaration of ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues” on 4 November 2002.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Point 19.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing spoke highly of the positive changes in the security situation of the Asia-Pacific region. He also outlined existing dangers and challenges, such as terrorism and extremism, non-traditional security challenges, and the lingering cold-war mentality. He stressed that multilateral dialogue and cooperation was an effective way to deal with these challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. Attaching great importance to the ARF's constructive role, Li noted that the ARF was an important channel to carry out multilateralism as well as a driving force for countries to enhance common security.¹⁵⁸

At this meeting, China and ASEAN agreed to convene a senior officials' meeting under the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and establish an ASEAN-China working group that would oversee the implementation of the Declaration.¹⁵⁹

The ARF Chairman's Statement gave high regard to China's decision to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in October 2003, and expected that this accession would contribute further to long-term peace and stability in the region.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, the Chairman's Statement

¹⁵⁸ "Chinese FM on Regional Security at ARF Meeting", *Renmin Ribao*, 3 July 2004.

¹⁵⁹ See Point 14, in "Chairman's Statement of the Eleventh ASEAN Regional Forum", Jakarta, 2 July 2004. <http://www.aseansec.org/16245.htm>

¹⁶⁰ The treaty formed a legal basis for relationships between ASEAN members and with countries outside

spoke positively of China's endeavours in maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. In June 2004, China hosted the third round of Six Party Talks, and the participating states also decided to convene the fourth Six Party Talks in September 2004 in Beijing.

It is noteworthy that the ARF ISG on CBMs held its first meeting of the 2003/2004 inter-sessional year in Beijing in November 2003. At the meeting, China proposed to hold ARF seminars on the issues of alternative development and non-traditional security cooperation.¹⁶¹ The meeting also discussed the concept paper that China submitted for its proposed "security policy conference", and agreed to submit it to the ARF SOM in October 2004.¹⁶² The security policy conference was successfully held in Beijing in early November 2004. The fact that China initiated and hosted this Conference is a good illustration of China's evolution from a passive follower to an active player, or even a potential leader in future.

the region. India signed the treaty in October 2003. Japan and Pakistan joined it in July 2004. It was reported that Russia and South Korea were scheduled to sign the treaty in November 2004. See "The Growth and Limits of China's Reach in Southeast Asia", *The Nation*, 4 October 2004.

¹⁶¹ See Point 23, in "Co-Chairs' Summary Report of the Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures (ISG on CBMS)", Beijing, 20-22 November 2003. <http://www.aseansec.org/15991.htm>

¹⁶² Op. cit., Point 29.

Conclusion

This study of China's behaviour at the ARF over the past ten years demonstrated the increasing weight of multilateralism in China's regional strategy. China has become more sophisticated in adjusting itself to and exploiting the changes in the dynamics of the evolving regional strategic structure. For a convenient review, Table 2 lists the most important activities and decisions made by China at each of the ARF meetings since 1994.

Table 2 China's Activities at the ARF Meetings, 1994-2004

<p>1st ARF Meeting 1994</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Participating as a consultative partner ✧ Recognition of security interdependence ✧ Endorsement of the TAC ✧ Reluctance towards stronger institutionalization of the ARF ✧ Insisting that the ARF develop at a pace comfortable to every participant ✧ Vetoed against discussing the Spratly issue at the ARF
<p>2nd ARF Meeting 1995</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Expressing the willingness to discuss the Spratly issue multilaterally for the first time, but only with ASEAN countries, and not within the ARF ✧ Still trying to slow down the ARF's pace towards institutionalization and appearing hesitant in endorsing the Concept Paper ✧ Objection to make CRMs into the Chairman's Statement
<p>3rd ARF Meeting 1996</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Participating as a full dialogue partner ✧ Putting forward CBM suggestions ✧ Introducing its new security concept for the first time ✧ Agreeing to co-sponsor with the Philippines the 1997 ARF meeting on CBMs
<p>4th ARF Meeting 1997</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Accepting the importance of enhancing the role of the Chair but noting the inappropriateness for the Chairman to coordinate outside of the ARF meeting ✧ Agreeing to discuss the competing claims in the South China Sea at the Forum ✧ Signing of the Shanghai Agreement and the agreement on CBMs in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the China-

	India Border Areas was taken as positive examples of confidence building arrangements at the ARF ISG on CBMs. ¹⁶³
5th ARF Meeting 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Emphasizing mutual security ◇ Praised for stabilizing the precarious financial situation in the Asian financial crisis ◇ Praised for its efforts in alleviating the India-Pakistan tension ◇ Praised for its contribution to regional stability through border agreements with Russia, India, and etc.
6th ARF Meeting 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Agreeing in principle to accede to the protocol to the treaty on the SEANWFZ ◇ Willing to discuss about the code of conduct in the South China Sea ◇ Expressing willingness to join the TAC ◇ Agreeing to discuss the PD issue and even conflict resolution
7th ARF Meeting 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Criticizing the U.S. TMD program in East Asia ◇ Willing to adopt a regional code on the conduct of the South China Sea ◇ Praised for its willingness to play a positive role in regional cooperation ◇ Submitting the Annual Security Outlook to the ARF
8th ARF Meeting 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Hosting the Seminar on Defence Conversion Cooperation and the Fourth Meeting of Heads of Defence College, Universities and Institutions in September 2000 ◇ Proposing to establish the ARF Regional Maritime Information Centre ◇ Stating its position on the role of the United States in Asia Paacific
9th ARF Meeting 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Submitting its position paper on the new security concept ◇ Emphasizing the importance of non-traditional security issues ◇ Supporting the ARF's role in counter-terrorism ◇ Supporting to expand defence officers' participation in the ARF
10th ARF Meeting 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Proposing to increase defence officers' participation ◇ Suggestion on security policy conference and preparing a concept paper ◇ Proposing to co-chair with Myanmar the meetings of the ISG on CBMs in the next inter-sessional year ◇ Praised for signing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea
11th ARF Meeting 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Stressing the ARF's importance in carrying out multilateralism and enhancing common security ◇ Praised for acceding to the TAC ◇ Praised for its endeavours in maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula ◇ Hosting the first security policy conference

After the first few ARF meetings, China's fear that the ARF would develop into an anti-China bandwagon had greatly reduced. The structure of the Forum as only a dialogue mechanism and its consensus-based approach to security issues also helped to increase China's confidence. With the ARF, the decisions

¹⁶³ See Point 9, in "Summary Report of the ARF ISG on Confidence Building Measures", Beijing, 6-8 March 1997. <http://www.aseansec.org/3605.htm>

were made in accordance with the ASEAN-motivated principle of voluntary acceptance or consent and consensus. This means that there is no danger of being singled out as a “recalcitrant”.¹⁶⁴ Unlike those multilateral organizations that have binding rules, the ARF has adopted a cooperative security mechanism, which takes dialogue as the main method. This helps to build trust among the participants and move the Forum forward to the comfort of all participants. Accordingly, this approach greatly alleviated China’s initial worry of being singled out for criticism at the Forum. It is interesting to note that the Chinese position on regional multilateral security cooperation like the ARF is similar to that of the United States. Both of them were sceptical of multilateral approach to regional security in the Asia-Pacific region during the immediate post-Cold War period. However, their attitudes softened in the mid-1990s.¹⁶⁵ This is because their initial misgivings about the negative impact of the multilateralism on their respective security interests were assuaged with the development of the ARF and change of regional security situation. This shows that China’s shifting attitude towards the ARF also reflects a general pattern of big powers’ changing position on multilateralism.

Furthermore, with the increasing economic strength, China has become

¹⁶⁴ Foot, “China in the ASEAN Regional Forum”, p. 428.

¹⁶⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of the comparison of Chinese and U.S. attitudes towards the ARF, please see Evelyn Goh and Amitav Acharya, “The ASEAN Regional Forum and US-China Relations”.

confident of taking advantage of international multilateral forum to make known its positions on major international issues to better serve its national interests. For example, China used the venue of the ARF to criticize the U.S.-proposed National Missile Defence (NMD) system and TMD Program.¹⁶⁶ Thus, the ARF, like other international forums, has become a useful means for China to state and explain its views and positions in order to seek understanding from other countries.

¹⁶⁶ Speaking at the 7th ARF Meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan pointed out that the development of NMD and TMD would surely disrupt the global strategic balance and lead to a new round of arms race. See “Chinese FM: China opposes NMD, TMD”, *Renmin Ribao*, 27 July 2000.

Chapter 3

China's Grand Strategy and Multilateral Diplomacy

The previous chapter discusses China's behaviour at the ARF and the shift of its attitude towards the forum. The case of China's evolving ARF policies is a typical example that reflects China's evolving strategy. At the same time, China also has made great progress in participating in many other international political and economic institutions. This chapter introduces China's behaviour in other multilateral institutions on both global and regional levels.

China's Multilateral Activities in Other International Organizations

On the Global Level

At present, the United Nations is the most influential inter-governmental organization (IGO) with the largest international membership of countries. In recent years, the United Nations has ushered in a new era of multilateral diplomacy on various issues.¹⁶⁷ China's shifting attitude towards the United Nations is also a typical case that shows its evolving grand strategy. On 26 October 1971, the UN General Assembly decided to transfer the seat of China in the United Nations from the Republic of China (ROC) to the PRC, which

¹⁶⁷ For details, see Jianwei Wang, "Managing Conflict: Chinese Perspectives on Multilateral Diplomacy and Collective Security", *Asian Perspective*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1998), p. 74.

marked its effective entry into the global community.¹⁶⁸ During the Cold War, ideological conflict separated the world into the communist and the capitalist camps. The United Nations became a battleground for the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Under this situation, for a long time after its entry, China took a passive way by choosing to abstain on the voting on many UN resolutions. For example, of the 101 resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council between 24 November 1971, and 22 December 1976, China posted a thirty-nine percent rate of abstention and non-participation.¹⁶⁹ Up until the mid-1990s, China frequently abstained from voting on the council's resolutions that invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which claimed that military force could be used to enforce peace.

However, since the 1990s, China has gradually changed its “passiveness” in the United Nations. This change was best reflected in the shift of China's attitudes regarding the UN peacekeeping operations. For example, China opposed and refused to get involved in the UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon in 1978,¹⁷⁰ which was among few of the UN peacekeeping missions during that period. Since it became a member of the UN special committee on

¹⁶⁸ When reviewing the history of China's 50-year diplomacy in late 1999, China's Vice-Premier Qian Qichen recognized the moment China's legal rights were restored in the United Nations in 1971 as marking the resumption of his country's status in the international community. See “Chinese Vice-Premier on China's 50-Year Diplomacy”, *People's Daily*, 25 September 1999.

¹⁶⁹ Samuel S. Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 209.

¹⁷⁰ A. Leroy Bennett, *International Organization: Principles and Issues* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), p. 100.

Peacekeeping in 1988,¹⁷¹ it had changed its position. In 1990, China, for the first time, dispatched military observers to take part in the UN Truce Supervisory Organization,¹⁷² followed by its active participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Since the early 1990s, China has dispatched over 1,000 personnel of military observers, engineering troops and civil police to take part in twelve UN peacekeeping operations.¹⁷³ This shift in China's attitude followed the adjustment of its foreign policy. In 1986, Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang noted for the first time in his government work report that multilateral diplomacy was an integral part of China's foreign policy.¹⁷⁴ China had since become more active in the UN multilateral activities. Now, with a booming economy and more experience within international institutions, China is more confident in multilateralism.

In tandem with this confidence, China's participation in both international nuclear non-proliferation and arms control organizations has also undergone

¹⁷¹ "China and the Peace-Keeping Actions of the UN", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, 15 November 2000. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zjzg/gjs/gjzzyhy/2594/2595/t15138.htm>

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ These actions include the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), UN Special Mission in Afghanistan (UNSMA), UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), and UN Organization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). See "Appendix IV Participation in UN Peace-keeping Operations", in *White Papers on National Defence in 2002*. <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/features/ndpaper2002/app4.html>

¹⁷⁴ Han Lianhong (et al.), *Dangdai Zhongguo Waijiao* [Contemporary China's Diplomacy] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1987), p. 384.

changes.¹⁷⁵ China did not join any arms control and non-proliferation treaties until the 1990s.¹⁷⁶ Since then, it also joined such UN organizations as the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in 1996, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in 1997, the Zangger Committee¹⁷⁷ in 1997, and the NSG in 2004. China has also made a commitment to adhere to the basic tenets of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Furthermore, before 1983, China submitted no papers on disarmament to the UN Disarmament Commission in New York. But by 1994, it has submitted seventeen such papers.¹⁷⁸ Meanwhile, it also submitted working papers to the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.¹⁷⁹ Thus, China has by now participated actively in all the main UN arms control and non-proliferation organizations.

¹⁷⁵ China opposed those treaties of nuclear non-proliferation signed by the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom in the early 1960s and 1970s. China condemned those treaties as a tool of nuclear states to set unfair limitations for other countries to develop nuclear weapons. See Qiao Weibing, "Lengzhan Hou Zhongguo Yu Guoji Jizhi De Hudong Guanxi" [The Interaction of China and International Mechanisms after the Cold War], *Pacific Journal* (Chinese), Issue 4 (2001), p. 16.

¹⁷⁶ China signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1992, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996, the Protocol Additional to the Agreement between China and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Application of Safeguards in 1998, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in 1993. For more detailed information, see "Relevant Multilateral Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation Treaties (1952-2004)", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, 30 June 2004. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjw/zjzj/jks/tyylb/t141338.htm>

¹⁷⁷ The purpose of the Zangger Committee, also known as the "NPT Exporters Committee", is to serve as the "interpreter" of NPT's Article III, paragraph 2, and harmonize the interpretation of nuclear export control policies for NPT Parties. The Zangger Committee maintains a Trigger List (triggering safeguards as a condition of supply) of nuclear-related strategic goods to assist NPT Parties in identifying equipment and materials subject to export controls. The Committee is informal and that its decisions are not legally binding upon its members. The relative informality of the Committee has enabled it to take the lead on certain nonproliferation issues that would be more difficult to resolve in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). For more details about the Zangger Committee, see <http://www.zanggercommittee.org/Zangger/default.htm>

¹⁷⁸ Alastair Iain Johnston and Paul Evans, "China's Engagement with Multilateral Security Institutions", in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (eds.), *Engaging China: the Management of an Emerging Power* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 238.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

In the area of international economic organizations, China has proceeded much further. Since the late 1970s, with its open-door policy and market-oriented reforms, China has consistently sought to benefit from participating in international economic organizations. It has joined all the major international economic institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In particular, the decision by Chinese leaders to accept some stringent requirements for its entry into the WTO represented a significant milestone in China's integration into the international economic system. By any measure, its WTO entry can be ranked as one of the most important developments in China since its reform began in the late 1970s. For example, on the issue of the WTO required market access, China would slash both tariff and non-tariff barriers to imports of agricultural and industrial goods. With respect to exports, the WTO required China to eliminate its various subsidy programs. Other WTO requirements included ratcheting-up protection for intellectual property rights, increased availability of trading rights to foreign companies, and a dramatic opening to foreign investment of critical service sectors such as

telecommunications, banking, insurance, securities, and distribution.¹⁸⁰ These requirements, with others as outlined in China's accession protocol, would place extremely high pressure on China's economic development. However, these challenges did not alter China's strong commitment to pursuing deeper integration into the world economy. Chinese leaders are aware of the negative aspects of the economic globalisation, but they are confident that China will benefit more from participating than refusing this globalisation. China's determination to join the WTO reflected this Chinese confidence. Chinese President Jiang Zemin pointed out: "Joining the TWO is a strategic decision made by the Chinese government under the situation of economic globalisation; it is identical with China's objective of reform, opening up and establishing a socialist market economic structure."¹⁸¹ In this regard, China has gone further in international multilateral economic cooperation than in the security domain.

By 2000, China joined over fifty IGOs and 1,275 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs),¹⁸² while in 1966, it was a member of only one IGO and 58 NGOs.¹⁸³ The expansion of China's membership in

¹⁸⁰ For more details on China's WTO commitments, see *China in the World Economy: An OECD Economic and Statistical Survey* (London: Kogan Page, 2003), Annex I.

¹⁸¹ See "Seize Opportunity, Meet Challenge, and Participate in Economic Globalisation", *Renmin Ribao*, 19 December 2001.

¹⁸² Ann Kent, "China's Participation in International Organisations", in Yongjin Zhang and Greg Austin (eds.), *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2001), p. 133.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

international institutions was strong evidence of China's commitment to international multilateralism.

On the Regional Level

For a long time, China was regarded as “a regional power without a regional policy”.¹⁸⁴ Its relations with almost all its neighbours before the 1980s were tenuous at best. It was partly due to the bipolar rivalry during the Cold War, partly due to China's historical complacency, as it took for granted its place at the centre of Asia's political order. At that time, China was trying to project its diplomatic influence globally and paid inadequate attention to its peripheral interests and regional affairs. This global-oriented diplomacy contradicted with China's “real” influential capacity as “more than merely a regional actor, but still less than a global power”.¹⁸⁵ And this diplomatic oversight had led to serious consequences, which kept China in constant tensions with its neighbouring countries.

Since the 1980s, this situation has changed and China has gradually improved the relations with its neighbouring countries. With the open-door policy and market-oriented reforms, Chinese leaders began to rethink China's role in the

¹⁸⁴ Samuel S. Kim, *China In and Out of the Changing World Order* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 84.

¹⁸⁵ Steven I. Levine, “China in Asia: The PRC as a Regional Power”, in Harry Harding (ed.), *China's Foreign Relations in the 1980s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 107.

world and decided on a policy that would help to create a regional environment conducive to domestic modernization and national security. China's new policy of "good neighbourliness" enabled it to improve its relations with almost all the neighbouring countries. While the fact that other Asian governments shared similar grounds with China in the area of human rights and sympathized with China's struggle against pressures from the West contributed to better relations, a more critical factor for China's reorientation towards a more neighbourly policy was the diplomatic isolation imposed on China by Western nations after the Tiananmen incident of 1989. In other words, the isolation from the West made China focus on improving its relations with neighbouring countries.

In Asia-Pacific, ASEAN was a very important regional organization with which China has developed close links. By the early 1990s, China had normalized and established diplomatic relations with all ASEAN countries. In 1991, China began the dialogue with ASEAN as a consultative partner and since then, China's Foreign Minister attended ASEAN's foreign ministerial meeting every year. Over the years, China has established a multi-layer framework of dialogues with ASEAN, which includes several parallel mechanisms: the ARF, the PMC, the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting, the ASEAN-China

SOM Consultations, the ASEAN-China Business Council Meeting, and the ASEAN- Beijing Committee.¹⁸⁶

The topics covered by the China-ASEAN dialogue ranged from economic issues to security affairs. The centrepiece of the future China-ASEAN economic links is likely to be the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (FTA). In November 2002, the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation between ASEAN and China was signed, setting a ten-year timeframe for the establishment of the FTA.¹⁸⁷ China has also worked closely with ASEAN at APEC “to present a common line and resist what is seen as pressure from the APEC’s Western members (led by the United States) for speedy and inappropriate liberalization of national economies and the dismantling of trade barriers”.¹⁸⁸

In the area of security issues, China and ASEAN issued the Joint Declaration on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues at the Sixth ASEAN-China Summit in November 2002.¹⁸⁹ This expanded security cooperation between two sides. At the ARF, China has consistently reaffirmed

¹⁸⁶ “ASEAN-China Dialogue”, ASEAN Secretariat. <http://www.aseansec.org/5874.htm>

¹⁸⁷ “Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-Operation Between the Association of South East Asian Nations and the People’s Republic of China”, Phnom Penh, 4 November 2002. <http://www.aseansec.org/13196.htm>

¹⁸⁸ Jim Rolfe, “Welcome in Asia: China’s Multilateral Presence”, in Satu Limaye (ed.), *Special Assessment: Asia’s China Debate* (Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, 2003), p. 4.

¹⁸⁹ “Joint Declaration of ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues”, Phnom Penh, 4 November 2002. <http://www.aseansec.org/13185.htm>

ASEAN as being in the driver's seat. From the very beginning of the ARF, China and ASEAN share the same position that the ARF should proceed at a pace acceptable to every participant. They also share the expectations that the ARF should play a balancing role in regional security environment of Asia Pacific. Even on the sensitive issue of the South China Sea, China changed its attitude from refusing to discuss it with the ASEAN grouping to agreeing to talk about it at the annual dialogue between China and ASEAN since 1997. Although China does not intend to give up its sovereignty in the South China Sea, it does not want to see any eruption of tension with ASEAN. China needs a peaceful and stable environment for its domestic economic development. It also needs cooperation and support of ASEAN on many international occasions, such as on the issues of human rights and trade. Moreover, when compared to the Taiwan problem, the issue of the South China Sea is less important to China. To win strong support from ASEAN on the Taiwan issue, China has taken a more reconciliatory strategy in the South China Sea. It is true that ASEAN countries still have suspicions on China's position in the South China Sea, but the opportunities for economic and political cooperation with China have largely relieved their worries. Moreover, in ASEAN's view, the recent Chinese approach in multilateral institutions is consistent to the so-called ASEAN's "Gulliver Strategy", which is intended to enmesh China in regional economic

and security organizations in order to persuade China to conform to the norms that would support regional stability.¹⁹⁰

In Central Asia, it seems that China has fostered a more institutionalised relationship with the regional countries than that with the ASEAN states. In 1996, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan joined together to set up the Shanghai Five. In 2001, on the basis of the Shanghai Five mechanism, the SCO (including previous five members plus Uzbekistan) was formally established. The SCO was the first multilateral group in the region. China played a central role on the institutionalisation of this multilateral group.¹⁹¹ For China, the SCO has helped to extend its influence through a formal channel to the Central Asia and maintain stability of its borders. Thus it will help to balance the U.S. influence in the region. China also hopes to get support from these countries in Central Asia to contain separatist movement in China's Xinjiang. Meanwhile, the SCO mechanism would also help China's access to the rich oil resources in Central Asia. For the Central Asian countries, China's multilateral approach to the region is welcome because it would enhance their

¹⁹⁰ Robert Sutter, "China's Recent Approach to Asia: Seeking Long Term Gains", *NBR Analysis*, vol. 13, no. 1, p. 23. http://www.nbr.org/publications/analysis/vol13no1/essay_Sutter.html

¹⁹¹ China's leaders and foreign ministers emphasized the importance and acceleration of organizational building in several speeches. For example, see President Jiang Zeming's speech at the SCO St. Petersburg Summit in 2002, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/wjb/zzjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/1128/1130/t4510.htm>; President Hu Jintao's speech at the SCO Moscow Summit in 2003, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/wjb/zzjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/1128/1130/t24657.htm>; Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan's speech at the SCO Foreign Minister's Conference in 2002, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/wjb/zzjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/1128/1130/t4512.htm>; Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing's speech at the SCO Foreign Minister's Conference in 2003, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/gjhdq/dqzzywt/2633/2634/2636/t22822.htm>.

own security and also provide great economic opportunities for their development. After all, most of the Central Asian countries are still wary of China's increasing power. They also intend to apply the Gulliver Strategy as ASEAN does.

In Northeast Asia, China's multilateral diplomacy focuses on the Korean issue. Since the sudden death of its leader Kim Il Sung in 1994, North Korea faces political uncertainties, declining economic conditions, and growing international pressures. This situation had increased China's concern on the future stability of North Korea and the whole Korean Peninsula.

For a long time, China had always insisted that the Korean conflict should be bilaterally settled, between the two Koreas as well as between North Korea and the United States. In April 1997, the U.S. President Bill Clinton and South Korea's President Kim Young Sam proposed a four-party meeting, including the two Koreas, the United States and China, to replace the settlement that ended the Korean War with a formal peace treaty. However, for a moment China did not want to be involved directly in this multiparty approach so it appeared lukewarm to the idea. Another reason for China's reluctance to get involved was that the United States and South Korea failed to consult China in the initial discussion on the proposal. It was reported that China made the arrangement for the two

Koreas to hold a secret bilateral meeting in Beijing after the U.S.-South Korea proposal was put on the table.

However, by July 1997, China had changed its position and began to support the multiparty talks. The Chinese foreign ministry announced that both as a signatory of the Korean armistice agreement and a neighbouring country, China would agree to participate in the quadrilateral talks and play a constructive role in the process of establishing a peace mechanism.¹⁹²

In early October 2002, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly informed North Korean officials that the United States was aware that North Korea had a program underway to enrich uranium for use in nuclear weapons.¹⁹³ North Korea denied this allegation at first but later it confirmed the U.S. claim and declared the Agreed Framework¹⁹⁴ nullified. Beijing realised that China should engage more actively to maintain a stable and peaceful Korean Peninsula for its own national interests. China doesn't want to be dragged into a direct

¹⁹² "Foreign Ministry News Briefings", *Beijing Review*, 28 July - 3 August 1997, p. 8.

¹⁹³ "Nuclear Weapons Program", Federation of American Scientists, 9 June 2003.

<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/dprk/nuke/>

¹⁹⁴ The Agreed Framework was signed by the United States and North Korea on 21 October 1994. It ended an 18-month crisis during which North Korea announced its intention to withdraw from NPT, under which North Korea committed not to develop nuclear weapons. The Agreed Framework called upon North Korea to freeze operation and construction of nuclear reactors suspected of being part of a covert nuclear weapons program in exchange for two proliferation-resistant nuclear power reactors. The agreement also called upon the United States to supply North Korea with fuel oil pending construction of the reactors. An international consortium called the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was formed to implement the agreement. For the full-text of the agreement, see "Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea", Geneva, 21 October 1994. <http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/AgreedFramework.pdf>

confrontation with the United States over North Korea. At the same time, China believes that its interests are best served by maintaining good relations with the two Koreas. It uses economic aid and political exchanges to maintain its relations with North Korea, while working closely with South Korea and the United States in seeking a peaceful resolution.¹⁹⁵ Also, China attempts to bring all the relevant parties together to discuss the issue in search for a diplomatic solution. Thus in April 2003, with the Chinese initiative, North Korea and the United States sat down for a trilateral meeting in Beijing. Although the meeting did not produce substantive results, it marked a good start for solving the nuclear issue through dialogue. In August 2003, China managed to bring about a six-party talk with the two Koreas, the United States, Japan and Russia. China has received international praise for activating the multiparty talks and its efforts in pushing forward the multiparty talks were welcome in the region. For example, the United States has stressed China's importance in the six-party talks and expressed the hope that China would keep playing an essential role in the process.¹⁹⁶ Other parties of the talk also highly complimented the important role of China in the talks, expressing thanks to China for its thoughtful arrangements for the parties.¹⁹⁷ To a certain extent, China's success in promoting multiparty

¹⁹⁵ Sutter, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁹⁶ It was noted in the interview with the U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell in Bangkok. See "U.S. Exploring Multilateral Security Assurances for N. Korea", Embassy of the United States, Japan, 21 October 2003. <http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20031021b1.html>

¹⁹⁷ "The Third Round of the Beijing Six-Party Talks Concluded", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, 26 June 2004. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/chlft/t141647.htm>

talks on the Korean issue helped to enhance its pivot position in security affairs of Northeast Asia.

China has actively participated not only in regional governmental organizations, but also in non-governmental and track-two processes, for instance, its active participation in the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP)¹⁹⁸. The CSCAP was described at the time of its formation as the most ambitious proposal for a regularised, focused and inclusive non-governmental process on Asia Pacific security matters, and as one of the most important developments in regional security since the end of the Cold War. Yet, from 1993 to 1994, China did not join the CSCAP because of Beijing's concern about the seat of Taiwan in the institution. Through two-year negotiations, China entered the CSCAP in December 1996 on a conditional basis.¹⁹⁹ This underscored China's commitment to regional security cooperation. After its entry, China attended every meeting of the steering committee and five working groups. It also co-chaired the Working Group on Comprehensive and Cooperative Security with Malaysia and New Zealand. The sincerity and

¹⁹⁸ The CSCAP was established on 8 June 1993. Its primary mechanism includes five working groups, which are concerned with maritime cooperation, the enhancement of security cooperation in the North Pacific/Northeast Asia, confidence and security-building measures, cooperative and comprehensive security, and transnational crime. <http://www.cscap.org/groups.htm>

¹⁹⁹ The formula that was eventually concluded permitted the participation of individual experts from Taiwan in working group meetings but no formal Taiwanese membership in the Steering Committee or annual meetings. It was also agreed that relations across the Straits of Taiwan would not be part of the CSCAP agenda, though several member committees noted that any military conflict across the Straits would have major regional repercussions and thus could not be ruled out as a future issue. Johnston and Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

sophistication with which China has engaged the regional mechanism has been clearly observed.²⁰⁰ In the CSCAP, the Chinese presence has raised the level of discussion. China has been increasingly involved in regional security mechanisms.

China's Security Objectives in the Asia-Pacific Region

China's multilateral activities, either on global or regional level, are guided within the framework of its grand strategy,²⁰¹ which is designed to achieve the status of a true great power that would influence, rather than simply respond to, the international system. At the moment, China is not yet a global power although it has gained rapid economic development and increased its national capabilities. The Asia-Pacific region is still the focus of China's security concerns. Therefore, for further understanding of its multilateral diplomacy, it is necessary to identify China's key security objectives and interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

As discussed above, China has begun to reassess its policy approaches since

²⁰⁰ According to Alastair Iain Johnston's study, in many instances, Chinese participants are better prepared and more attuned to the pattern of the discussion than participants from other countries, including the United States. Ibid., p. 263.

²⁰¹ Here, the term "grand strategy" refers to a political-military-economic means-ends chain that integrates the military and nonmilitary instruments employed by a state to achieve a broadly defined goal of national security. For this broad understanding of grand strategy, see Paul Kennedy, "Grand Strategy in War and Peace: towards a Broader Definition", in Paul Kennedy (ed.), *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (eds.), *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993); Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

the 1990s. Based on the adjusted evaluation of its national power and position in the world, China has put more emphasis on building its relations with the neighbouring countries. As a regional power, China's security strategy in the Asia Pacific generally focuses on the following objectives:

- To safeguard national unity and territorial integrity;
- To maintain a stable and peaceful international situation in its periphery and establish good relations with its neighbouring countries;
- To secure the foreign policy environment at a time of domestic preoccupation; and
- To build up a good international reputation as a responsible power.

To fulfil these strategic goals, China believes that a regional security regime to advance mutual understanding and trust is helpful to ensure regional political stability and economic development. This is a very important reason behind China's gradual involvement in developing the regional security regime, such as the ARF. But China insists that there should be some principles for the regional mechanism to adhere to, namely:²⁰²

²⁰² Zhu Majie, "China and Asia-Pacific Security Building in the New Century", in David W. Lovell (ed.), *Asia-Pacific Security: Policy Challenges* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 67.

- The mechanism must be based on the Five Peaceful Co-existence Principles, and no country should seek regional hegemony;
- Disputes between countries must be solved peacefully, and if an immediate solution is not available, relevant disputes could be shelved and normal exchanges between countries should be maintained;
- Armament must be maintained at the level that is necessary for a country's proper defence; and
- All the nuclear powers must take the obligation of not using nuclear weapons first and not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries.

China's Security Concerns vis-à-vis the United States and Japan

Behind China's growing support for multilateral cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, there is a constant worry about the influence of the United States in the region, in particular the U.S. bilateral alliances and Japan's pursuit of political and military power in its national policy.

The United States has forward deployments in the Asia-Pacific region, maintains formal security treaties with Japan and South Korea, and is the

primary supplier of weapons to Taiwan. To ensure a constructive regional security environment, it is important for China to well manage its relations with the United States, which is the only superpower in the post-Cold War era. The potential threat from a hostile United States tops the list of China's security concerns. Specifically, it is concerned about the expansion and strengthening of the U.S. alliances and their intervention. Chinese officials believe that they must be on guard to counter actions by the United States and its expanded alliances that are detrimental to Chinese interests, notably regarding Taiwan.²⁰³ The Taiwan problem has been the most important and sensitive issue between China and the United States. The United States actually holds an ambiguous attitude on the "One China Principle". It maintains a de-facto defence relationship with Taiwan through the provisions of its 1979 Taiwan Relations Act. In the Chinese eyes, the United States acquiesces to, or even actively supports, Taiwan's effort for greater international space²⁰⁴ and de jure independence. When China conducted missile tests during 1995-96 in the hope of weakening the separatist sentiment on Taiwan, the United States dispatched two aircraft carrier battle groups to the area around Taiwan. This told Beijing of a possible scenario of armed conflict in the Straits involving the United States.²⁰⁵ On the issue of the

²⁰³ Sutter, op. cit., p. 17.

²⁰⁴ Gary Klintworth and Murray McLean, "China and the United States: Neither Friends nor Enemies", in Stuart Harris and Gary Klintworth (eds.), *China as a Great Power: Myths, Realities and Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Melbourne: Longman Australia Pty Ltd, 1995), p. 73.

²⁰⁵ Avery Goldstein, "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy: A Rising Power's Emerging Choice", *The China Quarterly*, no. 168, 2001, p. 840.

TMD system, Beijing is concerned about its effect for eventually neutralizing China's short to mid-range ballistic missiles, and the prospect of the United States providing TMD to Taiwan. China insists: "China cannot commit itself to renouncing the use of force as a final resort to halt the independence of Taiwan and foreign intervention into Taiwan."²⁰⁶ It believes that force is also the guarantee that the Taiwan issue might be resolved peacefully. In the Chinese view, if the United States provides TMD to Taiwan, it will lead some separatists on Taiwan to feel protected and encourage them to move further towards independence.

While China views the United States as the most pressing challenge to China's national security,²⁰⁷ it also regards Japan as its most likely long-term challenge, at least in the Asia-Pacific region. The history of Japan's invasion of China left a deep impression on the relationship between the two countries. Japan's attitude towards its wartime aggression, for example, downplaying atrocities of the Nanjing Massacre and revising history textbooks in the public schools, has intensified China's aversion to Japan. There is an ancient Chinese saying: *Qianshi Buwang, Houshi Zhishi*, which means past experience is a guide

²⁰⁶ Xia Liping, "China: A Responsible Great Power", *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 10, no. 26 (2001), p. 24. For China's official points, see *White Paper on Taiwan Issue: The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*, the Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office of the State Council, 2000. <http://www.gwytb.gov.cn:8088/detail.asp?table=WhitePaper&title=White%20Papers%20On%20Taiwan%20Issue&id=4>

²⁰⁷ William T. Tow, *Asia-Pacific Strategic Relations: Seeking Convergent Security* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 23.

for the future. But Japan tries to deny its aggression and war atrocities. China is then worried about the revival of Japanese militarism as Japan's impressionistic younger generation, who does not know the invasion history, would be more susceptible to hawkish elites' plans to increase military power. At the same time, China is also doubtful of Japan's commitment to a peaceful foreign policy and the U.S.-Japanese alliance. Since the announcement of the revised guidelines for the U.S.-Japan security relationship in 1996, China has been worried of the growing possibility that this alliance will broaden Japan's strategic role in East Asia.²⁰⁸ In particular, China takes issue with the reference in the guidelines that the scope of the alliance covers "situations in areas surrounding Japan" and that "the concept, situations in areas surrounding Japan, is not geographic but situational."²⁰⁹ In China's reading, it hinted that Taiwan and its surrounding waters might be included. So China immediately sought for Japan's clarification on this point. But Japan pointedly refrained from providing sufficiently explicit assurances,²¹⁰ which accentuated China's worry regarding the potential that the alliance would turn out to be a tool for defending an independent or permanently separated Taiwan. Thus, it is clear to Beijing that one purpose of the U.S.-Japan alliance is to constrain China's power in the region. To counter this, China has endeavoured to weaken this alliance by, for example, emphasizing the

²⁰⁸ Sutter, op. cit., p. 34.

²⁰⁹ "The Guidelines for Japan-US Defence Cooperation", Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/guideline2.html>

²¹⁰ "Chi Haotian, Vice-Chairman of Chinese Central Military Commission and Defence Minister, Talks with His Japanese Counterpart", *Renmin Ribao*, 5 February 1998.

multilateral institutions in the region such as the ARF, where the United States does not have the leadership.

However, it should be pointed out that China does not intend to push the United States out of Asia Pacific. On the one hand, China does not have the capacity to confront the United States. On the other, at least at present, there is no such a need. China still recognizes the positive role of the American military presence in the region, especially its function as a “bottle cap” over Japanese power.²¹¹ In this regard, China’s multilateral diplomacy is not intended to go into conflict with the United States, but to secure for itself a better bargaining position vis-à-vis the United States.

²¹¹ For detailed discussions, see Alastair Iain Johnston, “China’s International Relations: the Political and Security Dimensions”, in Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *The International Relations of Northeast Asia* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004).

Conclusion

China's Security Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region

This thesis explores China's behaviours at the ARF to illustrate its evolving regional security strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. Behavioural changes reflect perceptual adjustments. The change of China's attitude towards the ARF and international and regional multilateralism is observed in this thesis.

As the previous chapters pointed out, though China participated in multilateral diplomacy in the early post-Cold War period, its behaviours in international institutions showed its reluctance. As one scholar noted, China's participation in multilateral regimes at that time was "mainly in order to symbolize the PRC's formal status as a country that must be included when deliberating matters of regional or global importance".²¹² But since the mid-1990s, China changed its attitude towards multilateral institutions. China no longer bears "the aloof posture of an outsider looking in and sizing up the game",²¹³ but gradually has become an active player in international organizations and regimes. The case of China's participation in the ARF represents such a change.

²¹² Goldstein, "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy", p. 842.

²¹³ Kent, "China's Participation in International Organisations", p. 136.

As Chapter 1 describes, the end of the Cold War meant the collapse of the bipolar framework and brought about the rise of multilateralism as a global phenomenon. The Asia-Pacific region was no exception. Moreover, the security uncertainties in the region after the Cold War called for building a pan-regional regime to maintain the regional security order. Under this situation, the ARF was established as a multilateral security institution with the largest membership in the Asia-Pacific region.

For the creation of the ARF, there were various calculations of security interests among its member states. At the driver's seat, ASEAN, the group of small powers, hoped to maintain its post-Cold War relevance in a new regional security structure and engage major powers in a multilateral framework to maintain a stable and peaceful regional environment after the Cold War. The United States took such a multilateral forum as a supplement to its bilateral alliance networks in the Asia-Pacific region and the ARF "offered the opportunity to broaden the U.S. hegemonic system by incorporating former adversaries such as China and Russia".²¹⁴ For Japan, the ARF was a vehicle to increase its regional influence and play some important role in promoting a new

²¹⁴ G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, "Conclusion: The United States and Stability in East Asia", in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno (eds.), *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 435.

security order while maintaining the existing security arrangements including the U.S.-Japan alliance.

ASEAN countries kept a cautious attitude towards China's rise. Their strategy was to entangle China into institutional checks-and-balances and persuade it to conform to international norms and rules, which would help regional stability. Another motivation was to gain an advantageous position in bargaining with China on the issue of the South China Sea. Indeed, China's later concession on the South China Sea could be regarded as a partial success of ASEAN's strategy at the ARF. Similarly, the United States and Japan both had the intention to engage China within a multilateral security framework. More than that, Washington took the ARF as "an additional testing ground for theories and expectations of socialization regarding the engagement of China",²¹⁵ a result of its strategic indecision on how to deal with China in the post-Cold War setting.

China was aware of other states' considerations of the strategic engagement. At first, it was concerned that the ARF would be used to internationalise the Taiwan issue and the South China Sea issue, which China preferred to manage bilaterally. So China initially appeared lukewarm towards

²¹⁵ Evelyn Goh and Amitav Acharya, "The ASEAN Regional Forum and US-China Relations", p. 8.

the formation and development of the ARF. As discussed in Chapter 2, during the period of the first and second ARF meetings, China's participation could be described as a mix of doubt, reluctance and defensiveness. However, China did not want to be excluded from regional security discussions, and the Forum also provided a good opportunity for China to express its peaceful intentions and dispel the region's suspicion regarding China's ambition for hegemonism. Moreover, the ARF operated on "the ASEAN-inspired principles of consensus rather than majoritarianism",²¹⁶ and a step-by-step incrementalism that proceeds at a pace acceptable to all participants, including China. So China attended the ARF, out of the defensive purpose of reiterating its official positions. Nevertheless, since 1996, China has become more active at the ARF. It was assured that the ARF would not develop into an anti-China bandwagon. But more importantly, with its economic success and greater familiarity with multilateral regimes, China has become confident in dealing with the ARF.

As Chapter 3 describes, similar changes also took place in China's participation and involvement in other multilateral organizations besides the ARF. In the United Nations, China's gradual involvement in peacekeeping operations since the mid-1990s reflected this change. During the same period, the quantity and quality of China's participation in the international nuclear non-

²¹⁶ Johnston and Evans, "China's Engagement with Multilateral Security Institutions", p. 257.

proliferation and arms control organizations also increased greatly. Regarding the interaction with multilateral economic institutions, China went much further than in the security area. China's entry into the WTO was a remarkable achievement in its history of incorporation into the global economic system. "To become a respectable member in the system, to enjoy equal trading treatment, and to play a part in the making of trade regulations",²¹⁷ were interpreted as China's major motives for accessing into the WTO. Actually, deeper involvement in economic interdependence has greatly influenced China's decision for a deeper involvement in multilateral security regimes.

Apart from the ARF, China also participated in many other multilateral regimes in the Asia-Pacific region. China's multilateral diplomacy in Southeast Asia, Central Asia and even Northeast Asia has made great progress. Although there exist some competition and conflict between China and ASEAN, their cooperation in many economic and security areas is still moving forward. China's endeavours in the formation and development of the SCO have confirmed its constructive role in regional cooperation. In Northeast Asia, China has contributed in bringing the relevant parties to sit together to discuss the security situation in the Korean Peninsular.

²¹⁷ Gong Wen and Zhang Xiangceng, "Zhongguo Jiaru Shimao Zuzhi Dashi Shuping" [Comment on General Trend of China's Entry into WTO], *Renmin Ribao*, 7 May 1999.

All these changes reflected an adjustment in China's grand security strategy. China has learned that bilateral diplomacy is not the only way for its national interests and multilateralism does not necessarily hurt China's interest. Being involved in rule-setting processes, China could exert its influence on the development of multilateral institutions for its own interests. This is better than being excluded and left without a venue and chance to slope the opinions. Moreover, China is conscious of the other states', especially its neighbours', concern over its rapid rise. Thus, joining in the regional community and discussing issues covering economic and security areas have been part of China's effort to alleviate their worries. China has long argued that a peaceful and stable environment was crucial to sustain its economic growth, which remains the top priority. Being a responsible power is the image that China seeks for itself in the international community.

To analyse China's security concerns, the factors of the United States and Japan cannot be neglected. It is believed that one of the aims of the U.S.-Japanese alliance is to constrain China, especially targeted at the Taiwan issue. As a consequence, China's proactive behaviour in multilateral regimes could be partly understood as a response to the possibility of negative influences of the U.S. bilateral alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. However, it does not mean that China intends to build an enduring multilateral coalition to counter the U.S.

alliances. Although the belief in the inevitability of multipolarity has been discussed frequently in Chinese official documents and research papers, China still acknowledges, at least inwardly, that the United States will stay as the sole global hegemonic power for decades to come.²¹⁸ As one scholar argued, “China has neither the capability nor the desire to take the lead in formulating such a coalition.”²¹⁹ One of its intentions behind multilateral diplomacy may be to set itself in a better position in negotiating with the United States.

Theoretical Applications in China’s Security Strategy

After examining the changes in China’s external behaviours and regional security strategy, this study observes that no existing theoretical framework can fully explain these changes. This author takes the view that realist perspectives are deeply embedded in traditional Chinese strategic culture,²²⁰ which has a profoundly influence in today’s Chinese strategic thinking. China’s concerns about the relations with the United States and Japan are also consistent with realist views of concepts such as the balance of power and security dilemma.

However, realism cannot convincingly explain China’s support of multilateral

²¹⁸ For a detailed discussion from Chinese views, see Men Honghua, “Lengzhan Hou Meiguo Da Zhanlue De Zhengming Jiqi Yiyi” [The Debate on post-Cold War US Grand Strategy and Its implications], in Hu Angang and Men Honghua (eds.), *Jiedu Meiguo Da Zhanlue [Decoding US Grand Strategy]* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 2003), pp. 3-22.

²¹⁹ Wang Jisi, *China’s Changing Role in Asia* (Occasional Papers of the Atlantic Council, January 2004), p. 15. http://www.acus.org/Publications/occasionalpapers/Asia/WangJisi_Jan_04.pdf

²²⁰ For an in-depth discussion, see Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995).

approaches to resolve Asia-Pacific security issues. Nor can it explain why China takes economy as its priority and is willing to share power with the United States. Taking liberalism into account, it is true that global economic interdependence has inevitably influenced China's worldview, and its active participation in multilateral organizations could be rationalized from the liberalist angle. However, liberalism proves inadequate in describing the security relations among the major powers in the Asia-Pacific region and consequently China's considerations in dealing with the United States and Japan.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to construct a new theory to provide a perfect answer to the changes in China's security thinking. However, it is suggested that it would be useful to include the element of cultural differentiation in exploring China's case. Chinese thinking stems from its own traditional culture that differs from the Western civilization. The current mainstream international relations theories are mainly based on the Western experiences, and a realist perspective has provided a part, but not a whole, of the explanation of China's case. Despite the changes in its external behaviours in the multilateral organizations, the core of China's predominant paradigm is still national interest that remains unchanged. China has a long history and unique traditional culture. The Confucianism, which has dominated Chinese thinking on political and social life for the past two thousand years, continues to influence

China's current worldview and strategic thinking. Maybe it will be more appropriate to delineate China's security strategy in a modified realist framework with Chinese characteristics, and it may be called "Chinese realism".

China's Future Role in the ARF and the Asia-Pacific Region

Based on the observations of the evolution of China's involvement in the ARF over the years, this author is of the view that China hopes to steer the ARF in a way suited to its own pace and wishes, and this situation is likely to continue to characterize the China-ARF relationship in the coming decades. As long as China and ASEAN concur on the principle of "*Qitong Cunyi*" [seeking common ground while reserving differences] in the Asia-Pacific region, there is no reason to believe that China will cease its support for the multilateral mechanism whereby ASEAN plays the leading role. Cautiously, but steadily, China is moving forward as a more active player in the multilateral regimes, and there is no evidence that China will not continue along this path.

Finally, the thesis emphasizes that, like most countries, China seeks to maximize its interests by participating in international organizations and has demonstrated its willingness to accept the costs as well as the benefits of participation and to assume some responsibility within the international system.

But in the process of its integration into the international system, China still takes the Asia-Pacific region as its focus. To keep the region peaceful and stable is beneficial for China, and this should continue to be an important objective of its security strategy. It is important for China to maintain its good neighbourliness policy and play a constructive role in the regional security cooperation in order to become a truly responsible great power.

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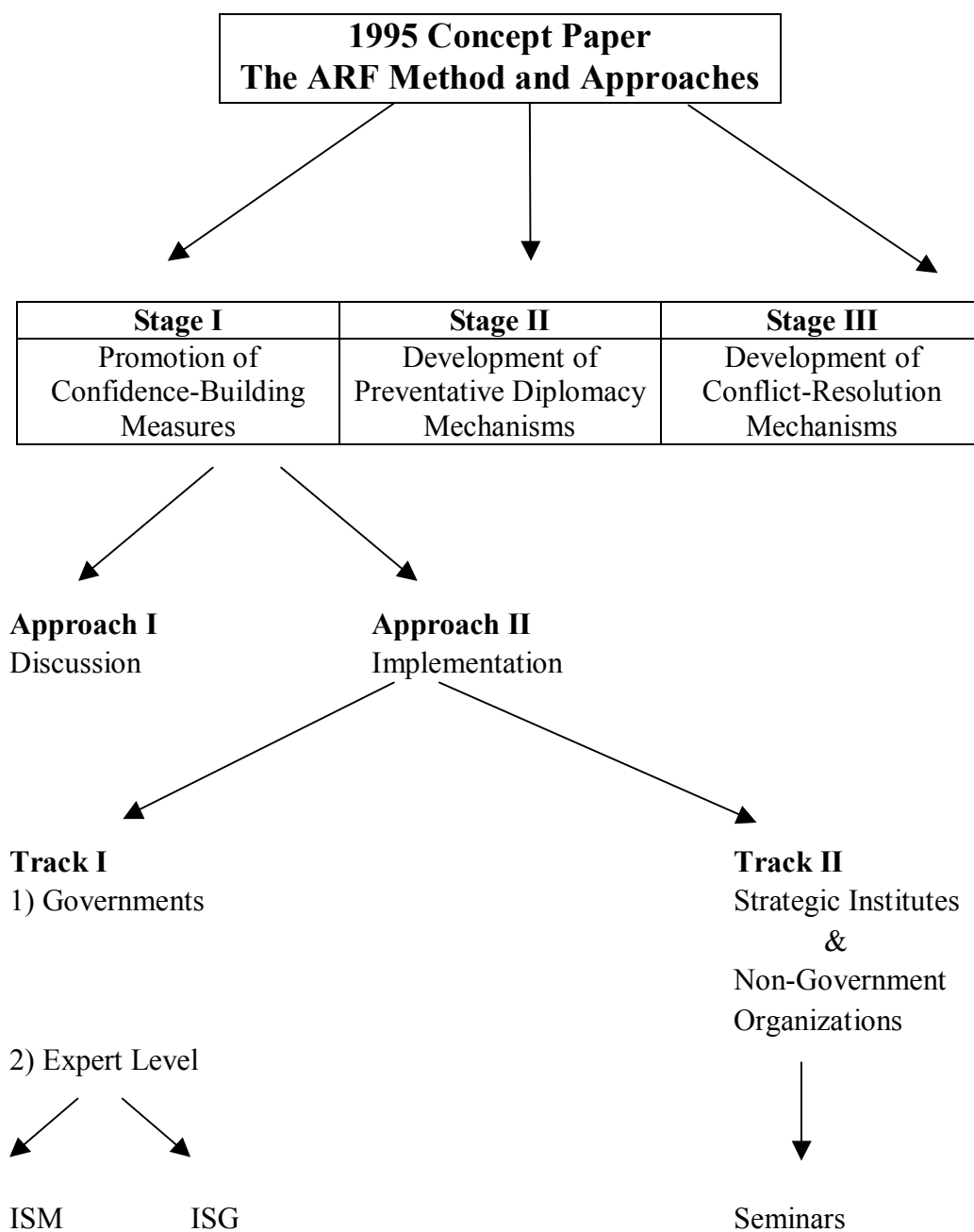
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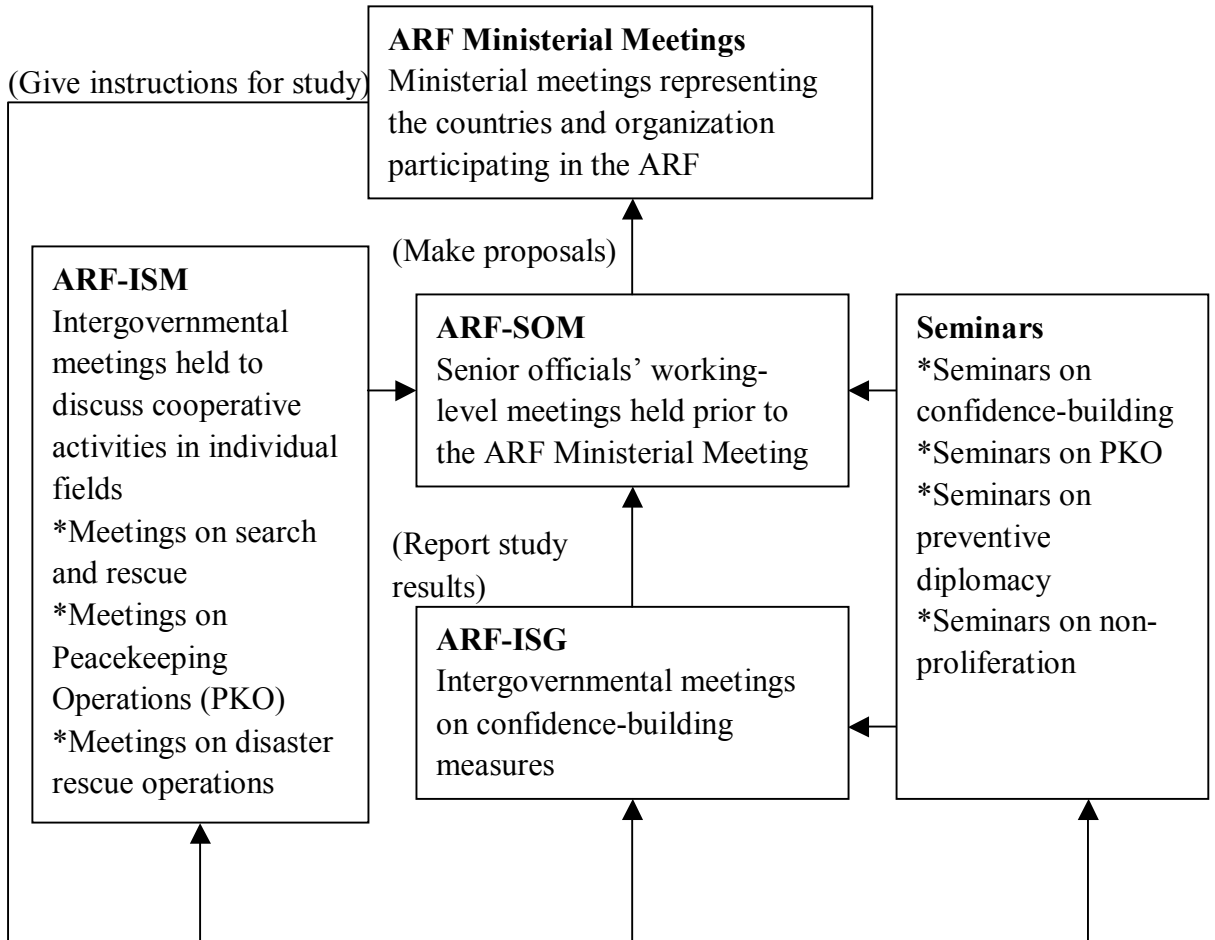
Appendix I



Source: ASEAN Secretariat, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper”, 1995. <http://www.aseansec.org/3618.htm>

Appendix II

How the ARF-Related Meetings Work



Note: Various seminars make proposals to ARF-ISG and report study results to ARF-SOM.

Source: Akiko Fukushima, "The ASEAN Regional Forum", in Michael Wesley (ed.), *The Regional Organizations of the Asia-Pacific: Exploring Institutional Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 88.

Appendix III

Proposed Measures for Preventive Diplomacy

	*Track I ARF/ISG on CBM	*Track II ARF Seminars/CSCAP-CSBM
*1st Category Confidence-Building Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Production of Annual Security Outlook (A5, A6, A7) ▪Voluntary Background Briefing on Regional Security Issues (A5, A6, A7) *Effort for Confidence Building (A7) Norms Building (A7) 	Creation of Regional ‘Code of Conduct’ (S3) Adoption of Asia Pacific Concord (C01) Reflect the experience of China-India and China-Russia CBMs (S3) Extended Military Meetings (C01) Voluntary Report of Military related Activities (C99) Establishment of Regional Peace-keeping Centre (C01)
*2nd Category Fact Finding Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair (A5, A6, A7) ▪ARF Register of Experts/Eminent Persons (A5, A6, A7) Special Representatives (A2) Establishment of Regional Risk Reduction Centre (A2) 	ARF Information Research Centre (S2, C99) ARF Register of Eminent Persons (C99) ARF Register of Experts (S2) Establishment of Conflict Prevention Centre (S1) Establishment of Regional Risk Reduction Centre (S2, C01) Establishment of ARF Secretariat (C01)
*3rd Category Early Warning	*Enhanced Channels of Communication (A7)	Promotion of Regional Capability on Early Warning (S3) ARF Information Research Centre (S2, C99)
*4th Category Negotiation Mediation Arbitration Good Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair (A5, A6, A7) ▪ARF Register of Experts/Eminent Persons (A5, A6, A7) Special Representatives (A2) 	Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair (S2, S3, C99) Special Representatives/ Third group Mediation (S1, S2, S3, C97)

Note:

“A” refers to the ARF Ministerial Meeting and ISG (Number shows the xxth meeting).

“C” represents CSCAP (Number shows the year of the meeting).

“CSBM” means Confidence and Security-Building Measures.

“S” refers to the ARF Track II Seminar (Number shows xxth meeting).

* <shows the definition and principles of the Preventive Diplomacy at the 8th ARF>

▪ <shows the measures officially adopted at the ARF meeting>

Source: Ken Jimbo, “Emerging Feature of Multilateral Security in Asia-Pacific: From Double Track to Multi-Layered Security System”, presented at the 2nd Asia Economic Summit: Securing Asia’s Future in an Uncertain World (Kuala Lumpur, 9-11 August 2004), pp. 14-15.

Appendix IV

List of the ARF Intersessional Meetings Held in China (1994 - 2004)

No .	Intersession Year	Title of Meetings	Venues	Dates
1	July 1996 - July 1997	ISG on CBMs (Track I)	Beijing	6 - 8 March 1997
2	July 1998 - July 1999	The Proliferation of Weapons and the Effectiveness of Non-Proliferation Regimes Regarding Northeast Asia (Track II)	Beijing	8 - 10 November 1998
		Symposium on Tropical Hygiene and Prevention and Treatment of Tropical Infectious Diseases (Track I)	Beijing	25 - 27 November 1998
		The Asian Economic Crisis and Implications for Regional Security Cooperation (Track II)	Beijing	24 - 26 May 1999
3	July 1999 - July 2000	ARF Professional Training Programme on China's Security Policy (Track I)	Beijing	10 - 19 October 1999
4	July 2000 - July 2001	4 th Meeting of Heads of Defence Colleges and Institutions (Track I)	Beijing	6 - 8 September 2000
		Seminar on Defence Conversion Co-operation (Track I)	Beijing	20 - 22 September 2000
		CSCAP Workshop on Asia and Pacific Nuclear Energy Transparency Website (Track II)	Beijing/Shanghai	30 November - 2 December 2000
5	July 2001 - July 2002	11 th Meeting of the CSCAP Working Group on Transnational Crime (Track II)	Shanghai	13-14 May 2002

6	July 2002 - June 2003	ARF Workshop on Military Logistics Outsourcing Support (Track I)	Beijing	25 - 27 September 2002
7	July 2003 - July 2004	ISG on CBM (Track I)	Beijing	20 - 22 November 2003

Source: ASEAN Secretariat, “List of ARF Track I Activities”, <http://www.aseansec.org/16280.htm>; and “List of ARF Track II Activities”, <http://www.aseansec.org/16359.htm>.

Appendix V

China, the United States, and Other Major Northeast Asian Countries' Participation in International Organizations (1994 – 2002)

Country	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	50	49	51	52	52	51	50	49	46
China	955	1013	1079	1136	1191	1258	1275	1366	1406
North Korea	20	18	18	18	18	18	17	18	19
	175	179	186	185	187	184	172	181	183
South Korea	47	48	50	51	52	51	52	51	49
	1034	1072	1138	1200	1250	1301	1315	1387	1431
Japan	62	61	63	63	63	63	63	61	59
	1863	1889	1970	2019	2059	2124	2122	2246	2279
The United States	62	64	64	65	64	63	63	62	61
	2273	2327	2418	2490	2560	2648	2685	2858	2891
USSR /Russia	48	58	62	61	63	66	60	63	62
	822	1093	1300	1492	1582	1673	1752	1901	1928
Global Total	263	266	260	258	254	251	241	243	232
	4928	5121	5472	5585	6020	6076	6177	6357	6398

Note: Intergovernmental organizations figures are in bold type throughout the table; international non-governmental organization figures are in lightface type.

Source: Union of International Associations, *Yearbook of International Organizations*, 1994-2002.