SECURITY COMMUNITY AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Australia, the U.S., and ASEAN’s Counter-Terror Strategy

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Abstract

This article evaluates the notion of an ASEAN Security Community. ASEAN’s community building initiative is examined in the context of regional, sub-regional, and national policy strategies to address a shared regional threat of transnational terrorism. The article examines under which circumstances constructivist norms and institutions generate denser networks of cooperation.

Keywords: security community, Southeast Asia, ASEAN, Australia, counter-terrorism

Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) ninth summit in Bali in 2003 marked a significant event in the organization’s history when political leaders called for the creation of an ASEAN Security Community (ASC) by the year 2020. The ASC plan aims for a region where intra-state and transnational security concerns are resolved peacefully through diplomatic processes of dialogue and consensus. Negotiated settlements would rest upon adherence to ASEAN norms of respect for state sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of...
neighboring states. An ASC therefore will assume a form of collective identity and pursue collective aims via dense networks of security cooperation among regional states.

In the dominant academic view, ASEAN represents a primary example of an emerging security community in international relations. The organization expanded its membership throughout the 1990s to include the former pariah states of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar, illustrating a growing sense of political community in Southeast Asia. It can also be argued that these states were socialized into the ASEAN grouping. ASEAN norms, moreover, permit the management of intra-ASEAN territorial disputes like that over the Spratlys and Litigan and Sipadan Islands without resorting to military force. As Amitav Acharya notes, ASEAN is a nascent security community that relies upon its normative process of consensus building and respect for state sovereignty to manage disputes. Meanwhile, its leadership in the ASEAN Regional Forum is intended to instill confidence in regional security among the larger Asia-Pacific powers, representing an institutional conception of international normative cooperation.

By contrast, other scholars assert that ASEAN is institutionally weak and continues to be characterized by an intergovernmental process of cooperation. ASEAN has been criticized for its inability to resolve disputes permanently and its plethora of meetings that result in limited concrete action. Indeed, ASEAN’s ambition of community building comes at a time when its reputation has been diminished by its ineffectiveness during three crises, the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the haze pollution that blanketed parts of Indonesia and its neighbors during 1997–98 and 2006, and the East Timor crisis in 1999. Meanwhile, the association’s engagement with the authoritarian regime in Myanmar has tested its credibility. Paradoxically, its norm of non-interference contradicts regional integration initiatives, reflecting a state-centric approach to foreign policy behavior.

The emergence of a security community relies on the political institutions of a regional group of states. Karl Deutsch, the pioneer of security


2. ASEAN has issued a non-binding code of conduct for claimants to the various Spratly Islands, South China Sea. Some of the disputed islands contain large oil and fishery reserves.


community theory, describes norms, values, and functioning political institutions as constituting a pluralistic security community. Interaction and transactions (economic, social, and political) among states cultivate communal feelings and engender a shared sense of “we-ness.”

Deutsch’s conceptual framework was later refined by two contemporary scholars, Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett. Subsequently, Adler and Barnett described security communities as evolutionary. In the security community’s nascent form, states establish relationships to enhance their own national security. In the community’s ascendant stage, ties deepen through institutions and organizations, in turn giving rise to a sense of trust. In its mature stage, regional actors come to share an identity and can entertain dependable expectations of peaceful change. Adler and Barnett consequently emphasize institutions, values, and a shared understanding as integral to the process. Ultimately, Deutsch’s notion of “we-ness” takes the form of a shared identity. Acharya considers norms, institutions, identity, and political processes of socialization as central to the formation of any security community. From this perspective, ASEAN norms of non-interference and respect for state sovereignty have contained interstate conflicts like the Malaysia-Philippine dispute over Sabah that might have otherwise led to war.

For Acharya, like Deutsch, Adler, and Barnett, a security community is built upon a set of dynamics—primarily security interaction through processes of socialization guided by an accepted standard of behavioral norms. States are drawn into an arrangement that identifies common threats to regional security and responds to them as a collective entity. Members of such a community will not go to war with one another but will settle their disputes in a peaceful manner.

This notion of a security community assumes that institutions shape state behavior through normative processes that ultimately transform a state’s understanding of its role in a regional environment. This form of interaction emphasizes norms as socially constructing state perceptions, and thus behavior, in an international environment.

Therefore, security community theory describes the conditions upon which a security community emerges but fails to explain specifically the causal links in its political transactions. In the case of Adler and Barnett, the theory fails to explain how precisely cooperation can transform states through the different stages of a security community. Meanwhile,

the theoretical conditions lack a specific set of measurements to discern whether norms generate cooperation in an emerging pluralistic security community.

Consequently, the application of security community theory to international relations requires testing against grounded variables. The literature contains a lacuna on how to define and measure the conditions upon which a grouping of states exhibits norm compliance. A standard criterion measuring dense transactions, communal feelings, and the effect norms have upon state behavior is required to draw stronger conclusions regarding the possibility of transforming state behavior within an emerging normative community.

In order to address this deficit in security community building, this paper will seek to test Southeast Asia’s evolution toward a security community against a common set of indicators. The article therefore will explore whether the threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia has galvanized counter-terrorism cooperation in a manner that reflects denser ASEAN security cooperation that gives substance to ASEAN’s claim to be an emerging security community. Southeast Asia may be gauged in security community terms in three ways: (1) the density of inter-ASEAN security and political interaction resulting from multilateral cooperation; (2) a sense of unity and “we-ness” illustrated in public speeches, statements, official documents, declarations, meetings, and multilateral cooperation; and (3) the extent to which ASEAN norms have enhanced cooperation that is measured through changes in policy in a manner that improves regional cooperation.7 These measurements are based upon John Garofano’s assessment of the need for further research into security community theory.

In this context, ASEAN counter-terror policy represents an obvious case study to evaluate how institutions and norms may shape the evolution of a nascent security community. The transnational nature of regional terrorist groups like Jemaah Islamiah (JI, or Islamic Community), poses a direct security threat to most Southeast Asian states and tests ASEAN’s ability to engender deeper cooperation.

If ASEAN can show via its response to terrorism that denser notions of security cooperation have evolved, this would demonstrate clear evidence of community building. However, if ASEAN shows merely rhetorical commitment and a practice that remains essentially bilateral, this would indicate that community building is stalled. This paper will thus interrogate counter-terror policies in Southeast Asia at the regional, sub-regional, and state levels.

Southeast Asian Regional
Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

Cooperation at the ASEAN Level

In terms of security community building, Acharya, and Adler and Barnett all argue that an institution’s norms must engender dense security cooperation and feelings of “we-ness” among its member states. Declarations and documents outlining plans of action are clearly important in codifying the commitment of Southeast Asian countries in fighting terrorism. Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, ASEAN responded with the Declaration on Joint Action to Counter-Terrorism, which has become the cornerstone for ASEAN’s international counter-terror policies. The declaration condemned the September 11 attacks and called for the ASEAN member countries to review and strengthen national mechanisms to combat terrorism; deepen cooperation in the areas of intelligence sharing and law enforcement; and develop regional capacity building programs to enhance the capabilities of member countries to investigate, detect, monitor, and report terrorist activities. The declaration reiterated ASEAN’s fundamental principle of non-interference, stating that all cooperative efforts to combat terrorism were to be in line with “specific circumstances in the region and each member country.”

Following the October 12, 2002, Bali bombings, ASEAN issued a Declaration on Terrorism at the Eighth ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh that condemned the “heinous terrorist attacks.” The declaration reiterated ASEAN’s commitment to fighting terrorism through enhanced collective and individual cooperation to prevent and suppress terrorist operations. It further called for the international community to avoid indiscriminately advising their citizens not to visit Southeast Asian countries, advice that had harmed business confidence in the region. The declaration, however, did not outline concrete forms of action. It was merely a declaration of intent. The declaration called for the establishment of a regional counter-terrorism center in Kuala Lumpur. Yet, the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), which opened in late 2003, is neither involved in regional operations nor serves as an intelligence collection agency. In fact, its main responsibility is to organize conferences, seminars, workshops, and training courses.

10. Ibid.
These declarations notwithstanding, ASEAN has taken on some capacity-building activities to strengthen regional counter-terrorism efforts. An ASEAN Workshop on Combating International Terrorism was held in January 2003 in Jakarta, and the ASEAN Workshop on Counter-Terrorism in August 2003 was hosted by Kuala Lumpur. Singapore has played a central role, actively hosting a Workshop on Counter-Terrorism —Managing Civil Aviation Security in Turbulent Times in July 2003; the ASEANAPOL (ASEAN Chiefs of National Police) Counter-Terrorism Workshop on Intelligence Analysis in September 2003; the ASEANAPOL Counter-Terrorism Workshop on Post-Bali Investigation in February 2004; as well as the ASEANAPOL Counter-Terrorism Workshop on Countermeasures for Explosives and Suicide Bombers in March. Meanwhile, ASEAN and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) jointly organized the Foundation Course for Senior Officials in the Theory of Counter-Terrorism Recognition and Multilateral Collaboration in Jakarta in 2004.

Significantly, it was not until the tenth ASEAN Summit held in Laos in 2004 that a comprehensive plan was put in place to streamline the grouping’s efforts to achieve an integrated community comprising the security, economic, and sociocultural spheres—all addressing issues of transnational crime between 2005–10. In the Vientiane Action Program (VAP), ASEAN sought to establish a Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement (MLAA) in criminal matters relating to terrorism, a Convention on Counter-Terrorism, as well as an ASEAN Extradition Treaty. The Convention on Counter-Terrorism was to be established under the joint drafting group between the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and the SOM on Transnational Crime (SOMTC). The extradition treaty was established under the purview of the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM). The MLAA, calling for comprehensive legal help for the member countries’ judiciaries, was signed by all member states in November 2004. Yet, under Article 3, Section 1(f), the agreement states that the requested party shall refuse assistance if, in its opinion “the provision of assistance would affect the sovereignty, security . . . or essential interests of the Requested Party.” This rather undermines the transnational effectiveness of the agreement.

At the same time, ASEAN has displayed some unity of purpose in combating terrorism through cooperation with countries outside the region. The ASEAN-U.S. Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International

Terrorism, signed in August 2002, committed both parties to a number of initiatives. These included the development of effective counter-terrorism policies; legal, regulatory, and administrative counter-terrorism regimes; enhanced liaison among law enforcement agencies; strengthened capacity efforts through training and education; consultations among officials, analysts, and field operators, as well as joint operations; and cooperation in transportation and border and immigration control. While this declaration articulates ASEAN’s commitment to fight terrorism in tandem with the U.S., ASEAN officials took the view that such activity ensured the association’s own security and did not necessarily happen at the behest of the U.S. This position was clarified with the U.S.-proposed Regional Maritime Security Initiative for the waterways of the Malacca Strait in early 2004. Here, the U.S. military proposed to interdict vessels suspected of carrying pirates or terrorists. The proposal received support only from Singapore, while Indonesia and Malaysia staunchly opposed the measure. The latter argued that primary responsibility for such intrusive counter-terrorism measures should belong to the littoral countries of the strait. Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia instead agreed to “coordinated patrols”—not joint patrols—in the strait, backed by intelligence and training cooperation with the U.S.

ASEAN’s foremost institutional mechanism for countering terrorism remains therefore the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC)—essentially an intergovernmental arrangement. The AMMTC is instrumentally headed by the ministers of home affairs and forms the core of ASEAN counter-terrorism cooperation. Following the September 11 attacks, the AMMTC held the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism in May 2002 in Kuala Lumpur. ASEAN leaders updated their terrorist work plan, welcoming efforts by member states like Singapore and Malaysia to provide training in the areas of intelligence procurement and psychological operations and psychological warfare vis-à-vis counter-terrorism. The SOM, the subsidiary body of the AMMTC, subsequently held annual meetings in Hanoi, in 2003, and Bandar Seri Begawan, Malaysia, in 2004, which discussed and reviewed ongoing cooperation and activities in combating transnational crime and terrorism.

Significantly, ASEAN reached a landmark convention on counter-terrorism at the 2007 annual summit in the Philippines. In January in Cebu, ASEAN leaders signed a legally binding counter-terror agreement that requires ratification through national legislation. The convention on counter-terrorism guides regional efforts to prevent terrorism and enhance cooperation among the various regional law enforcement authorities. ASEAN member states are legally required to adhere to the key international conventions established since the 1970s that are designed to thwart acts of terrorism. The conventions make it a crime to seize aircraft, inflict damage upon fixed platforms on the continental shelf, disrupt maritime navigation, take hostages, carry out or finance terrorist bombings, and conduct nuclear terrorism. At the operational level, the convention requires the sharing of early-warning information with member states on terrorist movements. It also requires signatories to strengthen their capability and readiness in dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (known as CBRN) methods of terrorism. Meanwhile, the agreement calls for a regional counter-terrorism database to be established with ASEAN oversight.

However, the convention’s effectiveness remains dependent upon each member’s willingness to cooperate. The ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism reiterates ASEAN norms of non-interference. Article 3 moreover contains an impediment to regional cooperation. It states, “The Parties shall carry out their obligations under this Convention in a manner consistent with the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and that of non-interference in the internal affairs of other Parties.”

The convention does not apply in cases where a terrorist offense is committed within the territorial domain of another party, which hinders the monitoring of known terrorist operations within another state. Also under Article 22 of the convention a party can withdraw from the agreement voluntarily “at any time after the date of the entry into force of this Convention for that Party.” Interestingly, Indonesia and six other ASEAN member states will hold discussions with Australia regarding the practical application of the convention.

Significantly, the development of a regional intelligence database on counter-terrorism will be affected by the degree of coordination among national agencies in various member states. In some Southeast Asian countries, the September 11 attacks have not improved the information flow between security and intelligence agencies. Instead ASEAN states rely upon information supplied by external partners including the U.S. and Australia.

18. Ibid.
ASEAN declarations and meetings on terrorism reflect unity at the level of official discourse. Indeed, ASEAN has taken steps to enhance its members’ level of state capacity in countering terrorism. It has also established a legally binding framework for cooperation. Yet, in practice, ASEAN plans for counter-terrorism cooperation lack effective application. Given this reality, as we shall show, regional political elites continue to uphold norms of non-interference at the state and sub-regional levels that inhibit progress toward deeper security cooperation.

Cooperation at the Sub-regional Level

The extent to which norm building in a security community deepens security cooperation and a sense of “we-ness” can also be measured in terms of counter-terrorism cooperation at the sub-regional level. Sub-regional cooperation in Southeast Asia has taken the form of intelligence and information exchanges. This has led to a number of high profile arrests.

Given the importance of the intelligence function in counter-terrorist policies, cooperation has been established under a trilateral political framework among Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines under the Agreement on Information Exchange and Establishment of Communication Procedures agreed to in Kuala Lumpur in May 2002. Cambodia and Thailand acceded to the agreement in July and November, while Brunei signed it in late 2003. The agreement broadly calls for greater intelligence sharing, joint anti-terrorism exercises, and combined operations to hunt suspected terrorists, but implicitly focuses on the geographical area bordering Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, where militants have been known to operate. It remains unclear whether the pact enhances the powers of individual nations to clamp down on transnational terrorists along the Thai/Malay, Thai/Malay/Philippine, and Thai/Myanmar borders, or if it compels a nation to act on information provided to it about suspects or possible terrorist activities.

Nevertheless, sub-regional information exchanges between some intelligence and law enforcement agencies have been successful in helping to capture key Islamic militants throughout Southeast Asia. While Singapore dismantled local JI cells in 2001, Arifin bin Ali, Singapore’s JI cell leader and a former instructor to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the southern Philippines, escaped the security net and plotted the further bombing of five embassies in Bangkok before his arrest by Thai authorities. Thai authorities arrested bin Ali in May 2003 as a result of a tip-off from Singapore’s national intelligence agencies.19 Similarly, another JI operative,

Mas Selamat Kastari, slipped the Singaporean government’s security net in 2001 following a failed plan to crash hijacked planes into the island-state’s Changi International Airport. Singapore’s intelligence services were able to inform Indonesian authorities of Kastari’s whereabouts in Riau Province on Sumatra where Indonesian authorities apprehended the JI operative. Kastari was repatriated to Singapore where, as of early 2008, he managed an escape from prison and remains at large.20 Furthermore, a JI bombmaker linked to the first Bali bombings, Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi, was arrested in early 2002 in Manila as a result of joint Philippine-Singaporean intelligence cooperation.21 These arrests have led one political commentator to note that despite the limited capacity of some Southeast Asian governments to handle internal matters, “ASEAN authorities are doing something right” in combating regional terrorism.22

The most significant strike against JI occurred when Southeast Asia’s most wanted man and formerly the world’s third most wanted terrorist (behind Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden), Riduan “Hambali” Isamuddin, was captured in Bangkok in August 2003 as a result of a joint U.S.-Thai operation. He was dubbed by U.S. authorities as Southeast Asia’s tier-1 terror operative following his connection to at least 33 bombings in Indonesia, including Bali in 2002 and the Marriott Jakarta hotel bombing in 2003, a political assassination in Malaysia, and various bombings in the Philippines. Hambali was apprehended following an intensive manhunt led by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) when intelligence officers traced his location to the Thai city of Ayutthaya and tipped off Thai authorities to arrest him.23

Significantly, the Hambali case demonstrated that ASEAN states required external assistance to identify and address the threat of regional terrorism. Similarly, in Singapore, Southeast Asia’s most tightly controlled city-state, authorities foiled a reported plot where a local JI cell planned to bomb Western embassies in 2001, including the U.S. and Israeli embassies and the Australian and U.K. High Commissions. Yet, again, it was not Singapore’s security apparatus, the Internal Security Department (ISD), that foiled the


plot but action resulting from a tip-off from Britain’s MI6. This information followed the discovery by U.S. forces in Afghanistan of a video from JI sent to Kabul with surveillance footage of the embassies as part of a funding application.

Just as ASEAN states require external assistance to police transnational terrorism, Southeast Asian security services are also vulnerable to inter-agency rivalry and lack of coordination, which limit successful implementation of sub-regional counter-terror policies. This critically undermines a shared ability to collect and analyze intelligence on internal security matters like terrorism. There has been a long-standing rivalry between Indonesia’s State Intelligence Agency, Badan Intelijen Negara (BIN), and the Indonesian National Police, Polisi Republic Indonesia (POLRI), since their separation in 1999. For Indonesia’s security services, BIN produces security assessments that determine the level and scope of potential threats. These data provide POLRI with the appropriate security-risk context to investigate and conduct arrests. Indonesia’s national military commander, Endriartono Sutarto, stressed that the Armed Forces of Indonesia, Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) would not involve its members in police duties to prevent or handle acts of terrorism. He argued that if police capabilities were lacking then police capabilities should be improved. This inter-service rivalry between intelligence and the national police has undermined responses to terrorism in Indonesia, with POLRI having to assess its own intelligence. In one instance, the national police force intercepted an email from the suicide bomber Asmar Latin Sani to another JI member regarding a suicide operation that later turned out to be preparations for the Marriott hotel bombings. In Bali, police had files on members of the JI cell six months prior to the bombings in October 2002 but were not provided with a threat assessment warranting arrests. Significantly, this lack of coordination puts Indonesia’s national police in a position where it is more inclined to believe foreign intelligence reports than TNI intelligence reports, particularly when the military traditionally has not been forthcoming in information sharing with the police.

Contrary to the rhetorical commitment at a regional level, the capture of key militants has occurred largely as a result of bilateral cooperation on an ad hoc basis. Singapore has been the most active Southeast Asian state leading counter-terrorism efforts. Indeed, as we have shown, Western states have also proved crucial. To help in security community building, there exists only a minimal network of counter-terrorism cooperation in the field of intelligence. Political elites continue to maintain their respect for state sovereignty despite the transnational nature of regional terrorism. Whereas the sub-regional linkages have been limited, the impact of ASEAN initiatives in counter-terrorism at the state level needs consideration. Let us look briefly at leading ASEAN states’ responses to the emergence of transnational terror.

The Implication of State Counter-Terror Policy on ASEAN Community Building

An examination of state counter-terrorism responses of the core ASEAN countries is needed to discern the existence of multilateral security cooperation and a sense of “we-ness” in Southeast Asia. This will allow us to determine the extent to which ASEAN community building initiatives have engendered denser networks of security cooperation at the state level. This section briefly assesses the counter-terror policy responses of Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Indonesia

Indonesia, home to the world’s largest Muslim population, was quick to condemn the September 11 attacks. Former President Megawati Sukarnoputri expressed Indonesia’s solidarity with President George W. Bush and joined him in condemning the attacks. Megawati supported plans to organize a coalition to respond to the new threat and was subsequently awarded an exclusive bilateral aid package from the U.S. Congress worth $130 million. Bush also promised financial assistance to train the police and rebuild infrastructure in conflict-ridden areas on the condition that past human rights violations on the part of the Indonesian military should be addressed.

Nevertheless, between 2001–04, Megawati equivocated over Indonesia’s political commitment to fighting international terrorism, in order to appease domestic political constituencies. Following the military invasion of Afghanistan, she urged Washington to cease hostilities during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, asserting that such action would “weaken the global coalition to war on terrorism.”

heart stemmed from popular criticism in Indonesia over the war. As the leader of a weak coalition government, Megawati was dependent on the support of Islamic parties and so was unwilling to align her government too closely with the U.S. Megawati was also unwilling to act on information provided by Malaysian authorities regarding a cache of bomb-making material, which remains unfound, belonging to Malaysian militants, on the island of Batam, out of fear of an Islamic backlash. A crackdown on domestic Islamic militant groups would have galvanized civil unrest and lost her support among Muslim political parties, which she needed to secure another term in the 2004 presidential election.

What particularly animated the Indonesian response was the Bali bombings, which forced Indonesia to confront the threat of home grown terrorism that had previously been ignored. Immediately after the bombings, a warrant was issued for JI spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir’s arrest on the grounds that he had received financial support from Osama bin Laden to procure three tons of explosives. Indonesia took active steps to apprehend the perpetrators of the bombings. Amrozi, the JI member who built the Bali bombs, was arrested on November 7, 2002. Indonesian police arrested Imam Samudra, the mastermind of the bombings and Hambali’s key deputy, on November 21. Ali Gufron (alias Mukhlas), a key JI operative in Indonesia and older brother to Amrozi, was arrested in Klaten, Central Java, on November 4. Ali Imron, the younger brother of Amrozi and Mukhlas and the field coordinator of the bombings, was arrested on January 14, 2003.

Significantly, Indonesian police forces could not have apprehended the JI Bali cell without cooperation with Australian law enforcement. Indonesia’s police forces lacked the technical capability as well as the forensic skills and experience needed to find the perpetrators in the aftermath of the first Bali bombings. When the Indonesian police apprehended 11 key suspects in a series of raids across Central Java, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) provided technical support in tracking the suspects; AFP officers were even on hand to assist during the arrests. Meanwhile Australian and U.S. signals intelligence (SIGINT) organizations, respectively the Defense Signals Directorate (DSD) and the National Security Agency (NSA), played a central role in tracking the mobile phones used by the JI

30. Ibid.
operatives. Following the second Bali bombing on October 1, 2005, the AFP assisted in bomb data analysis and victim identification.

Beyond cooperating over the Bali bombings, Australia and Indonesia jointly established the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in July 2004, which focuses on training activities in counter-terrorism, including tracking and interception of terrorists, forensics, crime scene investigation, financial investigation, and threat assessments. The Australia-Indonesia security treaty signed in 2006 allows members of the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR), the Australian special forces, to conduct joint counter-hijack and hostage rescue exercises with Indonesia’s Army Special Force Command, Kommando Pasukan Khusus (KOPASSUS). However, the release of JI spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir in mid-2006 was met with criticism by the Australian government in a letter to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono that pointedly reminded him of Bashir’s connection to the first Bali bombings.

At the same time, Indonesia has also engaged in closer bilateral cooperation with the U.S. to build its counter-terrorism capabilities. The U.S. provides assistance to police and security officials, prosecutors, legislators, immigration officials, and banking regulators. The U.S. has implemented counter-terrorism capacity building programs including funding for the establishment of a national police counter-terrorist unit, counter-terrorism training for police and security officials, and financial intelligence training to enhance anti-money laundering operations and train counter-intelligence analysts. Indeed, the Indonesian police’s counter-terrorist unit, Detachment 88, was established with U.S. funding and trained by retired officers of the U.S. Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and CIA. Crucially, the elite unit apprehended key JI military leader Abu Dujana in June 2007. U.S. counter-terrorism assistance has also extended to the Indonesian military. The U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) has reestablished limited ties with the TNI, sponsoring conferences on civil-military relations, democratic institutions, and non-lethal training (all components of the U.S. International Military and Education Training program).

Indonesia’s counter-terror responses have primarily been influenced by domestic politics, with former President Megawati shifting Indonesia’s commitment on the basis of Muslim popular support in the global war against

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terrorism. Although President Yudhoyono, Megawati’s successor, has demonstrated a stronger commitment to fighting terrorism, he has not transformed Indonesia’s approach to ensuring regional security. The ASEAN norm of non-interference limited Indonesia from engaging with other Southeast Asian states in significant counter-terrorism cooperation. Instead, bilateral cooperation with Western states like Australia and the U.S. has developed Indonesia’s counter-terrorist capabilities.

The Philippines

The Philippines is another key theater in the fight against terrorism in Southeast Asia. Following the September 11 attacks, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo emerged as Southeast Asia’s most vocal supporter of the U.S.-led anti-terrorism campaign. After meeting Bush and pledging her support, Arroyo was awarded over $4 billion in trade deals and aid packages. Of that amount, nearly $100 million was designated for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including the procurement of a C-130 military transport plane; helicopters; a patrol boat; armored personnel carriers; 30,000 M-16 rifles; and anti-terrorism training. Arroyo’s cordial relationship with the U.S., however, galvanized resentment from nationalist parties, which suspected a return of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines.

As with Indonesia, but with somewhat different political motives, Arroyo’s support for the American-led campaign against terrorism served a domestic political agenda. Arroyo wanted to restore a close alliance and security relationship with Washington following the decline in bilateral relations after the American withdrawal from its military facilities at Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Force Base in 1991 at the behest of the Philippines. Second, and more important, U.S. military support to the Philippine armed forces served a political purpose, fostering ties between the Arroyo administration and the military, a factor always important in Philippine politics given the country’s history of coups d’état. Arroyo wanted to end the function of the Philippines as a base for international terrorist organizations and realized that only U.S. military support could give the Philippine military equipment and training to conduct effective counter-terrorist operations in the southern islands where most of the insurgents operate.

Indeed, the U.S. military deployed approximately 1,200 personnel, including 150 Special Forces soldiers, to the southern Philippines between January and July 2002, to assist in counter-terrorism operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG, or Bearer of the Sword). The exercises, dubbed

38. Ibid., p. 211.
“Balikatan” (shoulder to shoulder), resulted in a significant reduction of Abu Sayyaf strength on the island of Basilan. The Philippine military’s counter-terrorist operations were effective as a result of U.S. aid for intelligence gathering, state-of-the-art equipment, and operational planning. The U.S. has also developed the Philippine army’s counter-terrorism capacity over the long-term by training two Light Reaction Companies (LRC) and eight light infantry battalions in counter-terrorism; strengthening operational and intelligence capabilities for the Southern Command; and training Philippine Air Force (PAP) helicopter crews in night flying.39 Similarly, members of the Australian SAS and intelligence officers of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) have been present since 2005 in the Philippines, cooperating with U.S. and local forces to find suspects Umar Patek and Dulmatin, the latter responsible for the October 1, 2005, Bali bombing.40

The Philippine army’s increased role in counter-terrorism has led to complications of jurisdictional overlap with law enforcement agencies, which also conduct counter-terrorism operations.41 At the same time, Philippine counter-terrorism responses have been hindered by Arroyo’s inability to enact anti-terrorism legislation. This is attributed to poor communication between Philippine law enforcement agencies and the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC), which has stymied effective implementation of the Anti-Money Laundering Act.42

President Arroyo used the rhetoric of the Global War on Terrorism to establish rapprochement between the Philippines and the U.S. after a lull in their relations spanning almost a decade. In so doing, she won international backing to confront Islamic extremists in the south, traditionally seen as an internal domestic problem. The Philippine military was given much-needed military hardware and counter-terrorist training, helping to develop its capabilities over the long term. Still, no denser counter-terrorism cooperation has been generated between the Philippines and neighboring states via ASEAN. Like Indonesia, the Philippines has enhanced bilateral

cooperation with the U.S. and Australia to develop its military capacity to conduct counter-terrorism operations.

**Thailand**

Thailand, like Indonesia and the Philippines, has a long-standing domestic problem with Islamic extremists, who operate in Thailand’s southern provinces. JI operatives have also targeted Bangkok, and following the September 11 attacks, Thailand pledged its support in the Global War on Terrorism. Thailand subsequently allowed its U-Tapao Air Base to be used by the U.S. Air Force as a logistical staging area for air combat operations into Afghanistan. The Thai government also sent an engineering unit to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. However, it was not until the 2003 capture in Thailand of Riduan “Hambali” Isamuddin, Southeast Asia’s most wanted terrorist, that then-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra officially acknowledged the threat emanating from regional terrorism.

Regional political commentators have highlighted the fact that domestic political considerations largely drove Thaksin’s support for the international campaign against terrorism. Thaksin’s stance was designed to “preempt” potential terrorist attacks in Thailand like those in Indonesia and the Philippines. An incident like Bali on Thai soil would devastate Thailand’s tourism industry, which accounts for more than 7% of GDP. More important, Thaksin was concerned with enhancing his regional leadership credentials and therefore needed to appear strong on the war on terrorism. This ambition led to a government crackdown on Islamic militants in southern Thailand that claimed 1,700 lives over two years. Thaksin’s heavy-handed response was one reason behind the recent military coup led by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin of Thailand’s southern command, the country’s first Muslim commander in chief of the army. The coup also stemmed from military disapproval of the tactics applied by the Thai government in the southern provinces. Thaksin used anti-terror rhetoric to strengthen his regional standing as a political figure in Southeast Asia. Admittedly, the most important political objective for Thaksin was to bandwagon with the U.S. in the war to gain strategic assets and reap concessions like the U.S.-Thai free trade agreement.

Consequently, Thailand and the U.S. have established close counter-terrorism cooperation through the joint Counter Terrorism Intelligence

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Center (CTIC), which was established in 2001 to enhance coordination among Thailand’s security services. The U.S. CIA assigns 20 agents to the center and shares the facility and information with Thai counterparts on a daily basis. There are plans to open a diplomatic mission in the southern region, which would serve as a forward post for U.S. agents collecting intelligence.

U.S.-Thailand counter-terrorism cooperation is most pronounced in joint military exercises like **Known Warrior** and **Cobra Gold**. **Cobra Gold** is a joint military exercise designed to develop the capabilities of the Royal Thai Armed Forces to respond to potential threats to national security. **Known Warrior** focuses exclusively on building the Thai military’s counter-terrorist capability, with particular emphasis on intelligence coordination, field exercises, and anti-terrorist special warfare tactics. Counter-terrorism training since September 11 has added the component of chemical and biological warfare.

Although Thaksin avowedly saw material benefits deriving from his support of the U.S. campaign, notably counter-terrorist training for the Thai military, the counter-terror policies have not engendered denser networks of cooperation between Thailand and neighboring Southeast Asian states. The continued acceptance of ASEAN norms of non-interference placed Thailand, like Indonesia and the Philippines, in a position where it has turned to the U.S. for assistance in intelligence assessment and counter-terrorism training, key areas for establishing effective counter-terrorism capabilities.

**Malaysia**

Malaysia is another Southeast Asian state with a dominant Muslim majority that has conditionally supported the Global War on Terrorism. Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad openly criticized Islamic terrorists after the September 11 attacks. In a show of appreciation for Malaysia’s support, President Bush invited Mahathir to Washington in mid-May 2002, and the two governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on counter-terrorism. Malaysia provided “nuts-and-bolts” support for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan by allowing overflight clearance during Operation Enduring Freedom. The Malaysian government has detained over 90 suspected terrorists, including members from JI and the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM, Malaysian Mujahidin Movement), an extremist group advocating a pan-regional

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45. See Vaughn, *Terrorism*, p. 27.
Islamic state encompassing Malaysia, Indonesia, and the southern Philippines. Following Mahathir’s resignation at the end of 2003, Malaysia’s new Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi pledged continuing support for the war against terrorism.

Malaysia’s political leaders, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, have used the war on terrorism to suppress domestic opposition. Mahathir, prior to stepping down in 2004, used the colonial era Internal Security Act (ISA) to detain 10 people reportedly suspected of having links to the KMM. Of them, eight were members of the opposition Partai Islam SeMalaysia (Islamic Party of Malaysia, PAS), which seeks to establish an Islamic state ruled by shari’a (Islamic law). These included Nik Abdul Aziz, the son of PAS leader Datuk Seri Nik Aziz, the premier of the state of Kelantan. Mahathir, like President Arroyo in the Philippines, also used the war on terrorism to reestablish relations with the U.S., which had declined throughout the 1990s.

While the U.S. and Malaysia have no military arrangement dealing with counter-terrorism, law enforcement and intelligence cooperation have increased since September 11. American law enforcement personnel were given access to a Malaysian citizen being detained under the ISA, namely, Zacarias Moussaoui, known as the “twentieth hijacker.” Malaysia and the U.S. also co-hosted the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime in Sabah, which included all 10 Southeast Asian nations.

Malaysian leaders have used the war on terrorism to advance their own domestic political agenda. In Malaysian politics, Abdullah Badawi’s ruling United Malays National Organization (UMNO) party has traditionally viewed the PAS as a threat to its authority. Moreover, despite ASEAN-level counter-terrorism initiatives, Malaysia, like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, has not established any collaborative working relationship with neighboring Southeast Asian states in countering regional terrorism. Indeed, the activities of the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) (and similar groups) have intensified since 2003 and increased Thailand-Malaysia bilateral tensions. And inter-ASEAN cooperation has not rectified problems along the Thai-Malay border. Malaysia’s adherence to ASEAN norms of non-interference limits the possibility of greater cooperation.

47. See Capie, Between a Hegemon, p. 233.
48. PULO is a separatist movement based in southern Thailand comprising predominantly ethnic Malays. PULO’s two armed factions are fighting the government of Thailand to resurrect the former territories of the Malay kingdom of Pattani.
Singapore

Of all the Southeast Asian states that have supported the war on terrorism, Singapore has been the U.S.’s staunchest ally. After the September 11 terrorist attacks, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew pledged Singapore’s support for the U.S.-led war on terrorism. Lee reiterated Southeast Asia’s strategic importance in the fight against international terrorism, urging regional states to deny Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda network a safe haven as its members fled Afghanistan. Singapore’s commitment to the war on terrorism was most pronounced when it swiftly uprooted local terrorist cells in December 2001, with intelligence operatives detaining over 16 JI members, eight of whom reportedly trained in al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. Singapore has also taken steps to counter terrorism on the financial front, with the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) calling on banks to institute rigorous anti-laundering procedures.

Singapore’s support for the U.S. war on terrorism, as in Thailand, is meant to maintain investor confidence in the city-state. Indeed, Singapore’s externally oriented economy relies heavily on foreign direct investment, which would recede if security concerns like terrorism became an issue. As Abuza notes, “Political stability and physical security tend to be the primary reasons multinational corporations base their regional headquarters in Singapore.”49 In a financial risk assessment report on Singapore that looks at the impact of terrorism, the city-state received an overall score of 12 out of 100, indicating a moderate level of risk to investors.50

Singapore’s counter-terrorism responses involved increasingly close cooperation with the U.S. The USPACOM Joint Intelligence Center regularly shares information with Singapore’s Joint Counter-Terrorism Center, where U.S. SIGINT is exchanged for Singaporean human intelligence (HUMINT).51 Singapore has signed on to a container security initiative headed by the U.S. Customs Service that allows U.S. Customs officials to be stationed at Singapore’s ports, where they help inspect containers to prevent terrorists from smuggling weapons of mass destruction into containers bound for the U.S.52 Port operators and shipping companies, however, have expressed concern that inspection can lead to costly delays.53

Singapore is Southeast Asia’s financial hub, and any terrorist attack on the city-state would devastate its economy and subsequently hurt its

53. Ibid.
national security. Singapore, like Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia, has not engaged in broader counter-terrorism cooperation with neighboring Southeast Asian states, except when targeting JI operatives who directly threaten its security. Instead, Singapore has established closer counter-terrorism cooperation with the U.S., primarily in the areas of law enforcement and intelligence. Practical security cooperation in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore has occurred with external states like the U.S. and Australia to develop national counter-terrorist capabilities. ASEAN norms of non-interference have limited practical security cooperation.

The ASEAN Security Community and Transnational Terrorism

In terms of security community building, Southeast Asia’s counter-terror policies need to demonstrate denser ties of security and political cooperation, and an enhanced sense of “we-ness.” In this context, ASEAN norms need to transform security policies in a manner that deepens region-wide cooperation.

The first criterion requires Southeast Asian counter-terror policies to demonstrate deeper levels of intra-regional security and political cooperation. Thus far, the data illustrate that practical counter-terror security cooperation between Southeast Asian states exists primarily at a bilateral level. Southeast Asian states adhere to norms of non-interference that limit the density of security cooperation. Interestingly, Singapore has taken more-active steps to share security intelligence with neighbors, efforts which have led to the arrests of key JI figures. Meanwhile ASEAN’s limited ability to generate dense security transactions leaves member states dependent upon external support for counter-terrorism operations.

At the same time, political cooperation through ASEAN has led to a number of capacity building workshops on counter-terrorism. These activities are aimed at facilitating a regional network of cooperation to develop each state’s national capabilities, such as investigation and intelligence analysis. Again, Singapore has been the most active state in hosting such capacity building workshops. For enhanced effectiveness, the ASEAN institution could facilitate a degree of intra-regional cooperation via Track-one and Track-two processes.

The second criterion requires that political interaction demonstrate a communal sense of “we-ness.” ASEAN’s political commitment to fight terrorism is illustrated through various declarations on counter-terrorism. The organization has established a framework through the convention on terrorism that will guide Southeast Asian counter-terror activities toward
collective security aims. ASEAN assumes the primary institutional role through which regional states engage on terrorism related matters.

However, political cooperation at the ASEAN level is inhibited by the association's code of conduct. ASEAN norms of non-interference and respect for state sovereignty enable member states to pursue individual, not collective, interests. ASEAN documents pertaining to counter-terrorism outline the need for information sharing but at the same time reiterate the importance of state sovereignty and non-interference. This enables a member state to share or act on information selectively, leaving counter-terrorism cooperation in an ad hoc form. Despite the transnational nature of threats, state level counter-terror responses have been largely bilateral, occurring in instances where a country is directly affected by terrorism. Such provisional cooperation limits communal feelings of “we-ness” while curtailing the growth of denser networks of security cooperation.

The third criterion requires that norms change policies in a manner that improves regional cooperation. ASEAN counter-terrorism initiatives have not altered the way member states relate to one another. State responses to the war on terror are based not on regional but on domestic political considerations. Political elites are primarily concerned with maintaining political legitimacy, domestic constituencies, financial assistance, and/or investor confidence.

Moreover, where practical cooperation occurs to develop national counter-terrorist capabilities, it is usually with an external non-ASEAN partner like the U.S. or Australia. Any successful ASEAN Security Community can be expected to alter state behavior that is based upon self-interest toward multilateral cooperation that would deliver absolute gains to a regional community. Despite ASEAN claims of generating denser networks of cooperation, an emergent pattern of behavior shows ASEAN countries cooperating bilaterally with external states. State level responses to terrorism have primarily sought ad hoc support from Australia and the U.S. Significantly, both countries have played a seminal role in developing the region’s counter-terrorist capabilities in the areas of intelligence and law enforcement.

The counter-terrorism test case illustrates that ASEAN displays a rhetorical commitment to fight terrorism while ASEAN norm compliance has limited counter-terrorism cooperation to an intergovernmental process. National responses to terrorism have been driven by elites’ domestic political agendas. Where bilateral or multilateral cooperation does occur to enhance domestic counter-terrorism capabilities, it is with an external partner, usually the U.S. or Australia. Overall in this policy context, there is little sense of unity or “we-ness” whereby counter-terrorism efforts take on a collective regional response.

In terms of security community building, the institution and norm functions have not facilitated dense networks of cooperation. There is limited
evidence to indicate that ASEAN cooperation changed policymakers’ understanding of the national interest from relative gains toward common security aims. Institutions have had a limited effect on socializing the ASEAN states into changing their behavior. Significantly, ASEAN member states, although grouped together by codes of conduct, in fact pursue their interests independently. Given this reality, states may form into a regional grouping and create institutions, but this does not guarantee a transformation of state behavior toward an agreed standard. Thus, institutions and norms may generate an ad hoc form of cooperation but are limited in altering state-centric behavior.

Conclusion

While ASEAN leaders have demonstrated a rhetorical commitment to fighting terrorism, their declarations, meetings, and process of extensive consultation and consensus building have resulted in little that is concrete. In practice, sub-regional and state level cooperation in Southeast Asia is bilateral, resulting from ASEAN norms of non-interference. The case of counter-terrorism in Southeast Asia demonstrates that institutions and collective norms have not facilitated practical multilateral security cooperation.

The 2001 ASEAN Joint Declaration on Terrorism and various workshops on intelligence analysis, post-blast investigations, and airline security all demonstrate efforts to coordinate a region-wide counter-terrorism response. In terms of security community building, however, ASEAN has had only limited success in creating denser networks of security cooperation. ASEAN members remain reluctant to cooperate should such cooperation infringe upon national sovereignty. Counter-terrorism policies, like that of the Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement, contain clauses stating that member states may exercise the right not to cooperate, if cooperation would affect their national security interests. In this context, ASEAN norms of non-interference and respect for state sovereignty restrict the ability of Southeast Asian states to engender denser networks of security cooperation.

Practical responses have been both bilateral and extra-regional. At the sub-regional level, counter-terrorism cooperation on intelligence and information exchanges has led to a number of key JI arrests like that of Ham-bali. Yet, counter-terrorism cooperation at that level is characterized by a bilateral process of security cooperation. The arrests of key JI figures have been a result of tip-offs from regional countries like Singapore. The region lacks a central intelligence sharing database on terrorism. This is not surprising given the overriding influence of the principle of non-interference. The bilateral nature of security cooperation in Southeast Asia clearly does not fulfill Garofano’s standard for a denser network.
At the state level, the most effective response has occurred extra-regionally through cooperation with either the U.S. or Australia. National counter-terrorism responses have also varied across Southeast Asia. Moreover, counter-terror responses have not reinforced a sense of community among Southeast Asian states, as national counter-terrorism responses have been driven by domestic political factors.

ASEAN leaders are hopeful about the prospect for an ASEAN Security Community in 2020 that is built upon processes of interstate socialization guided by an accepted set of behavioral norms. Such norms foster communal feelings of unity and “we-ness.” In practice these norms should create denser networks of regional security cooperation. This study of Southeast Asia’s policy illustrates a regional pattern of behavior defined by self-interest and ad hoc cooperation. The practice of security cooperation in Southeast Asia, at least in the context of counter-terror policies, continues bilaterally and via partners external to ASEAN. ASEAN’s 40-year anniversary in 2007 undoubtedly inspired reflections upon its historical progress and future aspirations in the ASEAN Community 2020. Considering Southeast Asia’s enduring pattern of cooperation that is most pronounced in its counter-terror strategy, and the importance of the U.S. in the regional architecture, the prospect for successful community building still remains distant.