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Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: Non-Traditional Security as a Catalyst

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This article details the importance of non-traditional security (NTS) issues as catalysts for the development and expansion of regional security architectures across the Indo-Pacific. The trans-boundary and non-military character of NTS issues, such as natural disasters and pandemic disease, have compelled states across the region to seek deeper and more substantial levels of security integration. NTS issues have pushed existing security structures West into the Indian Ocean and initiated the development of newer defence-based regional forums. New cooperative structures include large multi-lateral groupings such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting as well as bi-lateral agreements between ASEAN and other countries in the Indo-Pacific. Largely based on NTS issues, these venues firmly stretch ASEAN based coordination across the Indo-Pacific and demonstrate an unprecedented move towards cooperative security. NTS issues provide important opportunities and incentive for security cooperation across the Indo-Pacific and should be perceived as valuable first steps toward more coherent integrated Indo-Pacific security architectures.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific, non-traditional security, security cooperation, ASEAN

Introduction

This article argues that non-traditional security (NTS) issues have been important catalysts for the strengthening, expansion and development of new modes of security cooperation across the Indo-Pacific. For the purposes of this article, the term Indo-Pacific is defined as stretching from the United States and Canada in the East, across the breadth of Asia, to end at the western coast of India. This definition intentionally excludes the Middle East and the eastern states of Africa, which are commonly

considered part of the Indian Ocean Region. This exclusion is intentional, and serves to limit analysis to developments originating in ASEAN based processes. This is not to say that NTS issues have not catalysed security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, as they most assuredly have, particularly in the realm of maritime security (Cordner, 2010; Paul, 2011; Akaha, 2002), only that discussions of this topic are beyond the scope of this paper.

Given its geographical location as the ‘pivot point’ between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, ASEAN has been at the centre of coordinative efforts in Indo-Pacific security coordination. ASEAN is a logical choice for an evaluation of new regionalisms emerging in the Indo-Pacific because ‘Southeast Asia is a crossroads and maritime space between South, Central, East Asia, Australia and the Pacific, and it also straddles the overlapping interests of India and China’ (Lin and Grundy-Warr, 2012, p. 56).

Since the end of the Cold War there has been a growing trend of security integration across the Indo-Pacific, centred on ASEAN, and characterised by a ‘staggering growth in regional multilateralism’ (Tow & Taylor, 2009). States are gradually altering their strategic considerations to accommodate a host of previously suppressed, unrecognised, or emerging sources of insecurity. For many states in Asia, the greatest threats to stability are not military incursions but instead stem from economic, political, social or environmental factors. These threats, collectively labelled ‘non-traditional security,’ encompass an ever growing range of international problems (environmental degradation, irregular migration, pandemic diseases, financial instability, transnational crime, etc.).

NTS issues have steadily gained political salience since the 1990s and have provided a unique and undeniable incentive for regional actors to move towards substantive

security cooperation. Foremost, they are often trans-boundary in nature and necessitate governance at the regional level. Furthermore, NTS issues also offer politically neutral options (e.g., disaster relief and humanitarian intervention) that are ideal for testing cooperative opportunities. The influence of NTS issues is apparent in both the orientation and structure of new modes of security cooperation and discourse appearing in the Indo-Pacific.

This article does not argue that NTS issues are replacing traditional military-based matters as the focus of regional security. Instead, it argues that NTS problems have offered both compelling incentives and clear opportunities for states in the region to change their approaches to security governance, and trial new methods of cooperation. Potentially, collaboration and coordination fostered by NTS issues can become crucial stepping stones for developing new forms of region-wide security cooperation.

This article proceeds in three discrete, but interconnected sections. First, it examines how the transnational nature of NTS issues has fostered cooperation across the Indo-Pacific Region. It builds upon the work of scholars in both the constructivist and institutionalist schools that have focused on the changing conceptualisations of security in Asia, and the impacts of these changes on regional security structures. The ‘ungovernable’ nature of NTS problems at domestic levels has compelled states to open up multi-lateral dialogues on a host of security issues (Devare, 2006; Caballero-Anthony, 2010b, 2010c; Acharya 2009). Dialogues have, in turn, evolved into an active push by some regional actors to consolidate and strengthen security architectures directed at NTS issues (Ball, 2010; Haacke, 2009). The configuration and tone of these dialogues differ dramatically from previous forms of security cooperation. Regional dialogues have gradually begun to deviate from the traditional governing norms of consensus, non-confrontation, and process-driven approaches and

have instead have adopted more outcome-oriented and assertive paths to security governance.

The article continues by interrogating the institutional developments stemming from state adaptation to NTS issues. Using the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a starting point, it argues that NTS issues played an important part in the establishment of the Forum by highlighting the need for multi-lateral security (Katsumata, 2003, 2006). NTS issues have continued to drive the Forum towards stronger, and more tangible, forms of cooperation. At the centre of this re-invigoration is the newly established ASEAN Regional Forum Defence Officials' Dialogue (ARF-DOD), which focuses mainly on NTS issues. Using defence-based processes, the ARF has taken firm strides toward concrete security cooperation on the issues of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).

Turning from the ARF, the article's focus shifts to ASEAN, which has sought to govern trans-national security issues by establishing the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM). The ADMM, and its Indo-Pacific extension the ADMM-Plus, were both ostensibly initiated to address NTS issues, and have been key actors in broadening security cooperation across the Indo-Pacific.

Last, this article briefly examines how ASEAN and non-ASEAN countries have bolstered multi-lateral processes with a series of bi-lateral NTS agreements. Often pre-dating multilateral efforts, NTS issues have served as a starting point from which stronger security cooperation has stemmed. The bi-lateral relationships ASEAN has with India and China will be examined and presented as evidence.

In a region historically hesitant to embrace institutionalised security architectures, the appearance of NTS issues has obligated states to cooperate on security matters. The

nature of these issues has influenced the development and configuration of new modes of security cooperation in the region. Furthermore, they have afforded the region the opportunity and incentives to test its capacity for substantive security coordination and to pursue new levels of Indo-Pacific security integration.

The Evolution of Strategic Security in Asia

The transition from traditional to non-traditional understandings of security is problematic for realist approaches to international relations. Traditional conceptualisations of security reinforce realists' understandings of global order by holding the state as the central referent object and provider of security. Threats are seen as largely stemming from the "use of force or threat of the use of force by another state against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of a state" (Akaha, 2002, p. 1). From this perspective, states are the highest authority in international relations especially in regards to security; however, non-traditional security issues challenge this state-centric paradigm.

First, NTS issues forcefully broaden the narrow 'realist' view of security to include more 'liberalist' understandings of security; liberal approaches to international relations argue that security is not only composed of military threats but also threats from other sources and towards actors other than the state (Akaha, 2002). NTS issues are overwhelmingly 'non-military in nature' (Caballero-Anthony, 2010b, p. 202) and stem from issues not usually associated with security. Ewing and Anthony note that "[c]ontemporary trends and events in the environmental, food, energy, health, development and other sectors ... have propelled these issue areas up the policy strata of many states," (2012, p. 8). For the majority of Asian states, 'non-military threats to regime survival are more likely to materialize than traditional military threats' (Arase,

2010, p. 810). On these grounds, non-military topics have progressively made their way onto the agendas of security forums. Consequently, realist-based traditional security issues are increasingly being comingled with more liberal-based understandings of non-traditional security. This has pushed states to seek out new ways of ensuring ‘security’ beyond the scope of military intervention.

Second, the effects of NTS issues, especially ones like transnational crime, maritime security, and illegal migration, are fundamentally trans-boundary. They are consistently ‘transnational in scope – neither domestic nor purely interstate, come with very short notice, and are transmitted rapidly due to globalization and the communication revolution’ (Caballero-Anthony, 2010b, p. 202). NTS issues contest state sovereignty by problematising the idea that politics, especially security politics, are conducted along state borders (Hameiri & Jones, 2011a). Many very salient NTS issues (terrorism, maritime security, transnational crime, environmental degradation) are only ‘governable’ at the regional level, and they effectively highlight the increasingly international nature of domestic politics (Acharya, 2009).

The trans-boundary nature of NTS issues challenges the validity of realist state-centric security approaches and questions the acceptability of the state as the sole provider and object of security (Hameiri & Jones, 2011b). In order to ensure domestic security, states are increasingly compelled to accept the authority of regional institutions for the purposes of managing address inter-state problems. However, historical governing architectures in the Indo-Pacific have proven to be ‘inadequate’ for dealing effectively with the expanded scope of security (Acharya, 2009, pp. 242-243; Caballero-Anthony, 2010b). Caballero-Anthony makes a compelling argument that NTS issues have been important factors leading to state recognition that ‘conventional responses no longer adequately address the new complex security

issues' (2010c, p. 2). This re-evaluation of security through the lens of 'non-traditional' security has forced a 'deep-seated historical transformation in the scale of the state's institutions and activities' (Hameiri & Jones, 2011a, p. 2) as states seek to 'govern' beyond their traditional territorial borders.

Further complicating NTS governance is the region's adherence to the ASEAN-way of diplomacy, which prioritises the sovereignty of the state. This approach to governance, which is based on non-confrontation, non-interference, and progressing at a pace acceptable to all, has proven itself to be inherently incompatible with effective NTS governance. The consensus-based and process driven methods of the ASEAN-way are unsuitable for managing NTS issues that often emerge suddenly and demand immediate action. NTS issues have caused Southeast Asian policy makers to 'to re-think existing modalities for addressing these threats, which has ostensibly lead to the (re)shaping of the institutional architecture in Southeast Asia' (Caballero-Anthony, 2010c, p. 2). States and regional observers alike have noted that 'new frameworks for cooperation to deal with [NTS issues] effectively are urgently needed' (Watanabe & Sahashi, 2001, p. 2), and a few regional actors have gone so far as to discuss the possibility, and even necessity, of a 'post-ASEAN' foreign policy (Sukma as quoted in Tan, 2012, p. 29). Cognisant that NTS issues are only going to increase in severity, states across the Indo-Pacific have begun to move, albeit slowly, away from the ASEAN-way and adopt new frameworks of security cooperation.

While NTS issues have undermined ASEAN-way based governing models, they have encouraged new governing prospects. NTS issues present both the incentive and the opportunity for enhanced regional integration, and for a variety of reasons they are the ideal candidates for building confidence in cooperative security governance. As Tow and Taylor rightly note, regional institutions have recognised this potential and

‘ASEAN countries have tended to base their architectural-building efforts around so-called non-traditional security issues’ (2009, p. 9).

There are two characteristics that make NTS issues suitable focal points for regional cooperation. First, the trans-boundary nature of NTS issues offers a unique opportunity for states to find a commonality of purpose. States across the Indo-Pacific are exceptionally diverse in language, culture, systems of government, and levels of development. Yet, Sekhon observes that ‘[a]s a result of the emergence of non-traditional security concerns, there are common interests among these nations that impel them to deal with the new challenges hereby leading to more cooperation rather than competition’ (2007, p. 43). Devare notes that the ‘growing convergence between ASEAN and India in perceptions and mutual interests, both in traditional as well as non-traditional areas of security’ (2006, p. 4) has encouraged India ‘to develop cooperative security with ASEAN,’ (Devare, 2006, p. 4). In a like manner, Arase points out that ‘[s]hared vulnerability explains why China and ASEAN are drawn to NTS cooperation’ (Arase, 2010, p. 810). NTS issues are powerful enticements for states across the region to coordinate their efforts towards achieving regional stability.

Second, ‘[n]on-traditional security issues are easier to address than hard-core strategic and defence issues’ (Ball, 2012, p. 22). Often (though not always) NTS issues lack political baggage and are therefore less likely to ‘raise the same level of sensitivity that more traditional security issues are apt to generate’ (Tow & Taylor, 2009, p. 9). NTS issues are an opportunity to foster cooperation because ‘addressing non-traditional security issues, pandemic threats and environmental issues is not only important in itself, but also crucial to nurturing trust and promoting community building in East Asia’ (NEAT as cited in Tow and Taylor 2009, p. 10).

Unsurprisingly, what progress has been made in regional security cooperation in Asia

has been on the politically popular and non-contested NTS issues of Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance, which provide low-risks and high-outcome opportunities to acclimatise state actors to substantive security cooperation. Both the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit have identified disaster relief as ‘an area of cooperation to enhance capacity and as a confidence building measure’ (ASEAN Secretariat News, 2011b).

The mutual vulnerability to NTS issues has served to link states across the Indian and Pacific Oceans and has been intrinsic to the ‘development of new multilayered governance arrangements, which bring in a range of new actors and governance instruments’ (Hameiri & Jones, 2011a, p. 3). Because of NTS issues, states have renewed efforts at region-wide security cooperation, deepened and broadened existing institutions, and established new mechanisms of security cooperation that heralded ‘a new era for unprecedented levels of interstate cooperation’ (Caballero-Anthony, 2010a, p. 322).

New Modes of Security Cooperation

Coordinative efforts by states have begun to coalesce into an NTS-based governing regime characterised by broader security definitions and an emphasis on cooperative and collective understandings of security (for information on regimes see Krasner 1982, p. 185). The majority of new security institutions reflect this new regime, and have characteristics that are markedly different from those of older institutions.

Foremost, their agendas are noticeably geared towards NTS issues at the expense of traditional security topics; furthermore, they have paired this focus with an assertive push for practical security cooperation. In a notable departure from previous processes favouring conflict avoidance and non-interference, all of the institutions

discussed below demonstrate a greater willingness to have the uncomfortable conversations required to address sensitive security problems, and are regularly praised for allowing ‘for a more frank and free flowing exchange of views’ (ARF, 2002).

Non-traditional Security and the ASEAN Regional Forum

The establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1993 signalled the start of NTS initiated cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The ARF was developed to address the ‘new security challenges in the wider Asia-Pacific region following the end of the Cold War’ (Khong & Nesadurai, 2007, p. 33). It was also a successful bid by ASEAN to draw important regional actors into cooperative security frameworks. Over time the ARF has grown to encompass the majority of the states in the Indo-Pacific.

NTS issues have always been an important part of the ARF and have increasingly come under the Forum’s jurisdiction (Haacke, 2009). In the last decade, the ARF agenda has ballooned with activities devoted to NTS cooperation; between August 2013 and December 2014 approximately half of the meetings/workshops on the ARF agenda were devoted to NTS-type problems (e.g., transnational crime, environmental degradation, cyber security, disaster relief) (ARF, 2014). More significantly, NTS issues are one of the few areas where the ARF has successfully achieved practical security cooperation. In particular, maritime security (disaster relief), humanitarian assistance, transnational crime, and terrorism have been valuable starting points for cooperation. Each of these issues has its own ongoing Inter-sessional Support Group (ISGs) or an Inter-sessional Meeting (ISM) and form a prominent part of the ARF’s agenda (Khong & Nesadurai, 2007). ARF participants are aware of the coordinative opportunities offered by NTS issues and have discussed ‘whether practical cooperation in relation to NTS issues could be a step to moving unambiguously from

confidence building to preventive diplomacy’ (Haacke, 2009, p. 443). For instance, Khong and Nesadurai note that the threat of terrorism has been able to unite a ‘sizable minority’ of ARF participants and have spurred enhanced levels of cooperation beyond what is characteristic for the Forum (2007, p. 77).

NTS issues are driving the ARF to reorient and re-organise itself to more effectively cope with NTS issues. The Forum’s Vision 2020 commits to the development of ‘preventive diplomacy in priority areas that directly affect our peoples and that are insurmountable through our individual actions alone, namely those pertaining to non-traditional, trans-boundary and inter-state security challenges’ (ASEAN, 2009). This reorganisation has led to the development of a ‘defence track’ within the forum. The ARF has increasingly sought to include defence officials, and what first began as an informal luncheon in early 1997 eventually evolved into the ASEAN Regional Forum-Defence Officials’ Dialogue (ARF DOD). ARF DOD meetings are held several times a year, with four such meetings held in 2010 and three in 2011. The topics of discussion vary and include managing and responding to natural disasters, strengthening defence diplomacy within the ARF, enhancing regional cooperation on maritime security and peacekeeping operations, using military resources to adapt to climate change, piracy and terrorism (Ball, 2012). While the topics differ, the theme remains the same, with the ARF DOD meetings geared towards trans-boundary and mostly non-military threats to stability, in other words, on NTS governance.

Defence officials have been reliably supportive of substantive security cooperation (Haacke, 2009) and they have used NTS issues as leverage to successfully argue for greater regional coordination. In the opening remarks of the ARF DOD in 2012 the Director General of the Cambodian General Department on Policy and Foreign Affairs referenced the ‘unpredictability driven by strategic competition with

increasing non-traditional security challenges’ and re-emphasised that ‘[n]on traditional security issues are no doubt the common key issues requiring joint efforts and cooperation’ (Sowath, 2012). Defence officials have clearly recognised that NTS issues ‘have presented the opportunities for a broader cooperation to better manage issues, particularly those which could lead to tensions and hostilities’ (ARF DOD, 2013, p. 2).

The ARF DOD’s arguments have been successful in gaining some levels of concrete security coordination. In 2008, the ARF held a table-top exercise focusing on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The success of this exercise subsequently led to a field exercise, known as a Voluntary Demonstration of Response (VDR) in May, 2009. This was the first live field exercise ever hosted by the ARF, and the VDR aimed to demonstrate the region’s ability to work together as a region towards disaster relief (Ball, 2012, p. 15).

Bolstered by the success of the VDR, the ARF held a full-scale Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) in 2011. Hosted by Indonesia, the scenario consisted of a hypothetical earthquake and subsequent tsunami striking North Sulawesi (ARF, 2011). By coincidence, three days prior to the start of the exercise a massive earthquake and tsunami had struck Japan – reiterating the very-real devastation of such natural disasters and the benefits of regional-wide responses. The Indonesian DiREx involved 3000 participants from over 23 nations and the European Union, and aimed to ‘enhance confidence and mutual understanding among the ARF’ and ‘strengthen cooperation and coordination among ARF members’ civilian and military agencies’ (ASEAN Secretariat News, 2011a).

The most recent DiREx, hosted by Thailand in 2013, was the most comprehensive to date (DFAT, 2013). Involving twenty-four ARF members and eight

international/regional organisations, the exercise included a Table-Top Exercise (TTX), a Field Training Exercise (FTX) and an After Action Review (AAR) (ARF, 2013). DiREx events have provided an important opportunity for cooperation across the Indo-Pacific, and full-scale cooperative exercises on Disaster Relief are now scheduled bi-annually, demonstrating a habit within the ARF/ARF-DOD of concrete security cooperation. The ASEAN Secretariat's Head of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Division noted that 'ARF DiREx is unique as it is by far the most inclusive simulation exercise in the Asia Pacific region' (ASEAN Secretariat News, 2013b). As lessons learned from previous exercises are applied, each successive DiREx is becoming increasingly complex and realistic, emphasising the 'growing significance of the ARF as a venue for concrete cooperation in disaster relief since the first exercise in 2009' (ARF, 2013, p. 2).

ASEAN and Defence Based Forums (the ADMM, ADMM-Plus)

Like the ARF, ASEAN has turned towards defence dialogues as mechanisms for organising and developing security cooperation on NTS issues. ASEAN established the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) in 2006 with the intent to move regional defense and security cooperation to a 'higher plane – from confidence-building initiatives to tangible defense and security cooperation within the ASEAN framework' (ADMM, 2007b, p. 2). The first meeting of the ADMM specifically mentioned the NTS issues of natural disasters, terrorism, climate change and transnational crimes as incentives for the forum's establishment. ADMM was the first formal multilateral process for defence ministers to meet and discuss cooperation in matter of defence and security and was designed to be the 'apex of all defense-related meetings within the ASEAN Framework' (ADMM, 2007b, p. 2).

ASEAN has used the ADMM as a mechanism to centralise regional military cooperation. In practical terms, this means that all existing meetings, such as those held between ASEAN armies, navies, air forces and military intelligence, now fall under the purview and direction of the ADMM. Whereas many ASEAN processes look inwards, the ADMM was designed to be ‘open, flexible and outward-looking in respect of actively engaging ASEAN’s friends and Dialogue Partners as well as [the] ASEAN Regional Forum’ (ADMM, 2006, p. 1). The ADMM has moved quickly to pursue cooperative efforts and it proudly proclaims that ‘[c]ooperation in the ASEAN defence sector has grown steadily since its inception’ (ASEAN, 2012). One year after its establishment the Meeting adopted a Three-Year Work Programme which declared that one of the ADMM’s goals was to ‘identify, prioritize and undertake practical security cooperation on non-traditional security concerns’ (ADMM, 2007a, pp. 3-4). The program selected NTS issues, like humanitarian aid and disaster relief, as good candidates through which to strengthen confidence-building measures. The Work Programme also articulated the need for cooperation to expand across the Indo-Pacific region in the form of an ADMM-Plus process. The ADMM-Plus extended ADMM style meetings across the Indo-Pacific and proactively engaged many of ASEAN’s friends and dialogue partners in more formal defence and security cooperation arrangements (ADMM, 2007a).

In 2009 ADMM took another step forward on NTS-based cooperation. Highlighting the ‘increasingly serious nature of non-traditional and transnational security threats’ (ADMM, 2009c, p. 2) and declaring that ‘regional and international cooperation need to be strengthened to meet non-traditional security challenges’ (ADMM, 2009c, p. 2), the ADMM adopted two concept papers that firmly put the region on track toward practical security cooperation.

The first concept paper, *Concept Paper on the Use of ASEAN Military Assets and Capacities in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief*, provided the basic framework for regional military responses to humanitarian and disaster situations in the region (ADMM, 2009b). The paper operationalised the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Responses adopted in 2005. It moved away from the generic terminology of ‘aid’ and ‘assistance’ and offered practical guidelines on how ASEAN militaries are to coordinate during large-scale disaster relief efforts. The paper aimed to enhance the effectiveness of ASEAN military responses to disaster relief, build a framework for deployment and acceptable response times, and clarified authority in disaster situations (all authority remains with the affected state)(ADMM, 2009b).

The second concept paper encouraged and outlined cooperation between ASEAN’s defence establishment and civil society groups for the purposes of addressing NTS issues (ADMM, 2009a). This paper, titled *Concept Paper on ASEAN Defence Establishments and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Cooperation on Non-Traditional Security* was adopted to fulfilled part of the ADMM’s Three-Year Work Programme. It is unusual in that it facilitates cooperation between individual ASEAN states and their respective civil society organisations, instead of focusing on cooperation amongst ASEAN states. Decentralisation of this nature was justified on the basis that each country copes differently with NTS problems and that ‘CSOs have played a major role in contributing assistance and worked closely with the people at all levels on non-traditional security issues’ (ADMM, 2009a, p. 2). This paper outlined practical steps facilitating cooperation between defence and CSOs on NTS issues (e.g., invite CSOs to defence workshops and establish channels for communication, consider CSOs’ views when developing policy, etc.)(ADMM,

2009a). These two concept papers were the first to chart the future roles and functions of the ADMM as a security coordinator, and it is telling that both papers dealt either explicitly or implicitly with NTS issues.

From ASEAN to the Indo-Pacific

Only one year after its establishment, the ADMM initiated the ADMM-Plus Processes. The ADMM-Plus extended the geographical reach ASEAN-based defence meetings across the Indo-Pacific to include Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States (ADMM-Plus, 2010b). The premise for this expansion was to create a forum for ‘transnational security challenges that are beyond the scope of any country to handle alone’ (ADMM-Plus, 2010a). The ADMM-Plus was the first ever formal meeting between Defence Ministers of ASEAN with their relevant counterparts from the eight dialogue partners (ADMM-Plus, 2010a).

Unlike traditional ASEAN processes, which are discourse based, ADMM-Plus processes have used NTS issues as leverage to push for actionable regional security cooperation. The Concept Paper for the ADMM-Plus emphasised that the only way to deal with new challenges was for ASEAN and the ADMM ‘to actively engage friends and Dialogue Partners from outside our region as ASEAN’s future is increasingly intertwined with that of the larger Asia-Pacific region’ (ADMM, 2007c, p. 5). A Joint Declaration issued in 2010 stressed that the key to NTS management rested on stronger regional security structures and labelled the ADMM-Plus as ‘a key component of a robust, effective, open and inclusive regional security architecture,’ that will allow ASEAN to ‘cooperate with the eight ‘Plus’ countries to address ... common security challenges’ (ADMM-Plus, 2010b, p. 1).

The ADMM-Plus, like the ARF, has been successful in achieving cooperation based on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). It has actively sought to ‘promote synergy between regional mechanisms,’ across the Indo-Pacific (ADMM-Plus, 2013b, p. 3) in the form of practical cooperative measures such as developing information sharing procedures and coordinating meetings, exercises and activities (ADMM-Plus, 2013b). Table 1 provides a list of practical security measure on NTS issues that have taken place in the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ADMM processes.

[Table 1 here]

Arguably, the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus have made remarkable headway in pursuing practical security cooperation in Asia – particularly in the Indo-Pacific. For instance, the efforts of the ADMM-Plus resulted in four cooperative exercises in 2013: the inaugural ADMM-Plus Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise and separate Military Medicine Exercises held in Brunei in June, the ADMM-Plus Counterterrorism Exercise (CTX) and the Maritime Security Field Training Exercise (MS FTX) conducted in September, and an additional peacekeeping table-top exercise that took place during the latter part of 2013 (ASEAN Secretariat News, 2013a).

Each exercise was hailed as a ‘landmark’ of cooperation amongst the defence forces that contributed ‘towards the building of regional capacity in addressing non-traditional security challenges’ (ADMM-Plus, 2013a, p. 3). The ADMM-Plus has used these small victories as steps towards even higher levels of defence cooperation. For instance, table-top exercises and meetings organised by the Expert Working Group on Maritime Security (EWG on MS) laid the foundations for the conduct of a Field Training Exercise and the launch of the ADMM-Plus’s Maritime Security

Community Information-Sharing Portal (ADMM-Plus, 2013a, p. 5). This portal is designed to foster practical defence and military cooperation by aiding information sharing between ADMM-Plus countries and drawing attention to maritime security activities in the region (AMSCIP, n.d.). The quick move to practical security cooperation is another indication of a shift away from the ASEAN-way, as previous cooperative efforts have spent years, if not decades, in confidence building measures prior to pursuing substantive security cooperation.

This practical approach to security cooperation has garnered the attention and praise of important regional players. Shortly after the ADMM's first meeting, the then-United States Defence Secretary Robert Gates noted the differences between the ADMM-Plus process and other regional governing mechanisms.

One of the critical challenges of the Asian security environment has long been the lack of strong mechanisms for cooperation between nations in the region ... last year the US was the first non-ASEAN nation to accept the invitation to join the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) forum ... I am optimistic that it will be a key body for making progress on a number of issues of shared interest including maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peacekeeping operations (Gates, 2011).

Secretary Gates' comments support the ADMM-Plus's more assertive governance approaches over the methods used by previous processes, and his high expectations appear to have been well founded. After the second ADMM-Plus meeting in 2013, his successor, Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel, applauded the ADMM-Plus for being 'action-oriented' and noted that, as a group, the 'ADMM-Plus is setting the right example with coordinated approaches to transnational and non-traditional threats' (Hagel cited in Pellerin, 2013). Perhaps realising the potential of new defence-based forums to fill the 'security governing gap' in Asia, the frequency of the ADMM-Plus, which was originally only scheduled tri-annually, has been increased to bi-annually

starting in 2013 (ADMM, 2012) with discussion now turned toward the potential of an annual meeting (Ball, 2012).

ASEAN – Bi-lateral Expansions to the Indo-Pacific

While this paper has focused largely on broad multi-lateral processes, it is important to turn a little attention to smaller sub-regional agreements on NTS issues. ASEAN has used the mutual vulnerability of NTS issues to engage its two most powerful Indo-Pacific ‘neighbours’ in bi-lateral forms of cooperation (bi-lateral meaning ASEAN-China and ASEAN-India). These sub-regional processes often predate the more recent developments in regional security cooperation, such as the ADMM and ADMM-Plus, and the involved countries have shifted the mutual trust evolving from these relationships onto the larger multilateral groupings. The success of bi-lateral agreements demonstrate how NTS problems can spur security cooperation on a smaller scale, and then be used to cultivate more comprehensive levels of cooperation at a later date. India and China are two important examples, despite being portrayed as regional competitors both countries have active agreements with ASEAN, and have also become important partners in multi-lateral forums like the ASEAN+3, ASEAN+10, ARF and the ADMM. The following section touches only briefly on the depth of cooperation existing between ASEAN, India, and China, and is not meant to be a comprehensive list of their cooperation on NTS issues. Instead, it serves to demonstrate how NTS issues foster cooperation at multiple, and mutually reinforcing, levels of security cooperation.

ASEAN-India Non-Traditional Security Cooperation

During the Cold-War, connections between India and the rest of the Asia-Pacific were tenuous; however, the end of bi-polarity signalled an upswing in relations between

India and ASEAN. Becoming an ASEAN Dialogue partner in 1992, India is now active in the ASEAN+1 processes, a member of the ARF, and a member of the ADMM-Plus. India also ascended to the *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation*, the bedrock of ASEAN led diplomacy, in 2003 (Naidu, 2004; ASEAN-India, 2012).

The dearth of previous connections makes the recent developments between India and Southeast Asia all the more remarkable, particularly India's 'Look East' policy (Naidu, 2004). Though this policy indicates India's renewed focus on its eastern neighbours and encompass the entirety of the Asia-Pacific (thus making it a truly Indo-Pacific endeavour), it is most clearly focused on Southeast Asia. India has actively engaged members of ASEAN (Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore) along with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to combat NTS issues. Notably, it established the Bay of Bengal Navies in 1995 with the goal of dealing with trans-boundary problems like interoperability. It has also and focused on specific NTS problems like coordinating search and rescue missions and conducting seminars on cooperation concerning marine environmental protection, pollution control and disaster relief (Naidu, 2004).

Between India and ASEAN 'mutual concerns are seen to be converging' (Devare, 2006, p. 18) and NTS issues have become effective catalysts for the development and strengthening of regional security structures. Maritime issues in particular have offered ample opportunity for both ASEAN and India to work together, as '[m]any so-called non-traditional security concerns, such as piracy, pollution from oil spills, safety of SOLCs, illegal fishing and exploitation of offshore resources, and other important elements of economic security, are essentially maritime' (Ball, 2012, p. 27).

'India-Southeast Asia convergence can be a harbinger of partnerships across Asia' (Devare, 2006, p. 4) and cooperative efforts between India and ASEAN are now

being funnelled into the ADMM-Plus processes. A vision statement released at the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit elevated the ASEAN-Partnership to a strategic partnership and emphasised the commitment of participants to utilise ASEAN-led processes like the ADMM-Plus and the ARF to ‘foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues’ (ASEAN-India, 2012). Further, it reconfirmed the participants dedication to ‘fostering greater security cooperation and information sharing in the form of regular and high-level security dialogues to further address traditional and non-traditional security challenges’ (ASEAN-India, 2012). Even more comprehensive levels of cooperation have taken place between ASEAN and China.

ASEAN-China Non-Traditional Security Cooperation

Perhaps the most well developed example of NTS issues as a basis for regional cooperation is between ASEAN and China. China participates in several ASEAN-led efforts including the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN + 3, ADMM Plus and the East Asia Summit. Separate, and prior to most of these forums, ASEAN and China entered into a unique partnership devoted specifically to NTS management. In 2002, the 6th ASEAN-China Summit issues a *Joint Declaration of ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues*. The Declaration emphasised the importance of strengthening regional and international cooperation expressly for the purpose of dealing with NTS issues (ASEAN-China, 2002).

This declaration was just the start of ongoing NTS cooperation between China and ASEAN. They signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security issues in 2004 (MoU, 2004). The MoU ‘determined to deepen cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues’ and identified

areas of cooperation such as information and personnel exchange, joint training, law enforcement cooperation and joint research efforts (MoU, 2004). David Arase in his article for the *Asian Survey* provides a comprehensive list of all of the plans, agreements and declarations between ASEAN and China concerning NTS issues between 2000-2010, totalling over two dozen gatherings. Cooperation between China and ASEAN has continued forward with an agreement on military cooperation concerning NTS issues in 2007, and another Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Non-traditional Security Issues adopted in 2009 (Arase, 2010, p. 822; ASEAN Secretariat News, 2012).

These agreements have all contributed to supporting a broader multi-lateral security framework spanning the Indo-Pacific. In fact, both China and ASEAN have taken pains to situate their bi-lateral cooperation as part of a nested progression of governing structures. For example, the Action Plan adopted in 2004 to operationalise the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity articulated that enhanced cooperation would be sought through existing mechanisms such as the ASEAN Senior Officials Meetings and ASEAN Plus Three Ministerial Meetings (Plan of Action, 2004). In a similar manner, the subsequent Plan of Action adopted for 2011-2015 was presented as a cooperative effort between ASEAN and China to realise the ASEAN Community by 2015 (Plan of Action, 2010). In order to implement the Plan of Action, China hosted a series of workshops and training in 2010-2011 for ASEAN Member States (ASEAN Secretariat News, 2012). Arguably, the enhanced linkages derived from NTS cooperation have aided current trends in Indo-Pacific regionalism, 'as their NTS cooperation broadens and deepens, China is drawn further inside the Southeast Asian circle of amity and conflict, whereas it used to stand solidly apart' (Arase, 2010, pp. 826-827). In turn, this security coordination

has helped further other avenues of cooperation, both between China and ASEAN as well as in the larger forums geared towards comprehensive security coordination. A very significant implication of this trend is that ‘the institutionalization of defense cooperation is riding piggyback on the back of progress made in NTS cooperation’ (Arase, p. 818).

Conclusion

This paper has explored the influence of NTS on security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. In particular, it has evaluated how NTS threats have functioned as important drivers for the expansion of existing institutions, and the development of new institutions aimed at providing security governance. It has highlighted the tension between realist traditions focusing on the state as the highest actor in international relations, and the realities of state interdependence regarding non-traditional security governance. By demonstrating the necessity of, and gradual shift towards, regional institutions as the providers of state security, this article undermines the realist assertions that the state is the highest actor in security. Instead it promotes an alternative perspective of regional security that expands both the sources of insecurity (NTS issues) as well as the reference objects of security. From this perspective, stronger regional institutions are key to ensuring the stability of both individual states and the region as a whole.

The trans-national and non-military nature of NTS issues has caused the region to re-evaluate the feasibility of the ASEAN-way as its dominant government paradigm. NTS issues require more than just rhetoric, and have driven the region to accept stronger and more assertive forms of cooperation. New forums have developed a reputation for forthright discussions on NTS issues and for being more tolerant of criticism. Additionally, ASEAN’s emphasis of moving at a pace comfortable to all

has fallen by the wayside as practical security exercise such as the DiREx can, and do, occur without the participation of all countries.

The transnational nature of NTS issues offers the necessary incentive for countries in the region to recognise their common interests and undertake substantive steps towards meaningful security cooperation. This has manifested in the development of the ARF, the ADMM, and the ADMM-Plus, as well as a host of individual bi-lateral arrangements between ASEAN and countries across the Indo-Pacific, each providing an additional layer in a nested hierarchy of governing structures.

Cumulatively, linkages based on NTS have progressively begun to link the Indo-Pacific into a very nascent, but no less real, entity of governing space. Where ASEAN and the ARF have served as mechanisms to develop the habit of dialogue amongst the disparate states in Asia; the newer defence-based NTS forums may serve as opportunities to acclimatise these same states to more actionable defence cooperation in the future. NTS issues have, in some cases, offered an ideal opportunity for states leery of cooperation to test the waters of multilateralism on less politically volatile issues (such as humanitarian assistance). NTS issues have potentially paved the way for cooperation of a more military or strategic nature, as David Arase notes, '[i]t is not unrealistic to expect NTS to broaden into traditional military cooperation' (Arase, 2010, p. 827).

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Table 1. Table of Practical Security Measures based on Non-Traditional Security Issues.

Practical Security Cooperation on Non-Traditional Security Issues		
Scale	Issue	Measure
ASEAN/ADMM Plus	Maritime Security	ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise (2013) Maritime Security Community Information-Sharing Portal (AMSCIP)
	Counter Terrorism	Table Top Exercise (2012) Counter Terrorism Exercise (CTX) (2013)
	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)	ADMM-Plus HADR/Military Medicine Exercise (2013)
	Peacekeeping	Table Top Exercise under ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations (2014)
ASEAN Regional Forum	Humanitarian Assistance/ Disaster Relief (HADR)	Table Top Exercises (2008) Voluntary Demonstration of Response Exercise (2009) Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) (2011) Disaster Relief Exercise (2013)

Source: Derived from (ASEAN, 2012; ARF, 2014; Ball 2012; AMSCIP, n.d.)