



**Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific**

# MEMORANDUM 1

## THE SECURITY OF THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

### A. Major political and security issues

1. A new equilibrium among the great powers is yet to be established in the Asia Pacific region. The relationship between the United States, Japan, China, and Russia will be crucial for stability and peace.
2. Potential inter-state conflicts still exist. North-South relations in the Korean Peninsula and the North Korean efforts to enhance its nuclear capability have caused serious tension. Other potential conflicts include the overlapping claims in the South China Sea, the China-Taiwan problem, and the Russia-Japan territorial dispute.
3. The military modernization programmes of some states have caused concern and anxiety among others in the region. The various ground, air and naval arms procurements of several states have led to perception that a major arms build up is underway in the region.
4. Domestic developments in some states could contribute to instability in the region. Issues related to generational and leadership change, income and economic disparity, and expectation for political reforms, are potential troublesome developments. Also, domestic insurgencies and minority problems in some states remain sources of internal and international concern.
5. New assertions on human rights, environmental protection and democratization add to and compound these uncertainties over domestic developments, as is the case with ever-expanding inter-regional illegal immigration, drug-trafficking and fisheries problems.
6. Security cooperation on a multilateral basis is still problematic, whether it be on a governmental or non-governmental basis. In the economic realm, the governmental APEC and the non-governmental PEEC and PBEC have developed into useful fora for regional cooperation. In the security realm, the ASEAN Regional Forum and CSCAP are new, but they should develop into effective fora for dialogue and cooperative effort within a short period of time.

### B. Confidence building measures (CBMs) – an effective mechanism

1. Despite several negative factors affecting the region's political and security situation, the problems that need to be addressed can be approached in a relatively benign environment. To take advantage of this reasonably favourable climate, it is timely for the

ARF to begin to address key areas of concern and specifically, to consider various confidence building measures (CBMs) which could promote peace and security in the region.

2. CBMs provides both the process and procedure aimed at raising goodwill and trust among governments through a variety of measures in the economic, political and military fields. It is a distinctly psychological exercise aimed at reducing misperception and suspicion. In the military field, it is basically aimed at enhancing transparency between states. In its simplest form, the concepts of transparency posits that when a state knows the level and types of arms and the doctrines and military planning that a neighbouring state has, and the rate that its neighbour is arming or disarming, the changes for dangerous over-acquisition of arms or of potentially escalatory tension will be reduced.
3. CBMs consists of deliberate economic, political and military measures designed to alleviate tension and reduce the possibility of military conflicts. This implies that peace can be attained on the basis of common security collaboration among states. CBMs also is part of cooperative security, which facilitates preventive diplomacy and averts conflict. CBMs also seeks to make military intentions clear in order to promote confidence by increasing the flow of information.

### **C. Security CBMs activities**

1. Promotion of activities in preventive diplomacy in the region including the following:
  - (a) support for the Indonesian initiated ASEAN Workshop on the South China Sea;
  - (b) promote dialogue and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula (at the bilateral and sub regional levels);
  - (c) promote dialogue on North Pacific cooperative security (both official and “second track” efforts).
2. Expansion of existing bilateral agreements, for example, those covering incidents at sea between Russia and the United States, and Russia and the United Kingdom, to include some other countries: they could be developed into multilateral instruments.
3. Implementation of CBMs in the military field through information exchanges and other procedures, including:
  - (a) intelligence exchange;
  - (b) mutual invitation to observe force manoeuvres;
  - (c) notification of forthcoming military exercises;
  - (d) exchange of information and comparison of estimates of military strengths, military budgets, doctrines and forward projections;
  - (e) publication of a defence white paper or equivalent for each country; and
  - (f) sharing of concepts and methodologies for defence planning and force structure developments.
4. Cooperative efforts to ensure the security of sea-lanes and sea lines of communication, with the enhancement of capabilities and maritime surveillance, safety, and search and rescue operations, for example, the concept of a Regional Maritime Surveillance and Safety Regime (REMARSSAR), and the establishment of a Regional Maritime Communications Network in the South West Pacific.

5. Other proposals in building regional security regimes including the following:
  - (a) a South East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEA-NWFZ);
  - (b) a Regional Airspace Surveillance and Control Regime;
  - (c) a Regional Security Assessment Centre;
  - (d) a Regional Technology Monitoring Centre;
  - (e) a Resource and Information Centre on Arms Transfer and Production; and
  - (f) A Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre.
6. Cooperative measures to control new technologies and weapons of mass destruction, especially ballistic missiles, nuclear and chemical weapons.
7. The list above is not meant to be exhaustive, and the various CBM activities can be phased in over a number of years. Also, consideration should be given to other fields of cooperation, which are related to security, such as:
  - (a) economic security;
  - (b) environmental security regime; and
  - (c) Zone of Cooperation, e.g. for the Timor Sea or the South China Sea.

#### **D. Relationship between ARF and CSCAP**

1. In all the above activities, support from the non-governmental efforts or the “second track” process might be crucial, especially in the earlier stages. CSCAP has considerable intellectual strength and expertise, drawn from research institutes, universities and officials acting in their private capacities.
2. CSCAP task force or study groups could deal with regional security issues in depth, in workshops and seminars. Their findings would be made available to the ARF and other official forums which promote regional security.
3. CSCAP has initiated four projects which may prove useful to ARF, viz. Comprehensive/Cooperative Security, Maritime Cooperation, Enhancement of Security Cooperation in the North Pacific, and CSBMs and Transparency. Also, CSCAP would develop a database and information centre on security matters in the Asia Pacific region.
4. Finally, CSCAP can support the ARF by providing the necessary support activities for ARF agenda, and making recommendations which are relevant for policy implementation by the ARF.

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