

ASEAN's response to the Changes of the US and Chinese foreign policy to the ARF

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[Abstract]

This paper examines the changes of the US and Chinese foreign policy to the ARF and ASEAN's reaction to the changes. The two powers are indispensable factors for the establishment of the ARF and sustainable stability in the Asia Pacific region. The two powers' ways of utilizing the security forum have gradually become similar in the point that they have participated pro-actively in the forum. Yet there are significant differences of use of the ARF between them. On the one hand, the United States had requested more institutionalized and active ARF while started to have an idea on a new security framework in East Asia that might overlap the role of the ARF. On the other hand, China has gradually concentrated on improvement of CBMs that might not disturb its crucial security issue such as Taiwan Strait and then South China Sea. While such big powers' involvement has occurred, ASEAN has adhered to the ASEAN Way and has not failed to manage the ARF.

Introduction

In 1994, ASEAN held inaugural ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting where participants exchanged their opinions on various security issues in the Asia Pacific region. The primary and principal purpose of the forum was to deal with the uncertainty of Asia Pacific security which had emerged from the demise of the Cold

War. Regarding the uncertainty, main concern of ASEAN states was future conduct of two states in the region, the United States and China. The Dominant power in the Asia Pacific region, the United States' political and military involvement has been recognized as important factor for Southeast Asian security during the Cold War. As another significant actor in the region, China has been increasing its economic and political influence over the world. Saying more, China has been had territorial dispute with ASEAN states on the South China Sea. Hence, ASEAN states have sought to maintain US presence in Southeast Asia by both individual and collective ways while engaging flexibly with rising China.

So far, ASEAN has seemed to achieve its objectives of establishment of the ARF because the United States and China have participated in the forum for 15 years. However, the principle of management of the ARF is still controversial. On this a certain level of success, the application of the ASEAN Way that consists of consensus decision making, informality, principle of non-interference, and maintaining comfortable pace of development for all participants can be regarded as a reasonable factor. Besides, ASEAN's driving role in the ARF and the application of the ASEAN Way to the ARF are expected to manage balance of power in the region by spreading a norms of restraint among the ARF members from long term perspective¹. In contrast with the positive argument above, some researchers on the stance of realism points out negatively that the ARF which has been driven by ASEAN is not appropriate institution for Asia-Pacific security. They say that the ASEAN Way is not simply applicable to the ARF where external big and middle power states participate with ASEAN members that can be said as weaker powers than them².

The objective of this paper is to explore how big powers foreign policy influences the characteristic of the ARF. Changes of US and Chinese foreign policy to the ARF and reaction of ASEAN to these changes will be examined.

This paper consists of four sections: introduction; three sections on the foreign policy of the United States and China; and conclusion. In the first section, present situation of the ARF and the reasons for existence of the forum are demonstrated. In the second section, US foreign policy to the ARF is examined with mentioning US

¹ Amitav Acharya.2001. "Constructing a security community in SE Asia" Chapter 6 in *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the problem of regional order*. London; New York: Routledge 184.

² See, Shaun Narine.1997. "ASEAN and the ARF: The Limits of the "ASEAN Way"" *Asian Survey* 37:10. and Yoneji Kuroyanagi. 2003. *ASEAN 35 nen no kiseki: 'ASEAN Way' no koyo to genkai*. Tokyo: Yushindokobunsha

incentives to participate in the regional security dialogue framework. The dominant power in the region has utilized the forum to while it has kept its bilateral relations with Asian states and Then, Chinese foreign policy to the ARF is elaborated. Generally speaking, China has proactively participated in the ARF to reassure neighbor states and prevent the forum from evolving into coercive institution against national behavior. Next, ASEAN's reactions to the changes of US and Chinese foreign policy follow. Finally, the common points and differences of the two big powers' foreign policy to the ARF are demonstrated as the conclusion of this paper.

ASEANS' Cooperative Security framework

On 24 July 2008, 15th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which had been held annually since 1994 was convened in Singapore. 26 countries and European Union (EU) participated in it and both traditional and non-traditional security issues in the Asia Pacific region were discussed by them³. For instance, as traditional security issues, missile and nuclear development in North Korea, territorial dispute on the South China Sea, and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were listed on the Chairman's statement. Regarding, non-traditional security challenges, counterterrorism, disaster relief, transnational crimes, and maritime security in the Strait of Malacca and so on were noted in the statement. The ARF is defined as comprehensive security framework by the expansion of security agendas that are discussed in the forum⁴. Each government sends its foreign minister or an equivalent of that and senior officials to the ARF.

As its name shows, the ARF is a forum that does not have coercive power to participant states but improve interaction and information exchange among participants. The two fundamental objectives of the ARF agreed in its augural meeting are: "to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern"; "to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia pacific

³ ASEAN 10, Australia, Canada, China, EU, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, ROK, Russia, The United States India (1996), Mongolia (1998), DPRK (2000), Pakistan (2004), Timor Leste(2005) ,Bangladesh(2006), and Sri Lanka(2007) attended.

⁴ Julie Gilson. 2007. "Regionalism and security in East Asia" (in) Anthony Burke and Matt McDonald (eds.) *Critical Security in the Asia Pacific* UK: Manchester University Press, 232-33

region”⁵. These objectives also demonstrated in the 1995 second ARF by adopting the Concept Paper. In the paper, the development of the ARF is divided into three stages: “Promotion of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)”; “Preventive Diplomacy (PD)”; and “Conflict Resolution”⁶.

As of the beginning of 2009, the ARF is on the stage between promotion of CBMs and PD, which means that the participants has not fully prepared to reach at PD yet. The ARF adopted the Concept Paper of Preventive Diplomacy and defined the definition of PD applied only to the ARF with articulating CBMs⁷. However, concrete development in this area has not appeared. Besides, regarding to the ARF’s third stage, “Conflict Resolution”, even conceptual discussion has not started⁸.

While the development of the ARF stage has been gradually (or slowly) done, institutions of the ARF regarding to improvement of mutual understanding have been arranged. The enhancement of the role of ARF Chairman, institution of Eminent Expert Persons Group, and incorporation of the ARF Unit in the ASEAN Secretariat were set for increase of information exchange. In addition, new security dialogues under the ARF framework were set. ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) and ARF Defense Officials Dialogue demonstrate recent development of CBMs in the ARF.

The ARF is managed by “the ASEAN Way” that has been key principles of ASEAN since 1967. The components of the ASEAN Way are: informal and gradual approach to cooperation while rejecting rigid rules and procedures; the principles of non-interference in internal affairs; decision making through consensus; and

⁵ *Chairman’s Statement The First Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum* 1994. And According to the objectives, the ARF has set up various Inter - Sessional Meeting (ISM) depending on participants’ requests that comes from international situation, In the ISMs, a certain security issues are discussed by government staffs For instance, ISM on Counter- Terrorism, Disaster Relief, and Peace-Keeping Operation are there. *ASEAN Regional Forum List of Track 1 Activities Year 1994-2008 (Classified by Subject)*

⁶ “CBMs” includes: Dialogue on security perception; defense publications; participation in UN Conventional Arms Register and so on in short term. Over medium and long term, for instance, Maritime security information bases, establishment of zone of cooperation, and mechanism to mobilise relief assistance in the event of natural disaster are included. *The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper* 1995

⁷ PD in the ARF is defined as “consensual diplomatic and political action taken by sovereign states with the consent of all directly involved parties”. Its subject is to prevent disputes and conflicts arising from States that could potentially pose a threat to regional peace and stability. *ASEAN Regional Forum Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy* 2001

⁸ There is a difference of expression on this matter. While it is noted as “Conflict Resolution” in the Concept Paper 1994, it is noted as “elaboration of approaches to conflicts” in the second ARF Chairman’s Statement.

nonuse of force⁹. The principles of the ASEAN Way are reflected in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation signed in 1976: (1) Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of all nations; (2) The right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion, and coercion; (3) Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; (4) Settlement of differences and disputes by peaceful means; (5) Renunciation of the threat of use of force. The reason why the ASEAN Way has been adopted is that ASEAN states have had to concentrate on national development since their independences. Unstable domestic situation of each Southeast Asian state with delayed economic development and complex social situation where consisted of various religion and ethnic groups needed stable inter-state relations in the region. “The ASEAN Way” has given ASEAN states the basis of mutual trust and enabled them to concentrate on its economic and social development without anxiety on interference from other ASEAN states.

The establishment of the ARF was initiated by ASEAN countries although other countries in the Asia Pacific region presented their own suggestion on a new security framework. The forum was instituted on the basis of the ASEAN’s political relationship with its 7 dialogue partners of ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) which were the Australia, China, the Europe Union, India, Japan, Russia, and the United States. Although Australia, Canada, and Japan proposed on ahead to establish a security organization in Asia Pacific region that is more institutionalized than the ARF in the beginning of the 1990’s, these proposals did not realize because of persistent skepticism among states concerned inclusive ASEAN member countries.

The primary reason why the ARF was established is to cope with the uncertainty of Asia Pacific security environment which was expected to emerge from the demise of the Cold War. Especially among ASEAN states who sat driver’s seat of the ARF, they held two big concerns in the world after the Cold War; future conduct of the dominant United States and rising China. First concern was how the United States would redefine security environment of the Asia Pacific region and reconsider its foreign policy to the region. The US decided to reduce its forward-based military presence in 1990. The Bush administration agreed American withdrawal from Philippine base in 1991 as part of decrease of US deployment all over the world.

⁹ Hiro Katsumata 2006. “Establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum: constructing a ‘talking shop’ or a ‘norm brewery?’” *The Pacific Review* 19:2 188.

Whichever only political or both political and military meanings, however, ASEAN states of the Cold War period shared the same viewpoint that the US presence in Southeast Asia region contribute to the stability of the region¹⁰. Yet it should be pointed out that there was difference of extent on desired US involvement among ASEAN states in around the end of the Cold War. Singapore, Thailand, and Philippine favored a strong relationship with the United States in military realm. Thailand and Philippine were allied with the United States during the Cold War. Singapore did not have an alliance with but cooperated in military fields, especially maritime security area. In contrast, Indonesia and Malaysia of ASEAN disliked excessive US political and military involvement to Southeast Asia and they strived to strengthen regional resilience since ASEAN established¹¹.

The other concern for ASEAN on the future Southeast Asian security is the rise of China. Their concern was related to Chinese military enhancement, increase of political influence, and rapid economic growth. However, in political security realm, how China responds the power vacuum in Southeast Asia that appeared from the demise of pressure of Soviet Union distress strongly ASEAN states. Even during the Cold War when Soviet Union, China and the US mutually supervised, China did not hide its territorial ambition to Spratly Islands of the South China Sea. China and some ASEAN states has had territorial dispute on the area and Chinese action got aggressive since the end of the 1980's. Besides, in 1992 after the Cold War, China instituted a Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone of People's Republic of China in which the regarded the territory as China's. This Chinese political action threatened ASEAN states concerned. Besides, in the same year, China navy set up a territorial sign on a reef of Spratly Islands and ASEAN's concern on the territory additionally rose.

As illustrated above, the motivations for the establishment of the ARF are based on ASEAN's fear on US excessive withdrawal from Southeast Asia and Chinese aggressive action in the region. It can surely be said that other states in the Asia Pacific region such as Canada, Australia, Japan, and even the United States had motive to construct new security institution whichever the one is institutionalized strongly or weakly. Because, they also strived to deal with the security uncertainty hanging in the Asia Pacific region as ASEAN states did. The number of ARF

¹⁰ Renato Cruz De Castro. 2000. "Managing Strategic Unipolarity: the ASEAN States' Responses to the Post Cold-War Regional environment" (in) *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Security*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies 62-63.

¹¹ Tobias Nischalke. 2002. "Does ASEAN measure up? Post-Cold War diplomacy and the idea of regional community" *The Pacific Review* 15:1 95.

participants has increased since 1994 and then political interaction among them has been articulated. Yet since its establishment, the importance of US and Chinese factor has not decreased. Future viability of the ARF depends on to what extent the ARF can prevent from troublous relationship between the two states heightening more¹².

The U.S. foreign policy to the ARF

In the early 1990's, the United States had political incentives to participate in the ARF. Firstly, by getting involved in regional multilateral security framework, the United States sought to maintain and show its political presence in the region. Secondly, the Unites States regarded the forum as tools for increasing engagement with China.

The US involvement in multilateral security framework was triggered by the end of the Cold War and crucial regional security issues left, especially the rise of China. During the Cold War, the US alliance network in Asia and balance of power between Soviet Union and the United States formed by the network shaped the regional security. Under the bipolar security during the Cold War, There is little room for multilateral security framework in the Asia Pacific region.

However, the demise of the bipolar order made the United States reconsider its front-force deployment in the Asia Pacific. Under Bush's administration, as noted above, the government planed US military retreat from the region. The importance of the US alliance network in the region did not changed and was put in the center of US East Asian strategy. But, at the same time, a multilateral security institution was also regarded as an important supplementary venue for bilateral relations.

While decreasing the US military presence in the region, the United States sought to maintain its legitimacy of US involvement in the region's politics. Demise of clear threat might reduce legitimacy of US political presence in the region. The United States needed to a new framework to support and advocate US involvement even after the Cold War. Then, multilateral framework is thought as realistic tool to achieve the goal.

Besides, the United States had crucial security issues whose deterioration

¹² Cameron J. Hill and William T. Tow. 2002. "The ASEAN Regional Forum: Material and Ideational Dynamics" *Reconfiguring East Asia: Regional Institutions and Organizations after the Crisis*. London: RoutledgeCurzon. 179.

might damage US national security interests; nuclear development in the Korean Peninsula (proliferation of nuclear weapon); freedom of navigation in the South China Sea; Taiwan straits; and related to the adjacent issues, rising China¹³. The ARF Chairman's statements for 15 years in which those security issues except Taiwan Straits has been noted in most of all the Chairman's statements show the US attention to them. To get obtain good management and solution for those issues, multilateral approach was regarded as useful supplementary and sustainable way. The Secretary of State James Baker presented such idea in his article published in *Foreign affairs*¹⁴.

The United States has confronted with China on the Taiwan issue for long time. Since the end of Clinton's administration which took "constructive engagement" policy to China, the United States has gradually taken strategic engagement policy. There are three variants of US engagement to China: a bilateral approach by which escalated tension is avoided and highlights negotiation for resolving solution; a multilateral approach to promote China's participation to international institution and request her to be as a responsible player; and long-term cooperative relationship with China¹⁵.

Again, back to the ARF as revenue for legitimizing US foreign policy in the Asia Pacific region, the characteristics of the ARF management, decision making based on consensus and tendency to avoid an issue that might increase tension among participants, disturbed US strife. Regarding to the Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) system for its allies in Asia that the U.S. was working on, China complained strongly against the plan. The U.S. explained the necessity of the Missile defense system as the U.S. had to meet the fear of North Korean long range missile program. Yet China feared that the missile shields could increase Taiwan's defensive capability. In addition, China, with Russia, condemned that the missile system might bolster arms race in the Asia Pacific and even ASEAN states, especially Vietnam, were also skeptical about the ideas¹⁶. Then, the issue has not been noted in the ARF Chairman's statement.

After the tragic terror attack in the United States in September 11, 2001, The

¹³ Evelyn Goh. 2004. "The ASEAN Regional Forum in United States East Asian strategy" *The Pacific Review* 17:1 58.

¹⁴ James A. Baker (1991/2). "American in the Asia: emerging architecture for a Pacific community" *Foreign Affairs* 70:5 1-18.

¹⁵ Robert S. Ross. 1999. "Engagement in US China policy" (in) Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (eds.) *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*. London: Routledge. 183-185

¹⁶ *The Strait Times* (Singapore) July 28, 2000

ARF has concentrated on anti-terrorism. Every ARF of since 2002, the ARF participants have discussed anti-terrorism as the Chairman's statements shows. As the result of strong involvement in the Middle East and War against Iraq, the United States under Bush's administration frequently downplayed and depreciated the importance of the security dialogue in the ARF¹⁷. Anti-terrorism has become common interests among the ARF participants and changed the Sino-US relationship more constructive¹⁸.

The United States which had demonstrated its favor for institutionalized and actual cooperation framework since the beginning of 1990's launched recently concrete cooperation in the ARF framework. In 2007, Christopher Hill, the assistant Secretary of State expressed US desire to develop that kind of cooperation in the ARF and the field of disaster relief was a suitable option for the development. In 2004, destructive earthquake and Tsunami hit Indonesia and other its neighbor state was the background of this idea¹⁹. The US proposal for a disaster relief force is one clear indication of American engagement in the region²⁰. Then, at the next ARF, ARF participants agreed on revolving the ARF from mere dialogue institution into the one with concrete operations.²¹ Singapore Declaration adopted in the fifteenth ARF of 2008 is the first joint declaration in the 15-years history of the ARF. The declaration said that ARF participants would commit to undertake concrete and practical cooperation in the common interest realm²². As the future cooperation fields, disaster relief, non-proliferation, Peace Keeping Operation (PKO), and maritime security are considered. When it comes to maritime security, the safety of Strait of Malacca which is the important sea lane for ARF participants was paid

¹⁷ Condoleezza Rice was absent from the 14th ARF in 2007 as She put the visits to Egypt and Iraq ahead of the forum. But, the representative of the United States was sent to the forum instead of her. *Financial Times* August 1, 2007. It was her second absence from the forum and first time is the 12th ARF in 2005.

¹⁸ Jia Qingguo 2003. "The impact of 9-11 on Sino-US relations: a preliminary assessment" *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* Vol.3 171-173.

¹⁹ The Strait Times (Singapore) August 1, 2007

²⁰ The same perspective is shared with Australian government. The Australia's Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Now let's jump across the pond to Rudd's famous (or infamous) speech to the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC, on April 20: "Seventh, it has timely deployed the ASEAN Regional Forum for the purpose of developing confidence and security-building measures across the region. The ARF has spent far too long as a regional talkfest. One practical area where we can begin building CSBMs is in the development under this ASEAN Regional Forum umbrella of a regional counter-disaster co-ordination authority, an Asia-Pacific disaster management organisation." *The Australian* July 24, 2008

²¹ *Asahi Newspaper* July 25, 2008

²² *Asahi Newspaper* July 24, 2008

attention. The U.S. and China expressed their recognition that eliminating piracy in the strait and preserving the sea lane was necessary for stable international trade. Yet, Malaysia and Indonesia condemned their proposals with regarding them as arrogation²³.

In addition to the achievement of non-traditional security cooperation, long-standing US desire that the ARF will launch a concrete security cooperation activity has gradually realized. In May 2009, the United States and Philippine co-hosted the first actual joint exercise under the ARF framework; disaster relief exercise. The contents of this mile-stone exercise included search and rescue operations, medical activity, reconstructive of disaster area. The United States, China, Japan and other Asian states participated in the exercise. The existent idea on the future actual disaster relief was supported more strongly by the damage of big cyclone in Myanmar and large-scale earthquake in China happened in 2008.

The United States has utilized the ARF as political opportunity to increase a contact with North Korea. On the sideline of the ARF, US strife for holding the meeting with parties concerned was partly succeeded. According to the proposal from Malaysia, the United States held unofficial meeting on the North Korean issue with 5 other six-party talk's members except North Korea and ARF participants: Indonesia, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand in the 13th ARF of 2006²⁴.

However, an idea appeared in the US government on which the United States might launch into forming a new security framework in the East Asia. The idea is to transform irregular six-party talks framework on the North Korean nuclear development into a certain kind of permanent organization which is expected to have similar functions of Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe(CSCE) for the region's security, which was showed by US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice in 2008²⁵. This idea is thought in long-term and substantial practical obstacles: skepticism on the effectiveness of the six-party talks framework it self; North Korean political system totally different from other six-party's members; and the question how the new permanent security organization will have a linkage with Asian economic groups such as ASEAN plus three or Chiang Mai Initiative²⁶.

²³ *Asahi Newspaper* 3 July 2004

²⁴ *Asahi Newspaper* 28 July 2006

²⁵ *The Strait Times (Singapore)* July 25, 2008

²⁶ Francis Fukuyama. 2005. "Re-Envisioning Asia" *Foreign Affairs* 84:1 80-83.

The Chinese foreign policy to the ARF

There are mainly two political incentives for Chinese participation in the ARF: Firstly, China had to reassure its neighbor and other states that held a feeling of threat against rising China; Secondly, China strived to softly balance against the United States in the Asia Pacific region and prevent the United States from increasing its political influence more²⁷.

First, China needed stable relationship with neighboring countries and comfortable regional security environment to achieve steadily high rate of economic growth, as well as to aggrandize its political presence in the world. Over the 1980s and the 1990s, the number of Chinese participation into international security institutions started to increase dramatically²⁸. There was a fundamental strategy that China would participate actively in and give a proposal to the forum as long as those activities do not prevent Chinese political conducts²⁹.

Especially regarding to Sino-ASEAN relationship, since Tiananmen incident in 1989, China was imposed economic sanctions by European states and Japan so that China wanted to improve political relationship and economic cooperation with ASEAN. ASEAN states regarded the event as an internal affair and stood on the principle of non-interference that is also one of the important factors of the ASEAN Way³⁰.

When it comes to political relationship with ASEAN states, China has had territorial dispute on the South China Sea. Although China had already attended the workshops on resolution for the territorial dispute which were chaired by Indonesia which was non-concerned state, China additionally tried to increase the opportunity to contact with parties concerned by participating in the ARF. Besides, China has sought to make a better political relationship with ASEAN. China acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in the ASEAN-China summit in October 2003 as well as India did in the ASEAN-India summit.

China has been basically eager to maintain the South China Sea dispute as bilateral issue with ASEAN states and resisted to the United States which tried to

²⁷ Kuroyanagi also noted these two Chinese incentives and added third factor: brake against enhancement of US-Japan alliance. Kuroyanagi (2003) 103.

²⁸ Alastair Iain Johnston and Paul Evans. 1999. "China and multilateral security institutions," in *Engaging China: The management of emerging power*. Alastair Iain and Robert S. Ross (eds.) London: Routledge. 238.

²⁹ Chinese foreign minister, Qian Qichen, stated that they would utilize all helpful factors. *Asahi Newspaper* July 26th 1994.

³⁰ Tobias Nischalke. 2002. 96.

interfere with the dispute. The United States requested the freedom of navigation in the area and that the territorial issues should be dealt with as multilateral framework. Yet China fiercely opposed the US and said in the second ARF that the dispute had been already discussed in ASEAN States –China relationship³¹. Both of China and ASEAN has had incentives to avoid the situation in the South China Sea more vulnerable because of considered rewards of continued peace in terms of security and economic realms³².

In the ARF Chairman's statements, the importance and the progress of ASEAN-China agreement on the South China Sea has been confirmed. Declaration of the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea adopted in 2002 requested restraint to the parties concerned. The continuous confirm of regional code of conduct in the multilateral framework has been expected to facilitate the adoption of actual code of conduct.

Second Chinese main incentive to participate in the ARF is to utilize the ARF for soft balancing against the United States in the Asia Pacific politics. Chinese rapid economic growth and subsequent increasing military capability were enough to make international society recognize China as rising power against US dominance in the region. Yet China has not hoped to conflict directly with US. Actually, there are scenarios in which relatively weaker China use its military power against the United States and that will emerge from US excessive intervention against China or US military decline³³. However, There is little tendency of Chinese hard balancing against the United States because China has needed to cooperation with the United States for economic and military modernization³⁴.

In initial period of the ARF, China was not pro-active to participate in the forum because the future direction of the ARF and the usefulness of the forum to China were still unclear. Especially, China held suspicion that the ARF might be ruled by US political influence, deal with Taiwan issue, and set certain binding rule or norm to states. The anxiety made China absent from Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) meeting until its third meeting which was important track two meeting of the ARF although China has attended all ARF meetings since 1994.

³¹ *Asahi Newspaper* 2nd August 1995

³² Michael G. Gallagher 1994. "China's Illusory Threat to the South China Sea" *International Security* 19:1, 193-194

³³ Thomas J. Christensen. 2001. "Posing Problems without Catching up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy" *International Security* 25:4 14-21.

³⁴ Peter Van Ness. 2002. "Hegemony, not anarchy: why China and Japan are not balancing US unipolar power" *International Relations of the Asia Pacific* Vol.2 140-143

However, China started to get involved in the CSCAP after being released from those doubts by keeping its participation in the ARF.

China gradually participated in the ARF with proactive attitude. Yet, its attitude is divided into two types although Chinese common purpose to keep its political freehand as much as possible is there. In first type attitude, China tries to exclude a certain content that might be able to restrict Chinese behavior from the ARF consensus. In the second ARF of 1995, China strongly opposed to incarnate the ARF concept of “Conflict Resolution” in A Concept Paper. As a result of Chinese objection, its expression was weakened and changed into abstract one as “elaboration of approaches to conflicts”³⁵.

In addition, China sharply insisted the non-necessity of US involvement to the South China Sea dispute who requested freedom of navigation in the sea. China rejected that the territorial issue was discussed in broader multilateral framework than Sino-ASEAN states relationship. Yet, as China articulated territorial dialogues with ASEAN states, China started to soften its robustness and open the issue to the ARF discussion. China agreed to put the South China Sea issue formally on the agenda of the ARF’s meetings. Actually, political achievements on the South China Sea issue between China and ASEAN were observed and there has been no substantial progress on the issue in the ARF dialogue³⁶. However, the multilateral forum might function to confirm the bilateral agreement. Positive change of Chinese attitude to the forum is based on the recognition of trend of multipolarization in international system³⁷.

As second type of Chinese action to the ARF, China strives to develop the ARF process and improve CBMs so as to prevent ARF’s excessive institutionalization that might have coercive power against China. In 2005, the first ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) was held by initiative of China who proposed the conference in the 11th ARF in 2004. The reason why China has come to participate actively in a part of light institutionalization in the ARF is that China has recognized the advantage to set up rules in international politics ahead of other states.

³⁵ *The Second ARF Chairman’s Statement* 1995

³⁶ *Declaration on the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* 2002

³⁷ Biwu Zhang 2005. “Chinese Perceptions of American Power, 1991-2004” *Asian Survey* 45:5 680.

Influences of the changes on ASEAN's initiative

In this section, ASEAN's perception about and reaction to the changes of US and China's foreign policy towards the ARF are explored. As discussed above, the two big powers have gradually got proactive towards the ARF although the forum has not been given priority in their foreign policy.

Regarding the driving force of the ARF, ASEAN still occupied the driving seat of the forum although the big powers' pro-activeness to the ARF has strengthened. For instance, Chairmanship of the ARF is limited only to ASEAN members while the enhanced role of the ARF chair was clarified in the 2001 paper submitted by Eminent, Expert Persons (EEPs). In the paper, the roles of the ARF Chair were clearly defined as a facilitator for dialogues and mutual trust and a coordinator for consensus among the ARF members³⁸.

While ASEAN has kept the driving seat of the ARF, ASEAN also fears that ASEAN and the ARF might reduce its political significance because of an idea emerging from the United States. A creation of a new security framework which will be transformed from six-party talk to a permanent and more institutionalized framework might overlap the security area which the ARF has treated³⁹. Mr. Ong Keng Yong, ASEAN secretary-general from 2003 to last year, acknowledged that: 'If the six-party talks emerge as a formal mechanism, ASEAN will lose some of its shine'⁴⁰.

On ASEAN's reaction to Chinese involvements in the ARF, it can be said that Chinese involvements are consistent compatible with the purposes of the ARF that is supposed to improve trust among the forum's members. Chinese initiative of ASPC is a good example. ASEAN as an aggregation of weaker states cannot expect easily itself to affect other stronger powers by material factors but to affect them with non-material factors. Chinese preference for improving CBMs and non-preference for coercive and institutionalized security framework in the Asia pacific region worked in a good sense in terms of development of the ARF process.

As the issues to which both the United States and China are related, first, ASEAN members did not necessarily agree on US and Chinese contention about

³⁸ *Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair (Shared perspectives among the ARF members)* 2001.

<http://www.aseanregionalforum.org/PublicLibrary/ARFChairmansStatementsandReports/EnhancedRoleoftheARFChairEEPs/tabid/112/Default.aspx>

³⁹ It is supposed to be open to other Asian states The Australian April 2, 2008.

⁴⁰ *The Strait Times (Singapore)* July 28, 2008

maritime security around Southeast Asia. US proposal about maritime security vision on counter piracy and terrorist around Strait of Malacca area was agreed with Thailand in 2004 before it was submitted to the 9th ARF⁴¹. Yet at next ARF, about security in Strait of Malacca, Foreign Minister of Singapore contended that it was important for costal states to hold their jurisdiction in the area while the United States and other ARF members emphasized freedom of navigation⁴². On the South China Sea dispute between China and ASEAN members, ASEAN states have already agreed on the Code of Conduct and peaceful settlement without use of force. Yet the dispute is still shelved.

Second, in disaster relief area which was recently regarded as one of the most important regional security issues, implementation of joint disaster relief exercise is welcomed for ASEAN members because they are victims of recent natural disaster such as Tsunami in Indonesia in 2005. In addition, accumulation of concrete actions in non-traditional security area under the ARF framework might further function of the ARF without disagreement among its members.

Conclusion

The two powers' foreign policy to the ARF in which the basis of security cooperation among states has been articulated for 15 years has been made a progress for pro-active tendency. Both of the United States and China have participated proactively in the multilateral security framework, proposed and carried out concrete operation. The two states recognize the importance and the usefulness of the forum that enable them to increase political opportunity to contact other states. The United States deal with North Korea issue in the ARF and took the advantage of the forum for holding meetings on the issue even with ARF participants not involved directly in the issue.

China also used the ARF to reassure ASEAN states which have had territorial dispute on the South China Sea with China. Although China gave permission to the ARF consensus that the territorial dispute was treated in the ARF, the Chinese basic diplomacy has been that the dispute must be argued only between ASEAN states and China. Even though China strived to avoid the territorial dispute being treated on multilateral basis, her involvement in continuous security dialogue has

⁴¹ *Asahi Newspaper* June 26 2004.

⁴² *Asahi Newspaper* July 30 2005.

partly improved Sino-ASEAN states relationship.

Yet the directions where the two states have paid their effort are different in terms of future figure of the ARF. On the one hand, the United States has sought to develop the ARF for more institutionalized security framework and requested the forum concrete and actual operations. The US ambition for more robust ARF has not necessarily received affirmativeness from ASEAN states which has had driving force of the ARF. Because excessive institutionalization of the ARF which might interfere national behavior with coercion has been not favorable for ASEAN states which has adopted the ASEAN Way for more than 40 years.

While the United States' likelihood to more active ARF that might increase its usefulness for regional comprehensive security, the United States' strategy for the regional security might decrease relatively the value of the ARF. The United States started to consider the idea that transformed six-party talk framework into a new permanent security organization in East Asia. It might overlap the security fields which the ARF has dealt with and decline ARF's position in international politics.

On the other hand, China has mainly focused on improvement of CBMs. Improvement of CBMs set as the first stage of the ARF, ASEAN has accepted positively proposals that non-ASEAN members presented such as ASPC. In addition, implementation of concrete security cooperation against natural disaster which was listed in the line of CBMs over medium and long term demonstrates the good development of the ARF process with pro-activeness of China (and the United States).

Besides, about the definition of PD which is applicable only to the ARF, it was agreed that principle of non-interference which is also one of the features of the ASEAN Way as a result of China's insistence. Taking the ASEAN Way into consideration, the definition of PD is favorable for ASEAN. But for Chinese contention, the definition might be defined differently by the influences of non-Asian ARF members such as the United States, EU, Canada, and Australia.

Examining ASEAN's responses to both US and Chinese foreign policy to the ARF and regional multilateral security framework, ASEAN has reacted to them consistently on the basis of ARF process which was defined in the Concept Paper in 1994 and been holding tightly the driving force of the ARF while receiving criticism on the inefficiency of the ASEAN Way. ASEAN itself has also kept basically the principles of the ASEAN Way in political and economic area since its establishment. The US and Chinese political influences in the ARF have surely big impact as many instances shows but ASEAN has taken advantage of their influence

for their interests. Given the objectives of the establishment of the ARF, ASEAN has achieved them and even more.

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