

Peacekeeping: an emerging area of Southeast Asia's defence and security cooperation?

Nicole Jenne

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

njenne@uc.cl

Paper prepared for the ISA International Conference 'The Pacific Century?', June 15th-17th, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.

--- Early draft version, please don't quote or circulate without permission. ---

Abstract

Since the 1990s Southeast Asian countries have contributed significantly to international peacekeeping. In fact, peacekeeping, often couched in terms of 'Global South' or Asian solidarity, has become part of Southeast Asia's regionally promoted defence diplomacy. It is widely assumed that participation in international missions may lead to similar defence policies, missions and values and create contacts between security personnel that outlast specific missions. However, does Southeast Asia's defence diplomacy in the area of peacekeeping effectively constitute such a form of successful security cooperation? To answer this question, I examine three factors: the importance of peacekeeping relative to other military missions across different countries, the level of regional activity around peacekeeping as compared to similar cooperation schemes with extra-regional states, and thirdly, cooperation within the framework of specific missions. The paper concludes on a cautious note highlighting the limits to expanding cooperation in the area of peacekeeping.

Tags: peacekeeping, Southeast Asia, military, defence diplomacy

Acknowledgements: I thank Valentina Hidalgo and Patricio Le Cerf for their research assistance to this paper.

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, international peacekeeping has undergone significant quantitative and qualitative changes. One of the new trends is a shift in the profile of personnel contributing countries, with increasingly higher numbers of peacekeepers coming from the global south. Southeast Asia is no exception to this trend. Singapore, Thailand and the tiny sultanate of Brunei began to participate in UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs) when the Cold War ended. Cambodia and Vietnam became part to the group of contributing countries in the past decade. Countries with a history of contributing to UN peacekeeping – mainly Indonesia and Malaysia, but also the Philippines and Myanmar – have significantly broadened their engagement in the past two decades. Myanmar had participated in the UN mission to the Congo in the 1960s, and after decades of international isolation, in 2015 it sent two experts to UNMIL in Liberia and two troops to UNMISS in South Sudan, respectively (UN 2017). Thus, of the ten countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to date only Laos has no direct experience in peacekeeping.

At the same time as peacekeeping became more prominent in the region, it also turned into “a growing focus for defence cooperation” between the ASEAN states themselves and with external partners (Capie 2015:120). Including Laos’ security officials, together with those of other Southeast Asian countries, participated in a series of multilateral activities organized to promote exchange of information and best practices around peacekeeping. These include global international summits, on the one hand, and regular meetings under regional frameworks such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM), on the other. Although the individual motives for participating in PKOs vary and are typically mixed (Blum 2000; Bove and Elia 2011), clearly there has been one common rationale to Southeast Asia’s recent interest. Peacekeeping, as Cambodia’s 2006 Defence White Paper officially stated, was expected to contribute to regional peace and security (Cambodia 2006:84).

First, the creation of local Southeast Asian peacekeeping capacity can help managing intraregional conflicts while avoiding outside involvement. This thinking was expressed early on in 1999 by Indonesia’s President Habibie when he called upon ASEAN to send more troops to East Timor to have “‘brown-faces [sic]’ assuming control over security there” (Anwar 2014:196). Secondly, peacekeeping is widely

assumed to have transformative effects on a state's security and defence sector with positive implications for relations with other states (Caballero-Anthony 2005; Capie 2015:122–123). Being it an international exercise, peacekeeping creates contacts between security officials that may lead to positive attitudes towards each other and can eventually be used to ease tensions in potential conflict situations. Moreover, peacekeeping is believed to lead to convergence in defence policies, missions and values, thus bringing states closer together (Thayer 2014:220). As such, peacekeeping, considered to be a 'soft' security issue that "stands to facilitate a slow deepening of 'hard' security cooperation at the ASEAN level" (Borchers 2014:6), has become part of ASEAN's proclaimed Political-Security Community.

However, whether these expectations actually rest on a sound basis is far from clear. The emerging literature on peacekeeping is mostly concerned with individual missions and peacekeeping's effect on the host countries rather than the contributing states. While there is now a considerable number of studies dealing with Europe and Africa, little has been written on Southeast Asia's participation in international peacekeeping. Studies on Southeast Asian security regionalism deal with the topic rather in passing pointing out that encounters in and around peacekeeping increased the already "impressive number of ASEAN defence-related meetings, conferences and activities" (Singh and Tan 2011:9). Yet, has peacekeeping led to qualitative changes to ASEAN's security and defence cooperation, often criticized to be little more than a talk-shop susceptible to shifts in political preferences? Given that the majority of Southeast Asian countries are committed to increase their contribution to PKOs in the future, can we expect peacekeeping to play a role for the development of ASEAN's Political-Security Community?

Some ASEAN scholars have expressed almost blind faith in the common exercise of peacekeeping yielding transformative effects, stating that "[c]orralling a multinational military force under the ASEAN banner would deepen confidence-building and engender strategic trust among the ASEAN militaries" (Siew Mun 2015). However, occasional talk about an integrated ASEAN peacekeeping force notwithstanding, it is highly unlikely that such will be created even in the mid-term future (see SIPRI 2014). Moreover, even if Southeast Asian countries participate in the same international PKO, interaction between the national contingents is usually limited to encounters between a comparatively small number of individuals during preparatory

training. Exchanges of information and education programs around peacekeeping appear to be global as much as regional in scope with the US being the largest provider of bilateral peacekeeping capacity assistance through its Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI). This type of triangulated defence cooperation in which the US (and other extra-regional states) bring the ASEAN states together has a long-standing tradition in Southeast Asia and may indeed yield beneficial – intended or unintended – results for relations between the local states. Yet, if extra-regional partners are equally or even more sought after as compared to regional states – after all, the US has the technologically most advanced security apparatus – at the very least we might ask whether activities related to peacekeeping can realistically be expected to make a distinctive contribution to Southeast Asian security and defence policy. In this regard, Vietnam’s officially cited motivation to break with its historic reticence in 2014 and set new legal bases to send peacekeepers abroad is illustrative: As the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote in the official National Defence Journal, “[p]articipating in UN’s peacekeeping operations [constituted] a breakthrough in Vietnam’s integration process [...], contributing to the completion of its panorama of multilateral diplomacy in particular and of the country’s international integration in general” (Ha Kim Ngoc 2016).

Lastly, the claim that greater activity as a result of participating in peacekeeping leads to positive outcomes internationally can be questioned on the theoretical basis that cooperation in ‘soft’ security issues leads to the deepening of international ties. To be sure, peacekeeping reflects today a broad security agenda including both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ issues. Thus, contemporary PKOs typically combine “robust military forces capable of limited peace enforcement tasks, should a ceasefire break down, with a strong civilian component that often includes civil administration, humanitarian agencies and police and justice officers” (Bellamy and Williams 2010:279–280). The ‘hard’, military component may be considered as potentially less sensitive in the context of peacekeeping where the contributing states theoretically have no stake in the conflict where they deploy. Above all, however, it is the ‘soft’ civilian and humanitarian activities of peacekeeping that have been considered as potential catalysts of deeper security cooperation (Borchers 2014). However, as Chong and Chang (2016) have convincingly shown, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief

has functioned as an area of security competition “by proxy” between Southeast Asian states. As the two authors state, such ‘soft’ security issues provide

the perfect political cover for geopolitical rivalry without the consequences of dealing with combat-induced casualties and nationalist umbrage over territorial acquisitions and surrenders, allowing militaries to compete under the veneer of ‘cooperating’ to do ‘good’ (Chong and Chang 2016:78).

To what extent, then, can it be said that PKOs have furthered security cooperation between the ASEAN states? To assess the role of peacekeeping and its related activities to Southeast Asia’s security and defence cooperation, this article discusses three specific aspects. First, the relative importance different states attach to peacekeeping domestically; secondly, regional cooperation in relation to peacekeeping, specifically the initiatives under Southeast Asia’s track I and track II defence diplomacy; and thirdly, Southeast Asian countries’ cooperation in specific peacekeeping missions, under the UN and otherwise. In none of these areas, I will argue, is there a clear, discernible trend towards a quality shift in ASEAN security and defence cooperation based on activities revolving around peacekeeping. Rather, secondary importance attached to peacekeeping and limited cooperation in concrete actions indicates that peacekeeping is little more than another issue area that broadens security cooperation without significant potential to deepen it.

Before proceeding, it is worth asking why we should pay attention to peacekeeping given that as a policy area it is comparatively recent and clearly secondary to others such as maritime security or terrorism, for instance. Yet, reasons of both supply and demand merit a closer look at peacekeeping and its potential future in regional security cooperation. First, with regards to supply, there is a trend in Southeast Asia towards enhancing capacity for peacekeeping with some states having expressed their preference for enhanced cooperation in this area. These include Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and more recently also Cambodia.

On the other hand, demand for peacekeeping persists at the regional level and the UN estimates that it will grow further at the international level (ref). Southeast Asia is not free from conflict and regional capacities to carry out PKOs can have advantages over UN-led missions (Kamarulzaman 2005). Faced with a growing demand for peacekeepers globally, the UN has repeatedly called upon regional organizations to take on responsibility based on Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. So-called ‘hybrid

missions' in which regional organizations work in parallel, support of even jointly with the UN to stem the political, financial, logistical and military responsibilities of a mission have been carried out by the EU and the African Union (Tardy 2014).

Therefore, and since ASEAN is generally considered to be one of the most successful regional organizations, it might well want to ask itself whether it is willing to meet the global expectation of burden sharing in the future.

The remainder of the paper is divided into four parts. The following section compares the national trajectories of peacekeeping and the relevance of PKOs across Southeast Asian states today. Next, I take stock of different regional and international initiatives around peacekeeping the ASEAN members take part in. The fourth section discusses to what extent we can speak of regional cooperation considering states' participation *in* specific UN and non-UN PKOs. The concluding section brings the findings together.

The comparative importance of peacekeeping domestically

If peacekeeping is to become an area consolidating security and defence cooperation in Southeast Asia, we should see convergence at a fairly high level in the importance the individual ASEAN member states ascribe to it. Consider first the trajectories of the individual states' contribution to UN peacekeeping. Following Haesebrouck (2017), states with a history of peacekeeping are more likely to contribute to peacekeeping also in the future in order to meet the expectations their prior action has created and to satisfy the demand of domestically created roles in this area (Lebovic 2004). In this regard, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines stand out as those countries with the longest history of sending blue helmets abroad almost from the very beginnings of the UN (see Table 1). Indonesia participated in the first armed PKO to address the Suez Crisis in 1956. Earlier, the Philippines and Thailand had participated in the Korean War (1950-1953) under the United Nations Command (UNC). However, although the UNC was authorized by the Security Council to use the UN's flag, the US-led force was not a peacekeeping mission.

The Philippines did join ONUC in the Congo in the early 1960s, the UN's first large-scale mission of nearly 20,000 military personnel at its peak. Also Malaysia and Myanmar, then in the early years of Ne Win's military dictatorship, participated in

ONUC. Subsequently, however, Myanmar retreated from peacekeeping and only in 2015 rejoined the group of contributing countries, about a dozen years after having sent civilian personnel to support the UN's political missions in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Iraq (UNAMI).

There were only 14 UN PKOs during the Cold War period from 1945-1987, compared to 56 missions since 1988. Non-UN actors carried out a significant number of missions across the globe, but from the 1960s on (Bellamy and Williams 2010:88–89), Southeast Asia had become more focused on domestic political struggles and conflicts within the region. The end of the Cold War brought important changes for peacekeeping generally and its relevance in Southeast Asia specifically.

Table 1. Southeast Asia and peacekeeping.

| | First UN mission | Senior appointments | Total prsnl. deployed (04/2017) | (data: total as % of the AF?) MILPER (2012, CINC |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| Brunei | 1992: UNTAC (Cambodia) | | 30 | 7,000 |
| Cambodia | 2005: UNMIS (Sudan) | | 846 | 124,000 |
| Indonesia | 1956: UNEF (Egypt) | Maj. Gen. Imam Edy Mulyono, MINURSO Force Commander (Western Sahara, 2013) SBY: previously chief military observer in UNPROFOR (Bosnia, 1995) | 2,722 | 302,000 |
| Laos | – | – | – | 29,000 |
| Malaysia | 1960: ONUC (Congo) | Lt. Gen. Khairuddin Mat Yusof, UNMISSET Force Commander (East Timor, 2003) | 866 | 109,000 |
| Myanmar | 1965-1966 (Congo) | | 0 | 406,000 |
| Philippines | 1963: ONUC (Congo) | Maj. Gen. Natalio C. Ecarma UNDOF Force Commander (Golan Heights, 2010); Maj. | 156 | 125,000 |

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|--|----|---------|
| | | Gen. Jaime De Los Santos UNTAET Force Commander (East Timor, 2000) | | |
| Singapore | 1989: UNTAG (Namibia) | Maj. Gen. Tan Huck Gim, UNMISET Force Commander (East Timor) | 0 | 73,000 |
| Thailand | 1991: UNIKOM (Iraq/Kuwait) | Gen. Boonsrang Niumpradit, UNTAET Force Commander (2000); Lt. Gen. Winai Phattiyakul, UNTAET Force Commander (2001); Maj. Gen. Songkitti Jaggabatara, INTERFED Dep. Force Commander (1999) (all: East Timor) | 29 | 306,000 |
| Vietnam | 2014: MINUSCA (CAR) | | 5 | 482,000 |

As the Cold War wound down, for the first time Brunei, Singapore and Thailand began to participate in UN peacekeeping. Although this was reflective of a worldwide upsurge in the number of peacekeeping personnel deployed, governments were also motivated by specific regional and national reasons. At the regional level, the two UN missions that took place in Southeast Asia in the 1990s played a special motivating role for many ASEAN states to contribute to stability in their immediate neighbourhood. All six ASEAN members at the time sent troops and police to UNTAC in Cambodia (1992-1993). The various missions in East Timor (UNAMET, INTERFET, UNTAET, UNMISET) counted with military, police and civilian contributors from Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, and each held the position of Force Commander for one year on a rotational basis (see Table 1). Indonesia, for obvious reasons, did not take part in East Timor and although Brunei did not participate directly, it agreed to send a company of British Ghurkhas stationed in Brunei (Ismail 2005:6).

The domestic push-factors for participating in PKOs varied across countries and across time. Singapore, for instance, with its offensive defense doctrine, has justified

peacekeeping “in the context of how globalization has affected its security interests” (Heng and Ong 2014). Thailand in the early 1990s underwent a process of democratization that went hand in hand with a shift in its foreign policy towards greater engagement and positive relations with other countries. Thailand’s Prime Minister Chaun Leekpai and his Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan saw peacekeeping as a possibility to bolster both these goals but had to fight hard to convince the military to participate.¹ Similar considerations of democratizing and civilianizing the armed forces played a role as well in post-*reformasi* Indonesia and surely in the Western states that have destined considerable resources to building peacekeeping capacity in ASEAN. Until today, however, the Royal Thai Army (RTA) has remained an exception in its reticence to participate in PKOs that many perceive as a second-order mercenary’s activity below the RTA’s standard. Curiously, the internationally criticized military dictatorship under retired Army General Prayuth Chan-Ocha appeared to see peacekeeping as a possibility of legitimization. As the administration’s ASEAN Information Centre reads on its website (Thailand 2015):

Thailand under the Prayuth administration has a clear policy to contribute as much as possible to the UN peace operation. Thai troops have been under training to increase their capacity to support the UN peace operation around the world.

Although this pledge has not been met – since the coup in 2014, less than 30 Thai peacekeeping personnel have been deployed at any point in time – the rhetorical commitment is in line with a general trend in ASEAN (see also Capie 2015).

Amongst the countries with a history of UN peacekeeping, Indonesia has sustained a significant participation in UN-led PKOs since 2006. The Philippines have maintained a higher level of contributions starting from 2009-2010. Evidence is less straightforward in the case of **Mal/S’pore/.**

Cambodia began to participate in PKOs in 2005 and steadily increased the number of peacekeeping personnel since. Like Singapore (2015), Cambodia has maintained that it cannot contribute with large numbers but adopted an explicit policy of identifying niches for peacekeepers with special competences instead (Caballero-Anthony and Haywood 2010). The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) have so far

¹ Personal conversation with Panitan Wattanayagorn, then at the Prime Minister’s office, Bangkok, June 2014.

successfully supported demining and explosive ordnance disposal efforts, while the Singaporean Armed Forces (SAF) have mainly sent small-craft capability logistics and reconstruction and humanitarian units, especially medics. Lastly, the trend to greater commitment is reflected in Vietnam joining the group of contributing countries. In 2014, Vietnam amended its constitution to lay the legal basis for the armed forces to participate in PKOs and created a peacekeeping centre for specialized training.

Based on this overview, it is possible to conclude that there has been some convergence on identifying peacekeeping as an important, although not primary policy area among the ASEAN states. Several observers even suggest that states have increasingly converged on greater acceptance of the contemporary robust UN missions mandated to ‘enforce’ peace where there is no peace to keep (Caballero-Anthony 2005; Capie 2015). Indeed, even Thailand’s conservative military Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha declared at a Peacekeeping Summit in 2015 that a broad, inclusive peacekeeping agenda was needed and stated: “We believe that peacekeeping mandates should become more robust” (Prayut Chan-o-cha 2015).

Yet, how significant are these developments for ASEAN’s Political-Security Community? Although the region’s growing commitment to peacekeeping will likely continue into the short-to-mid-term future, for none of the ten states peacekeeping is a primary mission or is likely to emerge as such in the near future. Malaysia is perhaps closest to include peacekeeping amongst its priorities, but like Indonesia and Vietnam, enhancing maritime security has taken precedence amongst other missions. In Singapore, the military is overwhelmingly concentrated on national defence against a potential external aggressor. The security forces of Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand, on the other hand, are overwhelmingly committed domestically either because they play a role in politics or due to internal armed conflict and strife.

One indicator for the importance ascribed to peacekeeping domestically is whether it plays a role for promotions within the military. The provisions for experience in PKOs, summarized in Table 2, clearly indicate that the armed forces’ promotion systems fail to provide special incentives for their best troops to participate in peacekeeping. –to be researched–

Table 2. Peacekeeping in the Armed Forces promotion system.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Brunei | |
| Cambodia | Formal promotion scheme, fails to be implemented. |
| Indonesia | No established rules for the promotion commissions. |
| Laos | n.a. |
| Malaysia | Promotions are political at the top level; up to the rank of Brigadier General standard rules apply. |
| Myanmar | |
| Philippines | |
| Singapore | Oversees missions rated positively in annual performance review. |
| Thailand | |
| Vietnam | |

Neither differences in peacekeeping trajectories and capabilities nor the fact that peacekeeping is a clearly secondary military and security objective across Southeast Asia are necessarily an obstacle to successful regional cooperation in this area as long as states perceive that there is a mutual benefit in capacity-building. Following this line, Thayer suggests that ASEAN’s newer contributing states can learn from their more experienced peers through socialization in regional peacekeeping exercises and in PKOs (Thayer 2014:219). However, as the following sections show, it is debatable whether the necessary conditions for the expected learning or socialization effects actually exist.

Regional cooperation around peacekeeping: defence diplomacy

Defence diplomacy, the “peacetime cooperative use of the armed forces and related infrastructure [primarily defense ministries] as a tool of foreign and security policy” (Cotter and Forster 2004:6), has become a major item on the post-Cold War international security agenda. Southeast Asia is no exception in this regard, and over the past two decades, peacekeeping has become an integral part to the region’s defence diplomacy involving both state officials (track I) and non-state actors (track II). For instance, this is clearly illustrated by the fact that the ARF’s Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures (CBM) listed conferences, seminars and joint exercises around peacekeeping in its annual reports under the rubric

‘implemented CBMs’ (available at ARF 2017). This section takes stock of regional cooperation around peacekeeping, that is, all preparation, training and education activities except for taking part in an actual PKO. These are then compared to bilateral cooperation schemes between the ASEAN member states and extra-regional partners.

Cooperation in the area of peacekeeping began under the region-wide Asia Pacific framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) soon after its creation in 1993. An Inter-Sessional Meeting on Peacekeeping Operations was established in 1996, and at its first meeting “[p]articipants agreed that the discussion on the subject of peacekeeping in the ARF context promotes greater understanding in the Asia Pacific region” (ARF Intersessional Meeting 1996). Following two peacekeeping training-related workshops in Malaysia and New Zealand during 1997, the ARF concluded that it was no longer necessary to hold on to a formal mechanism and suspended the Inter-Sessional Meeting. Between 1998 and 2005, two training courses, four seminars and one workshop were held in different ARF member countries before in 2007 a regular mechanism was re-established. The new Peacekeeping Experts’ Meeting met annually until 2013.

The ARF had considered the possibility of creating a regional peacekeeping centre for several years. Eventually, in 2009, ASEAN established an ASEAN Peacekeeping Centre Association. Two years later, this was formalized at the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) into a network of then five peacekeeping centres (Vietnam was the sixth to join in 2014; see Table 3). The corresponding Concept Paper laid out the network’s objectives in information sharing, joint planning and training in order to “promote and enhance cooperation among defence and armed forces [sic] within ASEAN Member States” (ADMM 2011). In the long-term, states pledged to enhance interoperability and create a regional standby arrangement.

The network’s first meeting in 2012 was co-hosted by Thailand and Indonesia and was attended by representatives from Cambodia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Thereafter, participation was gradually extended to include all national peacekeeping centres plus the military representatives from other countries. It is worth noting that Singapore, although it has no dedicated peacekeeping centre, participates through representation of specialized units in the armed forces and the police, which are also members of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC).

All/some (???) of the peacekeeping centres also train foreign military, police and civilians, which has provided an additional venue of exchange. However, as the next section will show, concrete plans for the long-term goals of interoperability or even a joint ASEAN force as envisioned in the Concept Paper have so far not been considered.

Table 3. Peacekeeping centres.

| | Creation | Observations |
|-------------|--|---|
| Cambodia | 2005: National Center for Peacekeeping Forces, Mine and ERW Clearance | |
| Indonesia | 2014: Indonesia National Defence Forces peacekeeping Center (PMPP TNI) | Compound including <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counter-terrorism training ground 2. HDR 3. Standby Force Centre 4. Defence University |
| Malaysia | 1995: Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre | In 2013 recognized as Full Training Capability (FTC) by the US |
| Philippines | 2002: Peacekeeping Operations Center | |
| Thailand | Peace Operations Centre (RTArF-POC) | Under the Royal Thai Supreme Command; member of the IAPTC |
| Vietnam | 2014: Vietnam Peacekeeping Centre | |

Peacekeeping-related activities have also been part of the ADMM-Plus, which held its inaugural meeting in 2010 and brings together the Defence Ministers of the ten ASEAN states and eight Plus countries: Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, ROK, Russia and the US. The ADMM-Plus convenes Expert Working Groups (EWG) in five areas, being one of them peacekeeping. Under this framework, two exercises have so far taken place, in 2014 (Philippines) and in 2016 (India). Apart from these fora, however, capacity-building activities have mainly taken place through bilateral mechanisms between the ASEAN states and their extra-regional partners (Cook 2014:156).

Amongst the many individual initiatives, it is worth noting the US's relevance in this regard. Cobra Gold, the US-led annual theatre security exercise in Thailand that

brings together up to 30 countries, has involved peace support and civilian evacuation operations. The US has also held bilateral exercises focused on peacekeeping with Indonesia (Garuda Shield) and Cambodia (Angkor Sentinel) (Capie 2015:121). A number of initiatives, especially with regards to improving peacekeeping education and training infrastructures in Southeast Asia have been funded through the US State Department's Global Peace Operations Initiative. Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand were amongst the first beneficiaries already under its predecessor, the Enhanced International Peacekeeping Capabilities (EIPC) program.

Other important partners of the ASEAN states in international cooperation around peacekeeping are Australia and the countries of the G8, most notably Canada, France, Japan and the UK.² These activities comprise a wide range of initiatives such as a cooperation scheme by the British Council to improve the English language skills of prospective peacekeepers in Thailand and Vietnam. Also the Singaporean Armed Forces, the most capable military in the region, cooperate with Australian, Dutch, US and New Zealand militaries in pre-deployment training and education courses. Lastly, as China is increasingly becoming involved in all aspects of UN peacekeeping (Foot 2014), it is likely that Beijing will increase its international activities in this regard as well. A first step in this direction was a Memorandum of Understanding on UN Peacekeeping Operations accorded with Vietnam in 2015.

In sum, peacekeeping appears to constitute another area of defence diplomacy with possibilities to build personal contacts and develop shared security outlooks. The tangible results in this regard are notoriously difficult to measure, but if one is to focus on the mechanism of capacity-building, it is clear that the important resources come from outside the region rather from within.

Regional cooperation in peacekeeping: missions

The relatively high level of activity around peacekeeping in Southeast Asia contrasts with fewer possibilities for transformative effects to arise from cooperation in the actual exercise of peacekeeping. In this section I consider the idea of establishing an

² At their meeting in 2004, the G8 adopted the Action Plan: Expanding Global Capability for Peace Support Operations with a focus particularly, but not exclusively, on Africa.

ASEAN peacekeeping force and ASEAN states' cooperation in UN missions and other PKOs. Although to varying degrees, each of these areas provide only limited opportunities for encounters, joint learning experiences and the development of a potential regional peacekeeping culture.

The idea of an integrated ASEAN force dates back to the 1980s (Acharya 1991:161). It was put forward in a serious manner for the first time by Indonesia when it assumed the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2003 (Capie 2016:17–18). The plan was part of the wider Indonesian-promoted project to establish an ASEAN political and security community with the aim to assume a greater role in regional security matters. However, the proposal was quickly silenced with Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs saying that ASEAN was "the wrong entity to play a peacekeeping role" (Kuah 2004:2). Thailand saw no need for a peacekeeping force in a region with "no conflict" and Vietnam declared that it was too early to consider such a form of cooperation (Kuah 2004:2).

Tay and Choo (2013:229) considered that even "such thinking is a considerable step forward for the group". Yet, when the issue was brought up again in 2015, ASEAN was still not prepared to discuss a joint force. This time, Malaysia pitched the idea on visits to other ASEAN countries when it held the annual ASEAN Chairmanship, which also coincided with its term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Other than tacit support from Cambodia and the Philippines, however, the proposal failed to create much echo. Observers frequently note that divergent views on the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) pose an obstacle to agreeing on a joint peacekeeping group (Siew Mun 2015). However, according to a reliable source, the Malaysian proposal foresaw a dedicated force of specialists in disaster relief and military medicine that would be despatched upon *request of the host country* (Parameswaran 2015). Therefore, it must be concluded that fears of a joint force creating a precedent for external intervention are unfounded or, alternatively, that the reasons for the ASEAN states' reticence are others.

The perhaps most significant attempt to build ASEAN's peacekeeping record was in 2011 when Indonesia, as the yearly Chair of ASEAN, brokered an agreement to station an observer mission along the Thai-Cambodian border. The mission was sanctioned by both the UN and the International Court of Justice to prevent the recurrence of violent clashes along a disputed border stretch (Jenne 2017). However,

although the Thai government had signed the agreement, the Thai Army refused to accept foreign observers on Thai soil. The observers never left their base in Indonesia and the newly built barracks to host the troops have remained empty. None of the ASEAN states spoke up to push for what had been framed as a collective action, and also Indonesia did not insist.

In a recent conference organized by SIPRI with East Asian dialogue partners participants agreed that an ASEAN peacekeeping force was not realistic in the foreseeable future (SIPRI 2014). While such a force would constitute a deeper commitment to security and defence cooperation and would provide possibilities for first-hand common action, ASEAN's alternative way is thus likely to remain flexible and non-binding. In this line, in 2015 the ADMM adopted the foundations for an ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief with no joint command and in which participation is voluntary (AMRG on HADR 2016).

If there are no opportunities for direct, regional cooperation within a Southeast Asian peacekeeping force, are such possibilities provided by missions under the aegis of the UN? First, it is worth noting that there is no single one preference for a specific type of mission or for a geographic area where Southeast Asian peacekeepers deploy.

Accordingly, in the past decade there was no UN mission in which even half of all ASEAN members participated. Moreover, it is questionable whether participating in the same mission leads to a common outlook or more contact between security personnel at all. Apart from mission-specific training sessions that the UN organizes for all individuals at the beginning of their deployment, there are few possibilities for direct encounters where peacekeepers could share their experiences. Generally, the national contingents deployed in a UN PKO operate each under their own command in different areas and are answerable to the mission's force commander and to their national authorities.

In the Southeast Asia context, there are two notable exceptions. The first is Singapore, which participated in the UN's Timor PKO with an infantry company as part of a composite Thai battalion. However, this specific example appears to be more a deployment strategy of Singapore as a small state rather than one of cooperation with a view to further cooperation in the future. Singapore has embedded medical teams and troops in other instances, and in all of these its partners were either more experienced or large, professionalized armies (Heng 2012:134).

The second exception is Brunei. Since 2009, the Brunei has continuously had between five and 30 troops deployed with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as an integrated part of a Malaysian peacekeeping battalion (Abu Bakar 2011). This cooperation built on previous experience in the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao in the Philippines (see below). The fact that Brunei's armed forces are simply too small to rival the Malaysian military helps to explain this peculiarity, but the cultural and historical closeness between the two militaries suggests that it was a precondition rather than the result of cooperation.

In PKOS other than UN, Southeast Asian security forces have participated jointly in two missions that have so far come closest to a regional security arrangement. One was the European Union's observer mission to Aceh, Indonesia, during 2005-2006. Here, personnel from five ASEAN states (Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand) represented about 40% of the 200-250 unarmed peacekeepers tasked to supervise the disarmament of rebels and withdrawal of Indonesian troops.

In Mindanao in the southern Philippines, the involvement of other Southeast Asian states has again not been related to ASEAN but in this case to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). From the ASEAN group, Indonesia and Malaysia are members of the OIC, which has been involved in a conflict between the Manila government and Muslim separatists since the 1970s. During 1995-1996, the OIC sent an Interim Ceasefire Monitor Observer mission to oversee the implementation of a largely Indonesia-brokered peace agreement (SAIS 2011:5). The agreement broke down, however, and in 2004 peace talks resumed this time with Malaysia in the role as facilitator and later as mediator of a peace agreement (2012). Under Malaysia's lead, an International Monitoring Team (IMT) was established to monitor the 2004 cease-fire together with Brunei and Libya. Since then, twelve IMTs have deployed for renewable one-year missions. Apart from the original three contributors, Japan, Norway, Indonesia and the EU also joined the mission. However, most of the IMTs' members and the mission heads have so far been provided by Malaysia, being the "only other sizable contingent [...] the 15-strong Indonesian team that deployed in July 2012" (Franco 2013:220). At different times, Brunei's contingents were integrated with each Malaysia and Indonesia (Hayat 2016).

Given that advances on an integrated ASEAN force have been elusive and considering the limited opportunities for joint action and learning in UN PKOs,

Southeast Asia's non-UN missions stand out as a significance where joint learning and socialization were possible.

Conclusions

This paper situated peacekeeping within ASEAN's security and defence cooperation. With a view to the high expectations that have been ascribed to participating in activities of and related to peacekeeping, notably its positive effects for bettering relations between states, the various conclusions reached here caution against too much enthusiasm. The ASEAN member states have varying traditions of participating in UN-led PKOs, and none of them includes peacekeeping amongst the primary missions of their armed forces. Joint training and education as well as capacity-building activities appear to be at least as important in cooperation with extra-regional partners as they are within partners inside the region. Lastly, opportunities to create contacts, share experiences and create a common peacekeeping culture are limited as there is no integrated force and encounters during UN-led missions are rare.

If peacekeeping is of secondary importance to ASEAN's Political-Security Community, should academics and policy-makers still care about the subject? The answer is clearly yes given that the importance of cooperation in peacekeeping has been strongly associated with strengthening ASEAN's international role (Shoji 2013:8). Thus, if the Association chooses to cling on to this goal, it will need to take concrete steps to enhance its own capacities.

Bibliography

- ABU BAKAR, ITI ZAHIRA. (2011) RBAF Deploys 5th UNIFIL Contingent. *Royal Brunei Airforce*. Available at:
http://www.mindef.gov.bn/airforce/Lists/News_Test/DispForm.aspx?ID=1152
- ACHARYA, AMITAV. (1991) The Association of Southeast Asian Nations: “Security Community” or “Defence Community”? *Pacific Affairs* 64: 159–178.
- ADMM. (2011) *Concept Paper on the Establishment of ASEAN Peacekeeping Centres Network*.
- AMRG ON HADR. (2016) *Terms of Reference*. ADMM. Available at:
<http://mod.gov.la/10thADMM/assets/4.7.1-tor-on-amrg-as-of-20160422.pdf>
- ANWAR, DEWI FORTUNA. (2014) Indonesia’s Peacekeeping Operations: History, Practice, and Future Trend. In *Asia-Pacific Nations in International Peace Support and Stability Operations*, Asia Today, edited by Chiyuki Aoi and Yee-Kuang Heng. Palgrave Macmillan US. Available at:
http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137366955_8. (Accessed May 3, 2017).
- ARF. (2017) Library. *Document Search*. Available at:
<http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/search.html?searchword=peacekeeping&ordering=newest&searchphrase=all>. (Accessed June 7, 2017).
- ARF INTERSESSIONAL MEETING. (1996) *Summary Report of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Peacekeeping Operations 1-3 APRIL 1996, Kuala Lumpur*. Malaysia.
- BELLAMY, ALEX, and PAUL WILLIAMS. (2010) *Understanding Peacekeeping*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK; Malden M.A.: Polity.
- BLUM, ANDREW. (2000) Blue Helmets From the South: Accounting for the Participation of Weaker States in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. *Journal of Conflict Studies* 20.
- BORCHERS, HENNING. (2014) ASEAN’s Environmental Challenges and Non-Traditional Security Cooperation: Towards a Regional Peacekeeping Force? *ASEAS - Österreichische Zeitschrift für Südostasienwissenschaften* 7: 5–20.
- BOVE, VINCENZO, and LEANDRO ELIA. (2011) Supplying Peace: Participation in and Troop Contribution to Peacekeeping Missions. *Journal of Peace Research* 48: 699–714.
- CABALLERO-ANTHONY, MELY. (2005) UN Peace Operations and Asian Security. *International Peacekeeping* 12: 1–17.
- CABALLERO-ANTHONY, MELY, and HOLLY HAYWOOD. (2010) *Defining ASEAN’s Role in Peace Operations: Helping to Bring Peacebuilding “Upstream”?* Australia: Asia Pacific Civil Military Centre for Excellence.
- CAMBODIA. (2006) *Defending the Kingdom of Cambodia: Defense White Paper*. Phnom Penh: Government Publication.

- CAPIE, DAVID. (2015) Evolving Attitudes to Peacekeeping in ASEAN. In *New Trends in Peacekeeping: In Search of a New Direction*, edited by Katsuya Tsukamoto. Tokyo: National Institute for Defence Studies.
- CAPIE, DAVID. (2016) Indonesia as an Emerging Peacekeeping Power: Norm Revisionist or Pragmatic Provider? *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 38: 1–27.
- CHONG, ALAN, and JUN YAN CHANG. (2016) Security Competition by Proxy: Asia Pacific Interstate Rivalry in the Aftermath of the MH370 Incident. *Global Change, Peace & Security* 28: 75–98.
- COOK, ALISTAIR D. B. (2014) Southeast Asian Perspectives on UN Peacekeeping. *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 18: 154–174.
- COTTEY, ANDREW, and ANTHONY FORSTER. (2004) *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies.
- FOOT, ROSEMARY. (2014) ‘Doing Some Things’ in the Xi Jinping Era: The United Nations as China’s Venue of Choice. *International Affairs* 90: 1085–1100.
- FRANCO, JOSEPH RAYMOND SILVA. (2013) Malaysia: Unsung Hero of the Philippine Peace Process. *Asian Security* 9: 211–230.
- HA KIM NGOC. (2016) Participating in UN’s Peacekeeping Operations, a Breakthrough in Vietnam’s Integration Process. *National Defence Journal* October 2016.
- HAESEBROUCK, TIM. (2017) EU Member State Participation in Military Operations: A Configurational Comparative Analysis. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 0: 1–23.
- HAYAT, HAKIM. (2016) Brunei Sends New Peacekeeping Contingent to Mindanao. *Borneo Bulletin*.
- HENG, YEE KUANG. (2012) Confessions of a Small State: Singapore’s Evolving Approach to Peace Operations. *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 16: 119–151.
- HENG, YEE-KUANG, and WEICHONG ONG. (2014) The Quest for Relevance in Times of Peace: Operations Other Than War and the Third-Generation Singapore Armed Forces. In *Asia-Pacific Nations in International Peace Support and Stability Operations*, Asia Today, edited by Chiyuki Aoi and Yee-Kuang Heng. Palgrave Macmillan US. Available at: http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137366955_6. (Accessed May 3, 2017).
- ISMAIL, ROSMAN. (2005) *Peacekeeping: Should Brunei Jump onto the Bandwagon?* Canadian Force College.
- JENNE, NICOLE. (2017) The Thai-Cambodian Border Dispute: An Agency-Centred Perspective on the Management of Interstate Conflict. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* forthcoming.
- KAMARULZAMAN, ASKANDAR ASSOCIATE. (2005) A Regional Perspective of UN Peace Operations in Southeast Asia. *International Peacekeeping* 12: 34–48.

- KUAH, ADRIAN. (2004) 21 *The ASEAN Security Community: Struggling with the Details*. Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, NTY.
- LEBOVIC, JAMES H. (2004) Uniting for Peace? Democracies and United Nations Peace Operations after the Cold War. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48: 910–936.
- PARAMESWARAN, PRASHANTH. (2015) ASEAN Peacekeeping Meeting Concludes in Cambodia. *The Diplomat*.
- PRAYUT CHAN-O-CHA. (2015) Statement by General Prayuth Speech Delivered at the “Peacekeeping Summit 2015”, Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York, 28 September 2015. Available at: <http://thaiembdc.org/2015/09/29/thai-prime-minister-participates-in-peacekeeping-summit-hosted-by-president-obama-pledges-thailands-strong-support-for-peacekeeping-operations-around-the-world/>.
- SAIS. (2011) *Mindanao: Understanding Conflict 2011* edited by Terrence Hopmann and William Zartman. *Conflict Management Program: Student Field Trip to Mindanao*.
- SHOJI, TOMOTAKA. (2013) ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM Plus: A Japanese Perspective. *NIDS Journal of Defense and Security* 14: 3–17.
- SIEW MUN, TANG. (2015) Asean Peacekeeping Force? Points to Ponder. *The Straits Times*. Available at: <http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/asean-peacekeeping-force-points-to-ponder>. (Accessed June 3, 2017).
- SINGAPORE. (2015) Overseas Operations. *MINDEF*. Available at: https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/key_topics/overseas_operations.html. (Accessed June 5, 2017).
- SINGH, BHUBHINDAR, and SEE SENG TAN, Eds. (2011) *From “Boots” to “Brogues”:* *The Rise of Defence Diplomacy in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.
- SIPRI. (2014) *New Geopolitics of Peace Operations: Emerging Powers*. Hanoi: SIPRI. Available at: <https://www.sipri.org/research/conflicts-and-peace/peace-operations-and-conflict-management/new-geopolitics-of-peace-operations-emerging-powers>. (Accessed June 3, 2017).
- TARDY, THIERRY. (2014) Hybrid Peace Operations: Rationale and Challenges. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 20: 95–118.
- TAY, SIMON, and AARON CHOO. (2013) Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding, and Preventive Diplomacy. In *Beyond 2015: ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership for Democracy, Peace, and Prosperity in Southeast Asia*, edited by Rizal Sukma and Yoshihide Soeya. Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange.
- THAILAND. (2015) ASEAN Peacekeeping Forces and Thailand. *ASEAN Information Center*. Available at: http://www.asean thai.net/english/ewt_news.php?nid=434&filename=index. (Accessed June 4, 2017).
- THAYER, CARLYLE A. (2014) *The Contrasting Cases of Cambodia and Vietnam: Active Engagement and Considering Engagement in United Nations*

Peacekeeping Operations. In *Asia-Pacific Nations in International Peace Support and Stability Operations*, Asia Today, edited by Chiyuki Aoi and Yee-Kuang Heng. Palgrave Macmillan US. Available at: http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137366955_9. (Accessed May 3, 2017).

UN. (2017) Troop and Police Contributors. *United Nations Peacekeeping*. Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>. (Accessed June 4, 2017).