

Prospects for Regional Security Cooperation in East Asia*

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In recent years there is a growing interest in creating a multilateral regional security institution in East Asia. An absence of such an institution has been identified as one source of instability for the region. There is active debate within the policy community for a need to build a regional security framework but there is little agreement on what form it should take.

This paper addresses the prospects for regional security cooperation and assesses the five models of regional security architecture. The paper finds that each of the models has its merits and demerits, but the U.S. alliance model and the ASEAN based model are the most promising in realizing cooperation. The former can provide capabilities to punish while the latter can decrease skepticism among members. The key to bringing about regional cooperation is to build a network of different institutions that can be functionally integrated. It is important for the United States and its allies to understand the insecurity of rising powers like China and bind themselves to a set of mutually agreeable rules. It is also important to alleviate the anxieties of status quo powers, which in turn will reassure potential revisionist powers.

I. The Question

There is no multilateral regional security framework in East Asia. It has been argued that the absence of such an institution hinders stability and integration in this region, as multilateral security institutions have been known to spur cooperation among member states. This has led to policy debates about the need to build a regional security framework. Although most agree that such an institution is necessary, there is disagreement about what form it should take. This paper addresses the prospects for regional security cooperation and asks which architecture would be the most effective in bringing about regional security cooperation.

This question is important for several reasons. First, it tests the mechanism behind cooperation. Among different types of cooperation, security cooperation is the hardest to achieve because security, by definition, is about defending the core values of a state, so compromise is more difficult than in other fields such as trade. Thinking about security cooperation helps us understand the mechanism behind cooperation because it is a hard case. Second, looking at this question will help provide an answer to a heated discussion among foreign and security policy specialists in the region.

I argue that while the prospects for security cooperation are not exactly bright, it is possible. Each of the regional security models has its merits and demerits. The key to bringing about regional cooperation is to build a network of different institutions that

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can be functionally integrated. It is also important to alleviate the anxieties of status quo powers, which in turn will reassure potential revisionist powers.

I will first review the theoretical framework I use in this paper: the theory of cooperation by Axelrod.¹ I will then review the five models for regional security cooperation that are discussed among policy makers. Next, I will introduce a snapshot of where we are today. I will then ask which model has the best chances of encouraging cooperation according to Axelrod's model. Next, I will analyze the benefits and shortcomings of each of the models and offer ways to improve them. Finally, I will conclude by offering some suggestions for policy makers.

II. Conditions for Cooperation

1. Theories of Cooperation

Different schools of international relations offer different mechanisms for cooperation among states. In this section, I will review mechanisms for cooperation offered by realism, liberalism, and scholars such as Axelrod.

Realism contends that cooperation occurs when a stronger actor pressures a weaker one to concede. Multilateral security cooperation is achieved when a hegemonic power drives other states to form an institution. In other words, the presence of a hegemon — or at least a strong leader — is required for multilateral institutions to emerge. This is because of a collective action problem, where each state may see benefits of cooperation but is unwilling to bear the initial start up costs.² There is no incentive for an individual state to provide public goods and let others free ride unless that state has the power and interest to do so unilaterally. A hegemon, being the strongest state in the international system, has the power to shape the institution and thus has the most to gain from it.³

Liberalism, on the other hand, contends that states participate in multilateral institutions to lower transaction costs.⁴ Once created, institutions create embedded interests and states conform to the rules and norms of the institution. The presence of a hegemon may not be necessary to create an institution. Institutions can be maintained without a hegemon and they have the power to restrain a hegemon's behavior.

Axelrod's theory of cooperation combines elements of both realism and liberalism. Axelrod argues that cooperation is possible under certain conditions even among egoists and without a higher central authority. This occurs because states are interest maximizers, and they will choose to cooperate when doing so furthers their interests. In Axelrod's theory, reciprocity and tit-for-tat strategy are important.⁵ Tit-for-tat is a strategy in the prisoners' dilemma. Using this strategy, the first player always begins the first move by cooperation. From the second move onwards, Player *A* reciprocates

¹ Robert Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation* (Cambridge, MA: Basic Books, 2006)

² Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971)

³ For arguments about the role of a hegemon in shaping cooperation, see, Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986); Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987)

⁴ See for example, Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984)

⁵ Axelrod's model is deduced from an observation of historical events and from analyzing a computer game tournament. In a computer game tournament, the winning strategy in both cases was tit-for-tat. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*.

the other player's previous move. If Player *A* begins with a cooperative move and Player *B* defects, *A* will also defect in the next move. Player *A* will continue to defect as long as *B* defects, but if *B* switches to cooperation, *A* will then also cooperate. The tit-for-tat strategy was the winning strategy in two cases of computer game tournaments Axelrod organized as part of his research.

The key to cooperation is reciprocity. Cooperative actions are rewarded with cooperative action and defection is punished promptly. The player is welcomed back to the game once its behavior becomes cooperative. It is the positive and negative incentives that lead states to choose cooperation rather than defection.

Here is a summary of the characteristics that facilitate cooperation: a) do not be envious — avoid thinking in zero-sum game terms; b) be nice — unilaterally initiate cooperative actions; c) maintain reciprocity; d) be forgiving — once punishment is completed, permit reentry into the game and initiate cooperation; and e) make clear moves that other players can follow.

For cooperative behavior to evolve and spread in a system, Axelrod argues that there must be more than a few states who act in accordance with the above conditions for cooperation. Otherwise, they will not be able to reciprocate cooperative behavior and will only choose defection.

2. Ideal Type for Cooperation

Based on the findings from Axelrod's study, an institution that facilitates cooperation ideally needs to have the following traits. First, the institution must have a core group of states that behave and reciprocate cooperatively. Second, there has to be a sufficient payoff structure for member states to invest in monitoring and punishment. It is crucially important for defectors to be punished promptly and properly. If defectors go unpunished, the institution will lose credibility and incentives for others to cooperate will decrease. This means that the institution must have a monitoring system and the willingness and capability to punish defectors. Third, future payoffs should be greater than present payoffs, as this should lead states to cooperate now in order to reap greater benefits in the future.

III. Five Models of Regional Cooperation

Five models of regional security architecture have been discussed so far. They are: 1) a network of U.S. bilateral alliances; 2) a league of democracies; 3) the Six-Party Talks; 4) an ASEAN based model such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); and 5) the disaster relief model.

1. U.S. Bilateral Networks

The security of East Asia has long been characterized by a hub-and-spokes system of U.S. bilateral alliances. The United States has security alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand.⁶ Until recently, each alliance stood by itself and, unlike in Europe, there was little security coordination among alliances.

⁶ The United States has bilateral security alliances with Japan and South Korea: U.S.–Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, and U.S.–ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. With Australia it was the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) which included New Zealand. The U.S. commitment to New Zealand ceased in 1986 when New Zealand adopted a non-nuclear policy. The United States has a Mutual Defense Treaty with the Philippines and from 1999 has the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). Thailand was designated a Major Non-NATO Ally in 2003.

Recently, however, the U.S. bilateral alliances have begun to show potential as the basis for regional multilateral security cooperation. The United States and its allies have begun to invite other countries to participate and observe in military exercises that used to be bilateral. For example, Cobra Gold, which used to be a U.S.-Thai bilateral military exercise, has turned into a multilateral exercise with six countries participating as full members and about twenty countries as observers. In the 2010 exercise, South Korea participated for the first time, and Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Japan also participated. In the past, Australia, Brunei, China, Malaysia, Mongolia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Canada and France also have participated as observers.⁷

There have also been efforts to connect the spokes. For example, Japan and Australia issued a Japan–Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in March 2007.⁸ The two countries subsequently have held 2+2 meetings of defense and foreign ministers and have held trilateral defense meetings with the United States. Ties between Japan and South Korea also are developing. The U.S., Korean and Japanese defense ministers held their first trilateral meeting in May 2009 in Singapore. Japan has shown more enthusiasm for developing this relationship than has South Korea,⁹ but the heightened tension in the Korean Peninsula after the sinking of the South Korean naval ship *Cheonan* in March 2010 and the Yeonpyeong Island attack by North Korea in November 2010 has led to closer relations between the two countries. Japan participated in a U.S.-ROK joint military exercise for the first time in July 2010 as an observer, and South Korea also participated for the first time in a U.S.-Japan joint exercise in December 2010.¹⁰ In January 2011, the two defense ministers agreed to begin discussing the possibility of signing pacts to increase cooperation on intelligence sharing and on providing each other with food, fuel and other materials when conducting joint activities.¹¹

⁷ On Cobra Gold 2008, see, Speech Delivered by U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Singapore, May 31, 2008. <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1253> (Last accessed May 7, 2010)

⁸ Japan–Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, March 13, 2007. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/joint0703.html> (Last accessed May 7, 2010)

⁹ In January 2010, Prime Minister Hatoyama expressed his enthusiasm for a Security Declaration between Japan and South Korea but the ROK government did not reciprocate his enthusiasm and denied that such negotiations were under way. See for example, “Prime Minister to Consider Japan-ROK New Declaration [「日韓新宣言を首相検討」],” *Asahi Shimbun*, January 8, 2010. <http://www.asahi.com/politics/update/0108/TKY201001080179.html> (Last accessed May 8, 2010); “Prime Minister Hatoyama Enthusiastic toward ‘Japan-ROK Security Declaration,’ ROK Government Cautious [「鳩山首相、『日韓安保宣言』構想に前向き姿勢 韓国政府は慎重」],” *Donga Ilbo*, January 9, 2010. <http://japanese.donga.com/srv/service.php3?biid=2010010962308> (Last accessed May 8, 2010)

¹⁰ On Japan’s participation see “Beikan Godo Gunjienshu heno Kaijoujieikan no Obzaba Haken nitsuite (On Dispatching Maritime Self Defense Force personnel as an Observer to the U.S.-ROK Joint Military Exercise 米韓合同軍事演習への海上自衛官のオブザーバー派遣について)” Press Release by the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force, July 23 2010. <http://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/formal/info/news/201007/072301.pdf> (Last accessed January 20, 2011). On ROK participation see the Defense Minister’s press conference on December 10, 2010. <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/kisha/2010/12/10.html> (Last accessed January 20, 2011).

¹¹ The two defense ministers agreed to proceed with talks on Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and a General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA). ACSA stipulates reciprocal provision of supplies such as food, water and fuel between their forces when conducting joint activities. Defense Ministers Toshimi Kitazawa and Kim Kwan-jin met in Seoul on January 10, 2011. “Extra Press Conference by the Defense Minister (6:20–6:29 P.M. January 10, 2011),” Japan Ministry of Defense website. <http://www.mod.go.jp/e/pressconf/2011/01/110110.html> (last accessed January 26, 2011)

2. League of Democracies

The second model is based on a group of democratic states. U.S. Senator John McCain advocated creating a League of Democracies during his 2008 presidential run. Although his idea, which would have prohibited the participation of non-democracies, is on the extreme end of models based on democratic norms, this line of thinking is popular among those seeking to design a new regional architecture.

One example of this democratic norms model is the East Asia Summit held in December 2005 when, for the first time, Japan invited India, Australia and New Zealand to participate. This was said to reflect the preference of the U.S. government over the alternative arrangement, ASEAN+3, which consisted of ASEAN 10 plus Japan, China and South Korea.¹² The concept of the “arc of freedom and prosperity” proposed by Taro Aso, then Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, is based on a similar logic. In that case, Aso emphasized the need for Japan to strengthen its ties with the United States, Australia, India, EU and NATO.¹³

The logic behind the league of democracies is the democratic peace theory. This theory is based on the empirical observation that no wars have occurred between democracies in the past two hundred years. Different variations of democratic peace theory argue that democratic norms of negotiated settlements, democratic structures, or a combination of both account for the absence of war among democracies.¹⁴ Proponents of democratic peace theory argue that the more democracies a region has, the more peaceful it will be.

3. Six-Party Talks Model

The Six-Party Talks, consisting of North Korea, South Korea, the United States, Russia, China and Japan, has been held to discuss the problem of North Korea’s nuclear weapons development. Although the six-Party Talks was designed solely to deal with the North Korean problem, some have proposed using its framework as a basis for a new regional security architecture.

China has expressed its interest in turning the Six-Party Talks into a permanent forum and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton frequently expressed her support for the idea during the U.S. Presidential election of 2008. In the Joint Statement of February 2007, all six parties agreed to form a working group on the Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism. Although little progress has been made thus far, the establishment of the working group suggests that all members have the willingness to build a security mechanism more permanent than the Six-Party Talks.

¹² ASEAN 10 members are Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Brunei, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

¹³ Taro Aso, “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan’s Expanding Diplomatic Horizons,” Speech by Mr. Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of the Japan Institute of International Affairs Seminar, November 30, 2006. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0611.html> (Last accessed May 13, 2010)

¹⁴ On democratic peace theory see, Michael W. Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80, no. 4 (December 1986); John M. Owen IV, *Liberal Peace Liberal War: American Politics and International Security* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principle for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Kenneth A. Schultz, “Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War,” *International Organizations*, Vol. 53.

4. ASEAN-Based Model

ASEAN has been active in building a multilateral regional security framework. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is the only region-wide security mechanism that exists today. Its members total 26 countries and the EU.¹⁵

The objectives of the ARF are to foster constructive dialogue on political and security issues and to make contributions to confidence-building and preventive diplomacy. ARF has set a three-stage process to achieving regional security: Stage 1 focuses on the promotion of Confidence Building Measures, Stage 2 on the development of Preventive Diplomacy, and Stage 3 on the Elaboration of Approaches to Conflicts.¹⁶

Two distinct characteristics of ASEAN-based institutions are their adoption of the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of member countries and the consensus approach to decision making. These rules are collectively termed the “ASEAN Way,” and they have allowed member states to participate in multilateral institutions without worrying about limitations being placed on their sovereignty or impacts on domestic affairs.¹⁷

5. Disaster Relief Model

Currently, there is no regional institution that provides and coordinates disaster relief despite the fact that the Asia-Pacific remains the world’s most disaster prone region. Between 2000 and 2008, 40% of the world’s registered disasters occurred in the region.¹⁸ Consequently, governments in the region often express the need for greater regional cooperation. Because of “the increasing frequency and scale of disasters in the ASEAN region and their damaging impacts,” in 2005 ASEAN came to an agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Responses. Disaster relief is seen to provide an opportunity for ASEAN countries to cooperate and work towards a common goal.

So far, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been in charge of coordinating the needs of countries affected by disasters and suppliers of relief. OCHA has offices in several countries in the region as well as a regional office in Thailand. But the coordination is mainly conducted by the OCHA headquarters and bilaterally between affected and donor states. Sometimes this has slowed aid from reaching affected areas and has led to arguments in favor of building a regional framework for disaster relief cooperation.

IV. Assessment of the Models

I will now use Axelrod’s theory to determine which model has the most potential to provide the basis for security cooperation in the region. To summarize, Axelrod’s

¹⁵ ARF members are the ASEAN 10 plus Japan, China, ROK, DPRK, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, Papua New Guinea, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, East Timor, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the European Union. ARF website. <http://www.aseanregionalforum.org/AboutUs/tabid/57/Default.aspx> (Last accessed May 14, 2010)

¹⁶ “ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy,” Adopted at the 8th ARF, 25 July 2001. <http://www.aseansec.org/3571.htm> (Last accessed May 14, 2010)

¹⁷ On the “ASEAN Way” see, Yuen Foong Khong and Helen E. S. Nesadurai, “Hanging together, institutional design, and cooperation in Southeast Asia: AFTA and the ARF,” Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston eds., *Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

¹⁸ Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), OCHA <http://ochaonline.un.org/OCHAHome/WhereWeWork/ROAP/tabid/5980/language/en-US/Default.aspx> (Last accessed May 20, 2010)

theory would argue that an optimal security mechanism for the region should: a) include as members a core of states in cooperative relations; b) have the capability to monitor behavior and adequately punish violators; and c) create an environment in which cooperative relations could quickly resume once punishment is completed.

1. A Network of U.S. Alliances

Of the five models, the U.S. alliance network is the only one with a viable capability to punish violators. It also has a number of states that share common interests and norms, and these states could serve as core states that promote cooperation. A recent increase in the number of countries participating in the network also suggests that many countries in the region see this model as a potentially acceptable framework.

A weakness in this model is the strained relationship between Japan and the ROK. The two countries could play leadership roles in building a regional security institution, but their relationship still has tensions stemming from the period of Japanese colonization. For instance, in a poll taken in 2010 a majority of Koreans rated Japan-ROK relations as bad and did not see Japan as trustworthy.¹⁹ As noted in the previous section, however, the defense forces of Japan and South Korea have become closer and have indicated their intention to increase defense cooperation.

The biggest problem for this model is whether or not its network can return to being cooperative after the punishment of a member state. The key feature of cooperation in the Axelrod model is prompt and adequate punishment followed by forgiveness. The U.S. alliance network, meanwhile, is designed to counter security threats. The United States and Japan are wary of China's behavior in the future, but both hope they are able to establish constructive and cooperative relations with it. The alliance serves as a hedge should China choose to behave in aggressive ways, and China is aware of this. The alliance network, therefore, seems to be limited as a basis for security cooperation in the region unless some things are changed. These possible changes will be discussed later.

2. League of Democracies

The greatest merit of the democracies model is that it provides a cooperative core, as the model assumes that conflicts of interest will be resolved peacefully through negotiations among democracies. Diffusion of rules and norms to non-democratic states is possible and can be expected.

A prerequisite for this model, needless to say, is the existence of democracies. According to the Freedom House, of the "ASEAN+3" countries only Japan, South Korea and Indonesia are liberal democracies or "free" in terms of political rights and civil liberties.²⁰ Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are "partly free." This number is too small to provide the core of cooperative states necessary under the Axelrod model. The East Asia Summit members consist of ASEAN+3 plus India, Australia and New Zealand. Counting this way yields 6 democracies out of 16 states. If

¹⁹ In a public opinion poll conducted in April 2010, 73% of the South Korean respondents thought Japan-ROK relations were "bad" and 80% thought that Japan was not trustworthy. The figures for Japanese respondents were 29% and 45% respectively. "Japan-ROK Relations 'Good' Japan 57%, ROK 24%," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 17, 2010. Yomiuri Online. <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/feature/20080116-907457/news/20100416-OYT1T01475.htm> (Last accessed June 11, 2010)

²⁰ The Freedom House uses the term "free." Although this is not synonymous with liberal democracy, here I will use the Freedom House's indicators.

Table 1. Freedom Status of ARF Member Countries

Country	Status	Political Rights	Civil Liberties
Brunei	Not Free	6	5
Cambodia	Not Free	6	5
Indonesia	Free	2	3
Laos	Not Free	7	6
Malaysia	Partly Free	4	4
Myanmar	Not Free	7	7
Philippines	Partly Free	4	3
Singapore	Partly Free	5	4
Thailand	Partly Free	5	4
Vietnam	Not Free	7	5
Japan	Free	1	2
South Korea	Free	2	2
China	Not Free	7	6
Australia	Free	1	1
New Zealand	Free	1	1
India	Free	2	2
Russia	Not Free	6	5
USA	Free	1	1
Canada	Free	1	1
PNG	Partly Free	4	3
Mongolia	Free	2	2
Pakistan	Partly Free	4	5
North Korea	Not Free	7	7

Source: *Freedom in the World* 2010, The Freedom House

* 1 indicates the highest level of freedom and 7 the lowest level of freedom

we extend the region to include the ARF member states, nine out of 23 countries can be considered democracies (Table 1).²¹ The small number of free states in East Asia stands in clear contrast to the situation in Europe, where all 27 members of the European Union (EU) are considered free. The EU has made respect for the principles of liberty, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law conditions to apply for membership.²²

²¹ Although EU is a member, I have excluded it. In the case of EU, all of the 27 members are free.

²² European Commission, "Conditions for Enlargement."

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/the-policy/conditions-for-enlargement/index_en.htm (Last accessed June 10, 2010). These conditions are based on the Articles 6 and 49 of the Treaty on European Union. Article 6 (1) reads: "The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States."

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12002M/htm/C_2002325EN.000501.html (Last accessed June 10, 2010)

As stated above, this model depends on the existence of a core of democratic states. ASEAN+6 has the greatest ratio of democracies at six out of 16 (37.5%), but this number is still small. It is not clear whether the six states could serve as the core. It also will be important for this framework not to exclude undemocratic states in the region from participating.

Another weakness of this model is the lack of a mechanism for monitoring behavior and punishing violators. The United States and its allies could provide the means for punishment as in the U.S. alliance model. However, so far the ARF is the only regional framework that includes the United States.

3. Six-Party Talks Model

The Six-Party Talks focuses on a single issue. The five participant countries — Japan, South Korea, the United States, China and Russia — all have an interest in maintaining a nuclear free Korea and preventing North Korea from acquiring deliverable nuclear weapons. This common interest spurs cooperation. It may be difficult, however, for these countries to find another issue besides the North Korean nuclear problem on which they can cooperate.

The United States, South Korea and Japan potentially could form a cooperative core, but China and Russia might see them as an opposing force. It is possible that the five countries become divided into two camps, thereby creating an obstacle to their initiating nice behavior. The United States and its allies may provide the punishment and monitoring that is necessary to spur cooperation, but it may be difficult for China and Russia to resume cooperation after receiving punishment.

Maintaining peace in Northeast Asia will continue to be of mutual interest to the five countries. The key is for the five countries to agree on a set of permissible behavior and to set up a scheme to monitor behavior and punish violators. It will be important for China and Russia to feel comfortable taking part in this scheme while the United States possesses far greater military capabilities.

4. ASEAN-Based Model

The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member countries and the consensus approach to decision making have lowered the entry cost for member countries. However, these two principles are obstacles to further cooperation based on Axelrod's model. Defectors must be punished for the system to function and facilitate cooperation. The consensus approach to decision making, however, makes carrying out punishments difficult because the target country will likely object.

The principle of non-interference may work under Axelrod's model if participating countries agree only to punish inter-state aggression. However, this may be difficult and become a source of weakness for the ASEAN model. Recently there have been more trans-national security problems in the region. Some ASEAN members have tried to modify the non-interference norm in the past,²³ but they were met by opposition from

²³ Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim raised the concept of "constructive intervention" in July 1997 that would have allowed ASEAN to give direct assistance to strengthen civil society and legal and administrative reforms with the consent of the state in question. However, this idea was poorly received by other members. The idea of "flexible engagement" was also an attempt to allow ASEAN to intervene more efficiently in problems in the region. Khong and Nesaduai, "Hanging Together," pp. 45-47.

other members who feared an “eventual disintegration” of ASEAN.²⁴ The very principle that contributes to members’ cohesion might hinder further cooperation.

5. The Disaster Relief Model

The strengths of the disaster relief model are its inclusiveness and its apolitical nature. Disasters are divorced from political values, thereby reducing obstacles for cooperation.

One stimulus for regional cooperation was the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. About 300,000 people were reported killed or missing in 12 countries. The most affected area was the Aceh Province in Indonesia. Contingents from approximately 20 countries cooperated in relief and rehabilitation efforts.²⁵ The United States, Japan, India and Australia took the lead in providing relief. After the tsunami, various actors and organizations in the region increased their efforts in disaster relief cooperation. For example, in June 2006 defense ministers of the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA) agreed on the establishment of a regional center for disaster relief.²⁶ In February 2009, the ASEAN defense ministers also adopted the concept paper on the use of ASEAN military assets and capacities in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.²⁷

V. Optimal Architecture and Prospects for Success

1. So Which Model?

Each of the five models has shortcomings when assessed using Axelrod’s model. As laid out in the section above, no model is structured with the ideal mix of punishment and cooperation. All either lean too much towards punishment or too much towards cooperation.

Table 2. Assessment of the Five Regional Models

	Core friendly states	Capabilities to punish	Forgiving
U.S. Alliance Network	✓	✓	×
League of Democracies	△/×	△	△
Six Party Talks Model	△	△	△
ASEAN based Model	✓	×	✓
Disaster Relief Model	✓/△	×	✓/× (NA)

✓ denotes satisfaction of the condition

× denotes absence of the condition

△ denotes that the condition is met partially²⁸

²⁴ Malaysian Foreign Minister, Abdullah Badawi, quoted in *Reuters*, “ASEAN debate on democracy, human rights shots up,” 26 July, 1998. Also in Khong and Nesaduai, “Hanging Together,” p. 46.

²⁵ Yoshihide Matsuura, “Indian Ocean Tsunami and International Cooperation,” The National Institute for Defense Studies, ed., *East Asian Strategic Review 2006* (Tokyo: The Japan Times, 2006 pp. 40–41).

²⁶ Carlyle A. Thayer, *Southeast Asia: Patterns of Security Cooperation* (Barton: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2010), p. 14.

²⁷ Joint Declaration of ASEAN Defence Ministers On Strengthening ASEAN Defence Establishments to Meet the Challenges of Non-Traditional Security Threats, Chonburi, Thailand, February 26, 2009. ASEAN Secretariat website. <http://www.aseansec.org/22314.pdf> (last accessed January 10, 2011)

²⁸ The level of the condition met is in the following descending order: ✓/△, △, △/×. ✓/× (NA) denotes non applicable.

Table 2 rates the degree to which the five models satisfy the three conditions stipulated in Axelrod's model. Of the five models, the U.S. alliance network model seems the most promising. This model has a core of cooperative states. It also is the only one that can provide adequate capabilities to punish, thus satisfying two conditions. As the mechanism for punishment is important for Axelrod, the U.S. alliance model seems to be the most promising. The model does not, however, possess the quality of "forgiving," which is equally necessary to spur cooperation. This lack of forgiving could cause skepticism in non-U.S. allies such as China, making them less likely to seek membership. How to overcome this problem will be addressed in the next section.

The ASEAN based model also satisfies two conditions: friendly core and forgiveness. It lacks the capabilities to punish. There are two parts to this problem. One is the lack of actual capabilities to monitor and punish violators. Military capabilities of ASAEAN countries are still modest and insufficient to enforce punishment. This may, however, be overcome by outside assistance. The other is the problem of political willingness to establish a mechanism of monitoring and punishment. Monitoring, inevitably intrudes in domestic affairs of a state if violations are to be detected and assessed accurately. Punishment would involve intervention by force in some cases. These go against the preference of ASEAN. So comparing the two models that fit the Axelrod's model the most, the question is whether it is easier to make the U.S. alliances more forgiving or the ASEAN more committed to vengeance.

The Six-Party Talks model has three triangles, indicating that conditions are met partially. This model may develop into a model that satisfies more of Axelrod's conditions. Of the six states, the United States, Japan and South Korea could provide a core of friendly states. This ratio is larger than that of democratic states in the region. The Six-Party Talks model has the same problem as the U.S. alliance network model in that China, Russia and North Korea may feel threatened by and skeptical of the U.S. alliances. Currently the balance is maintained between the two groups: the United States, Japan and South Korea on the one side and Russia, China and North Korea on the other. An increase in the friendly core or the model's capability to punish may disrupt this balance. Improving all three conditions seems more difficult than improving the conditions for the alliance network model or the ASEAN based model. The remaining two models: the democratic peace model and the disaster relief model do not satisfy any of the conditions.

2. How to Succeed

In this section, I will examine ways in which the above models could be improved to better satisfy Axelrod's conditions and thus provide a basis for regional cooperation.

There are two ways this may be done. One would be to improve each of the conditions. The two best models, the alliance network model and the ASEAN based model, will be examined in detail. The other way to improve them would be to combine some of the models to compensate for the shortcomings in each.

(1) Improvement of the U.S. Alliance Network Model

The U.S. alliance network model must improve its capacity to accommodate a former aggressor back into the system after negative sanctions have been applied. Currently, the basic function of the alliances is deterrence, or put another way, punishment against aggressors. Recently, however, the U.S. and Japanese governments have

emphasized the engagement function of the alliance. For example, in 2005 the two governments welcomed a constructive role played by China and identified increasing cooperation with that nation as one of the alliance's common strategic objectives.²⁹ The United States and Japan also have proposed trilateral talks with China, showing that there is some willingness on the part of the United States and Japan to accommodate China. China, however, is reluctant to participate in trilateral talks. This may be a reflection of Chinese concerns about the alliance. China also has expressed opposition to and criticized the U.S.-ROK joint exercise and South Korean participation in the U.S.-Japan military exercise.

The alliance network system must first calm the fears of countries such as China so that they will become willing members. At present, China seems to regard the alliances as a means to bind and constrain its behavior. This results in China's skepticism. It will be important for the United States and its allies to make concessions so that the system binds their behavior as much as China's. This, however, may cause U.S. allies who are militarily weaker than China to fear abandonment by the U.S., thereby inadvertently decreasing forgiveness in the system. The key will be to devise an arrangement where U.S. allies do not feel insecure and at the same time China is not skeptical of the system's intentions. This will be a challenge, however, since in recent years China's neighbors have become more wary of China's rise, while China has become more wary of U.S. intentions. China's behavior in 2010, such as its reactions to the fishing boat incident near the Senkaku (Diaoyu in Chinese) Islands in September and its assertiveness in its claims to the South China Sea at the ARF meeting in July, have led to Japan and Southeast Asian countries to move closer to the United States.³⁰

(2) **Improving the ASEAN based model**

The ASEAN based model lacks the means to monitor behavior and punish violators. This is caused by the ASEAN way, which is based on consensus and non-interference principles that are fundamentally at odds with a system based on punishment. This problem could be solved, however, if non-ASEAN countries provide the means for monitoring and punishment. The United States and Japan, among others, have been engaged in capacity building with ASEAN countries, and these efforts could improve ASEAN's monitoring capabilities. The biggest challenge, however, is will. Unless ASEAN countries embrace the concept of monitoring and punishment it will be difficult to improve this model.

One way to proceed would be for member states to agree on a set of rules and enforce them. They could start from rules that are easy to observe and gradually work

²⁹ The U.S. and Japanese governments agreed that regional common strategic objectives included working to "Develop a cooperative relationship with China, welcoming the country to play a responsible and constructive role regionally as well as globally." "Joint Statement U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee," Washington, D.C., February 19, 2005. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/joint0502.html> (Last accessed January 20, 2011)

³⁰ At the ARF meeting in July 2010 in Hanoi, twelve of the 27 members raised maritime issues in discussion. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi was reported to have responded harshly to U.S. Secretary of State Clinton's statement that the United States had a national interest in freedom of navigation and respect for international law in the South China Sea. This invited further concern towards Chinese behavior. China has responded critically to such U.S. and ASEAN positions. On Chinese response see for example, Luo Yuan "U.S. Gunboat Policy and its Hidden Agenda," *China Daily*, August 18, 2010. Luo Yuan is a Major General and the Deputy Secretary-General of the Society of China Military Sciences (Academy of Military Sciences) of the Peoples Liberation Army.

upward. China and ASEAN signed a non-binding code of conduct in the South China Sea in 2002.³¹ Since the ARF meeting in July 2010, China has been critical of the U.S. position on South China Sea issues but has begun discussions with some ASEAN countries to strengthen their code of conduct and make it legally binding.³² The challenge here would be for ASEAN countries to impose sanctions on China without support from the United States, as China has been explicit in its opposition to U.S. intervention on this issue.

(3) Integrating the Models

As we have seen, each of the models has weaknesses and improving them is not easy. An alternative would be to combine several models to complement their weaknesses. Integrating the two most promising models — the alliance network model and the ASEAN model — may have the greatest chance of success. If we integrate these two models we may be able to increase forgiveness and capability. The presence of ASEAN will dilute some of the confrontational elements in the alliances and make it easier for non-U.S. allies to join. At the same time, it will provide the capability necessary to punish violators including China. The rules, once agreed upon, must be enforced in the case of all parties, including the United States and Japan. This should alleviate concerns of weaker members and states suspicious of the alliances' motives.

In the beginning, rules most likely will only include issues that do not involve core national interests of states. Over time, however, a successful record of cooperative relations will lead members to agree on more critical issues. In the meantime, the two different models will exist in parallel. Cooperation on less contentious issues that do not require punishment, such as in disaster relief, may contribute to reducing skepticism among countries. Disaster relief mission can be used actively to provide an opportunity for armed forces to work together.

VI. Conclusion — Policy Recommendations

This study shows that none of the models as currently constructed fulfills the conditions of Axelrod's model. This should remind policy makers and practitioners of how difficult it is to build a successful regional architecture. It should also, however, remind them not to lose hope even if cooperation does not occur in the short term.

This study also reveals that challenges in many of the models stem from skepticism of the status quo powers, such as the United States and Japan, and of China. While a mechanism for punishment is important, cooperation will not occur unless states see an interest in signing onto the system. The status quo powers that currently hold relative advantages should restrain themselves to create a better environment for rising powers to commit themselves to the regional architecture.

The best prospect for regional cooperation seems to be to integrate the two optimal models: the alliance network model and the ASEAN model. This study recommends policymakers maintain a multi-layered approach to regional institution building but

³¹ "Declaration on the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea," November 4, 2002, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. <http://www.aseansec.org/13163.htm> (Last accessed February 1, 2011)

³² "China, ASEAN Begin Discussion on Stronger Code of Conduct," *Xinhua*, September 30, 2010. <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-09/30/content11371512.html> (Last accessed February 1, 2011)

focus their efforts on combining the two models. The inclusion of China in the regional architecture is of particular importance, and should be accomplished either by including China in the talks among U.S. allies or in fora that include ASEAN states.