

Many Regionalisms: Asia-Pacific Peace and Security and Taiwan

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When the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) convened its first meeting in Bangkok in 1994, the situation in the Korean Peninsula was the lone security issue specifically cited in the Chairman's Statement—the most important outcome document of every ARF annual meeting for the next 13 years. This document summarizes the range of regional and international issues ARF participants deem crucial in the pursuit of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Except for a paragraph that reiterated the importance of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in maintaining peace and security; welcomed the negotiations between the United States and North Korea; and supported the resumption of talks that would lead to the normalization of relations between the two Koreas—the 1994 Chairman's Statement mainly centered on the ARF's role and plan of action as the only political and security forum in the region in the years to come (ASEAN Regional Forum 2004). Eighteen countries attended—six from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) [Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand], seven from ASEAN's dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and the United States), two consultative partners (China and Russia), and three observers (Laos, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam).

Thirteen years after, this same document has evolved into a long list of political and security issues, from traditional to nontraditional, which are noticeably not limited to those happening in the region alone. It has become

a wish list of issues that ARF countries hope to address and action plans they expect to enforce. The 2007 ARF Chairman's Statement issued in Manila in August was all seven pages of 60 important points the 27 participating countries discussed during their annual meeting. The scope of political and security issues highlighted ranged from regional—the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the quest for democracy in Myanmar, the presidential and parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste, the political developments in Thailand, the resolution of disputes in the South China Sea; international—the situation in the Middle East, Iran's enrichment related activities, the instability in Afghanistan and the abduction of South Koreans; to nontraditional—terrorism, the illicit use of small arms and light weapons, maritime security, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, people smuggling and trafficking in persons, avian and pandemic influenza, and energy security.¹

Without a doubt, the politico-security situation in the Asia-Pacific has become more complex and inter-related, the concept of security has become more comprehensive, and new threats and challenges to regional peace and stability have emerged in over a decade since ARF's inception. While potential regional flashpoints remain as the most important issues on the ARF's agenda, nontraditional security threats have outnumbered traditional issues and are now given as much attention especially after the September 11 terror attacks on the United States. In 2002, former Singapore Foreign Minister Shanmugam Jayakumar echoed this shift: "Previously, we were discussing traditional security concerns evolved around flash points like the South China Sea, Korean Peninsula and India sub-continent. Now the nontraditional security threats have assumed as important (a place) as traditional matters." (Kyodo News 2002.07.31) As crucial are the issues of climate change, environment, and energy security which are expected to take center stage come November when Singapore chairs and hosts the 13th

¹ <http://www.aseanregionalforum.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=RbahNhjo2E8%3d&tabid=66&mid=940>

ASEAN Summit and the 15th ASEAN Regional Forum in July 2008.

Notwithstanding the myriad of security challenges hounding the region, it does not mean that it is in a worse shape now compared to thirteen years ago. Much of the peace, stability and prosperity this side of the world currently enjoys are a result of years of dialogue and cooperation among countries. The ARF has played an important role in providing this venue for the multilateral discussion of political and security issues over the years. Prior to the creation of the ARF, discussion of security issues among disparate countries was rare, a multilateral regional security machinery undeveloped, if not non-existent (Dickens 1998). Developing habits of dialogue and cooperation among a diverse group of countries that have previously declared wars against each other, whose economies vary from the richest to the poorest, and that are, up the present, beset with historical, cultural and religious differences, is no small feat. Participants have since grown in number from just over a dozen present at the inaugural meeting in 1944. At least 27 countries participated at the 14th ASEAN Regional Forum in Manila this year, with Sri Lanka as the latest addition. The People's Republic of China (PRC), India, Myanmar, and North Korea—considered key players in shaping Asia-Pacific peace and security—likewise on board. Membership of ASEAN has since expanded to 10, with the inclusion of the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam). So far, having more countries involved in the ARF process has proved to be a boon rather than a bane to the security forum.

The growing involvement of Asia-Pacific states in ARF, their commitment to moving the process beyond confidence-building and towards preventive diplomacy,² will no doubt give this previously criticized “talk shop” the necessary clout to influence regional and international peace and security. Countries see the Forum evolving into an institutional and operational body that will respond more effectively to regional security

² Preventive diplomacy is considered the second stage in the evolution of the ARF process. See “The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper,” <http://www.aseansec.org/3635.htm>

issues (ASEAN Regional Forum 2007).

At the heart of this multilateral security forum is ASEAN, which, despite criticisms that its policy of non-intervention has slowed down the process, remains a neutral venue or an honest broker for the discussion and resolution of regional conflicts. The regional grouping has been a successful counterbalance to the growing presence of a number of powerful and influential states in the ARF.

I. Country Assessments: Current Challenges and How to Address Them

Countries in the Asia-Pacific generally view the peace and security situation in the region as relatively stable although beset with uncertainties that may lead to future conflicts. These can be grouped into: (1) traditional issues that have minor successes in terms of achieving resolution and those that have been contained; (2) traditional issues that may spark conflict anytime; (3) non-traditional issues that are already being addressed; and (4) emerging non-traditional issues that deserve immediate attention.

The resolution of these security issues, be they traditional or nontraditional, will largely depend though on the political landscape in the region.³ In its latest security outlook, Singapore, current chair of ASEAN, draws attention to the changing political scene in Asia—highlighting the emergence of China and India as economic powers, the impact of Japan’s quest for normalcy, and the foreseen role that Russia will play in Asia-Pacific affairs. Amid these changes, the prevailing supremacy of the United States in ensuring regional security and prosperity is still very much part of the equation. To the city-state, the stability of relations among these major powers is imperative.⁴ For its part, Australia looks at the future “open and cooperative links” between the United States, Japan, China and India as

³ Exchange of Views on Regional Defence and Security Outlook presented at the ASEAN Defense Senior Officials’ Meeting, October 18-19, 2007, Singapore.

⁴ ASEAN 93.

key in sustaining regional stability and prosperity.⁵

II. Gaining Ground on and Containment of Traditional Issues

The situation in the Korean Peninsula remains the most urgent issue for several countries in the Asia-Pacific. The fact that the issue was already on the first ARF Chairman's Statement is enough proof that it has been dominating regional discussions on security for more than a decade. However, this may take a back seat in the coming months as a result of positive developments in the Six-Party Talks, wherein all relevant parties have so far fulfilled their commitments under the February 13, 2007 agreement. The talks are now on the second phase involving the verifiable disabling and elimination of all existing nuclear facilities in Pyongyang. North Korea has agreed to provide all parties a complete and correct declaration of all its programs by December 31. It has also committed not to transfer nuclear materials, technology and know-how. In exchange, it will receive the promised economic, energy and humanitarian assistance up to the equivalent of one million tons of heavy fuel oil (USINFO 2007). These positive developments would now allow countries in the region to give more attention to other pressing security matters that have long been overshadowed by the North Korean issue.

The territorial dispute in the South China Sea is deemed the most important flashpoint due to the number of countries involved. The issue is being contained with the adoption of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea signed in 2002 by ASEAN countries and China. The Declaration calls for the peaceful settlement of all jurisdictional and territorial disputes among claimants. It allows parties to hold exploration of cooperative activities pending a settlement. These include: marine environmental protection; marine scientific research; safety of navigation and communication at sea; search and rescue operation; and

⁵ ASEAN 1.

combating transnational crime, including but not limited to trafficking in illicit drugs, piracy and armed robbery at sea, and illegal traffic in arms (ASEAN 2002). Claimants have so far managed to practice restraint albeit occasional issues involving fishing and joint oil exploration works conducted by some countries.

III. Looming and Unpredictable Traditional Issues

Cross-straits relations are not improving and may in fact be the next newsmaker after North Korea due to the perceived renew aggressiveness of Taiwan in its pursuit of independence and membership in the United Nations. Taiwan is set to hold a referendum on applying for UN membership under the name of "Taiwan" in March 2008 at the same time of its presidential elections. China, whose political clout continues to grow as a consequence of its economic rise, is not expected to take this sitting down. The reason for the lack of progress in resolving the issue is obvious. Taiwan remains diplomatically isolated as a result of the One-China Policy practiced by most countries. Hence, venue to engage Taiwan in a dialogue is nil and countries could only limit themselves to calls for both parties to exercise restraint. ARF has no influence over Taiwan since it is not allowed to participate in the forum. ASEAN countries deal with it on a bilateral and purely economic basis. Countries scramble to be on China's good side, including the United States, which unfortunately is the only party that is in the best position to broker a settlement or peaceful solution between Taiwan and China.

The international community's hands are practically tied unless the main players: Taiwan, China, and the United States seriously go back to the negotiating table and come up with a credible and lasting arrangement to contain, if not resolve, the issue. As Russia has put it, "a military conflict in the Taiwan Strait with possible involvement of U.S. armed forces seems unlikely, but not entirely impossible."⁶ ASEAN and ARF may also have to

⁶ ASEAN 86.

re-evaluate their roles in the cross-Strait issue without necessarily giving up their One-China Policy, if they are bent on avoiding any future conflict that may arise within their neighborhood.

Another issue that has long dominated discussions in ASEAN and ARF is the political developments in Myanmar. This issue should have been on the first category, and it had stayed there for quite some time, until the recent protests initiated by the Buddhist monks in that country that re-awaken the people to oust the military regime and free pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. ASEAN has consistently practiced its policy of non-interference when it comes to the situation in Myanmar and has limited itself to calls for the restoration of democracy in Yangon. The regional bloc has also given Myanmar time to complete its Roadmap to Democracy and has never imposed a deadline. It has rejected calls by the United States, the European Union, among others, to impose sanctions on its member and has flatly denied suggestions of expulsion.

At the height of the demonstrations in Yangon in September, however, ASEAN issued a rare strong-worded statement against the military junta, emphasizing the impact events in Myanmar might have on the reputation and credibility of the grouping.⁷ An ASEAN diplomat revealed that the group's informal meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York was supposed to discuss the progress in the ASEAN Charter whose draft is being rushed to meet the signing by the heads of state in Singapore in November. This was instead shelved in favor of the statement. French Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Bernard Kouchner paid another visit to Southeast Asia to pressure ASEAN and even China-considered Myanmar's ally-to intervene. According to Kouchner, "the capacity of China and ASEAN countries to engage in dialogue with the Burmese junta is irreplaceable."⁸

⁷ Statement by ASEAN Chair Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs George Yeo, September 27, 2007, New York.

⁸ "Burma: The Status Quo Cannot Continue," *Philippine Star*, October 30, 2007.

IV. Nontraditional Issues That are Being Addressed

Other than the traditional security issues, the region has been giving equal weight to transnational security threats such as terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction especially among non-state actors; piracy, armed robbery and maritime terrorism particularly in Southeast Asia; proliferation of small arms and light weapons; people smuggling and trafficking; illicit drug trafficking; among others. Of these, particular attention has been placed on international terrorism due to the presence of a number of terrorist organizations in Southeast Asia.

Terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology are special issues of concern being pushed by the United States, the European Union, Japan, Australia and Canada. However, in Southeast Asia, where the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist organization conducts recruitment and training, discussions and plans of action have only gained ground in 2001 after September 11. Early this year, ASEAN decided to fast track its anti-terrorism agenda by signing the landmark ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism. With regard to the issue of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, again big powers are taking the lead and their Asian counterparts are following albeit at a slow pace. This is not surprising as there are only a number of countries in Asia that possess or have the capacity to produce nuclear weapons. The U.S.-initiated Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), whose aim is to intercept trade of weapons of mass destruction, has managed to lure only a handful of Asian countries to jump in since most countries are more inclined to support disarmament. Nonetheless, international terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will remain in the security agenda of the region in the years to come.

V. Shifting Attention to Emerging and Pressing Security Issues

The relative stability being experienced by the region with regard a

number of traditional security threats now give it the opportunity to set its sights on emerging issues. The issues of pandemics such as avian flu and SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), as well as climate change and energy security, are gaining ground. Singapore specifically highlights these trans-boundary issues that could impact on the internal stability and national security of Asia-Pacific countries. Environmental degradation and climate change could also cause “humanitarian crises, social upheavals, political tensions, instability and civil strife” over the long term.⁹ Giving importance to energy security, meanwhile, is imperative as most economies in the region are net importers of oil and hence, are susceptible to oil price volatility.

These nonconventional issues have been given much attention, indicated by their presence in almost all major regional forums. Climate change and energy security are being discussed not only in ASEAN and ARF, but in the East Asia Summit (ASEAN 10 plus India, Australia and New Zealand) and the ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN 10 plus China, Japan and South Korea) process as well.

Asia-Pacific countries are one in saying that there is a need to strengthen existing multilateral forums and creating new ones to address various threats to security. Given the multitude of security issues hounding the region, Singapore acknowledges the need for new, focused and functional regional forums to discuss and address various threats. Aside from existing multilateral forums such as the ARF, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the East Asia Summit and the Shangri-La Dialogue, it welcomes the creation of other functional forums including the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (RECAAP), the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, and the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA). It likewise lauds the convening of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) in 2006 and considers it a clear manifestation of ASEAN's “maturity and readiness” in

⁹ ASEAN 94.

tackling regional security issues. The ADMM works on the principles that: one, regional security is a collective responsibility; two, the regional security architecture should be inclusive big and small countries as well as international organizations; and three, cooperation that is based on mutual respect and abides by international law.¹⁰

With regard to addressing nontraditional security issues, China urges the ARF to place these on high priority.¹¹ It advocates a comprehensive response to new security threats and challenges—political, economic, diplomatic, legal, scientific and technological—which involve information sharing, establishment of early warning mechanism on natural disasters and pandemics, and going to the roots of nonconventional threats as in terrorism.¹² Thailand calls for the promotion of human security, which aims to free individuals from fear and want, through prevention of conflict, terrorism, hunger, disease, homelessness and illiteracy.¹³ Human security encourages the employment of non-military means such as “preventive diplomacy, conflict management and post-conflict peace-building, to addressing the root causes of conflict by building state capacity and promoting equitable economic development.”¹⁴

Apart from the ARF, proposals to expand the role and scope of the Six-Party Talks beyond the North Korea denuclearization issue have come up following the success of the February 2007 agreement. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill, the top US negotiator in the North Korean issue, welcomed the proposals and expressed hopes that the “six-party process can serve as an ‘embryonic structure’ for Northeast Asia to create new bilateral and multilateral ties.” (Bullock 2005) The creation of a Northeast Asian multilateral security regime that will take off from the six-party process is seen to not only serve

¹⁰ Exchange 4.

¹¹ ASEAN 28.

¹² ASEAN 27.

¹³ ASEAN 103.

¹⁴ Human Security International website. http://www.humansecurity.org/?page_id=4

the interests of Northeast Asian countries—to the normalization of relations between the two Koreas, to China's quest for regional influence, or to the United States which is being left out in the East Asia community building project. It can likewise supplement the U.S.-centered East Asian alliance structure and the ASEAN-led East Asian regionalization (Zhang 2005).

VI. Asia-Pacific Security: Philippine Initiatives

The Philippines shares the perception of most Asia-Pacific countries that security in the region has become relatively stable owed to the continued cooperation among countries over the years. It advocates multilateralism as the best approach in addressing various regional threats and challenges. The Philippines is a member to a number of multilateral political, economic and security arrangements in the region and looks at cooperation in ASEAN as a cornerstone of its regional policy.

In its regional security outlook submitted to the ARF last May,¹⁵ the Philippines considers the situation in the South China Sea, cross-straits relations, and the Korean Peninsula as the major traditional security concerns in the Asia-Pacific. It listed terrorism; transnational crimes (such as trafficking in narcotics and precursor drugs, trafficking of persons, trafficking in weapons or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, money laundering, piracy and other maritime threats); pandemics; energy security; and environmental concerns and biological hazards under non-traditional security threats.

In the South China Sea, the Philippines pursues cooperative undertakings with a number of countries that are in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. These include the Joint Oceanographic Marine Scientific Research Expeditions (JOMSRE) with Vietnam that was started in 1996, and the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) it is conducting with both Vietnam and China in

¹⁵ ASEAN 65-73.

selected areas in the South China Sea. JOMSRE involves scientific research on marine life, topography and ecology. Laos is an observer to the project which has completed four expeditions so far. The tripartite JMSU, meanwhile, is a private sector undertaking led by the national oil companies of the Philippines, China and Vietnam. The three firms agreed in 2005 to conduct a joint survey of oil deposits in undisclosed areas in the South China Sea covering 143,000 square kilometers. The survey is now on its second phase and the parties are considering future joint resource and energy exploration and development should efforts resulted in positive findings.¹⁶ Both the JOMSRE and the JMSU are in line with objective of transforming the South China Sea from an area of conflict to an area of cooperation. It is not clear though whether the JMSU is open to other claimant-countries who might be interested to join in the survey and future exploration works. Including more countries in the agreement may help lessen the tension created when the tripartite cooperation was first announced and criticisms that a number of countries are violating the provisions of the UNCLOS and the Declaration on the Code of Conduct.

The Philippines is also closely following developments in cross-Strait relations, as it enjoys and pursues strong relationships with both China and Taiwan. Despite its adherence to the One-China Policy, it has aggressively engaged Taiwan in the area of economics through healthy bilateral trade and investments. The two countries also interact socially, culturally and through people-to-people relations. The Philippines seeks to achieve the “optimum balance” in dealing with its two Asian neighbors and supports efforts to resolve the cross-straits issue peacefully.¹⁷

ASEAN was under the chairmanship of the Philippines when the landmark February 2007 agreement on the denuclearization of North Korea came to fruition. As chair, the Philippines endeavored to create an active role for the regional grouping in resolving the issue in the Korean Peninsula

¹⁶ ASEAN 67.

¹⁷ ASEAN.

cognizant of the importance of a peaceful resolution of the issue to regional security and stability. Other than the usual expression of support on progress in the Six-Party Talks, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has offered the Philippines as venue for future meetings among the six countries. In July, high-level representatives to the Six-Party process met for the first time in Manila prior to the ARF annual meeting. The Philippines has also kept a policy of engagement with North Korea manifested in the bilateral visit of Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo to Pyongyang in June.

The Philippines has also done its share in addressing nontraditional security concerns. It has passed into law this year the Human Security Act that gives more teeth to the country's relentless drive against terrorist organizations at home (Abu Sayyaf Group), in the region, and in other parts of the globe. It has actively taken part in the drafting of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism, which the 10-member grouping signed in Cebu early this year. The Philippines also supports the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and is a signatory to all 12 international conventions and protocols on terrorism, as well as the 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The Philippines believes, however, that getting to the roots of terrorism is as crucial in fighting the global scourge. It is working with countries on a bilateral basis for peace and development projects—especially in Mindanao. It also participates in inter-faith and intercultural dialogues to promote tolerance and understanding among peoples. On the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Philippines has been active in many initiatives and is in fact a staunch advocate not only of nonproliferation but of disarmament as well. The Philippines has ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Treaty on Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Inhumane Weapons Convention, and the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention. It is among a handful of countries in Southeast Asia which supports the PSI. Tied to this is the country's commitment to fight money

laundering and related activities through the establishment of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (under which IO), whose successes removed the Philippines from the list of Non-Cooperative Countries and Territories of the Financial Action Task Force. On other transnational crimes, the country has been aggressive in going after drug and human traffickers. It backs regional and international endeavors to address these problems. It also works on a bilateral and multilateral basis with other countries in Southeast Asia to resolve maritime security threats. Finally, the Philippines takes the issue of energy security seriously. It passed into law Republic Act 9367 or the Biofuels Act to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels through the mandatory use of a minimum of one percent biodiesel in all diesel fuels sold in the market.

VII. Asia-Pacific Security: Taiwan's Role

In order to effectively address the increasing number of threats and challenges to regional security, it is imperative that each country does its share in contributing to the pursuit of peace and stability. Taiwan may be isolated diplomatically but it remains, geographically, within the neighborhood of Asia and is thus a stakeholder in the region. Regional stability is in the interest of Taiwan as it continues to create security and prosperity for its people. Taiwan's role and participation may seem limited, as it is being excluded in existing regional multilateral political, security, and economic arrangements. However, should it decide to take on a more active role and pursue initiatives to address the various security threats discussed earlier, on its own, its choices are in fact limitless.

On the cross-Straits dilemma, both Taiwan and China have consistently rejected the possibility of an all-out war to resolve the issue. This, however, does not fully give their neighbors in Asia enough assurance, as both countries continue to pursue policies and issue statements that could lead to a change in the status quo or a military confrontation. There is no stopping the Taiwanese government or the Taiwanese people from pursuing its own

identity and independence. At the same time, nothing will hinder the Chinese from claiming what they believe to be rightfully theirs. This issue, however, may still be resolved peacefully—if Taiwan and China is willing to go back to the negotiating table and resume discussions to arrive at a win-win solution. In the meantime, the two sides are urged to exercise restraint and not contribute to the already tensed situation. Since a final resolution to the issue cannot be achieved overnight, both sides are encouraged to start cooperating in other non-sensitive, non-political areas. Taiwan and China are strong partners in the economic and cultural arenas. It is imperative that this partnership remains unhampered as these will help improve relations and develop habits of dialogue and cooperation between the two parties. More specifically, Taiwan should boost economic ties with China, with or without a free trade arrangement (FTA) or comprehensive economic partnership (CEP) agreements. The emergence of China as an economic giant in Asia is a reality and countries scramble to take advantage of the huge Chinese market for their products and services, as well as of the investments that China has to offer. Taiwan should likewise maximize its existing economic partnership with the Mainland for its economy to remain competitive. Together, the economies of the two countries can help sustain regional prosperity.

Economic security in the 21st century is crucial if countries are to remain relevant in light of the accelerated pace of globalization. Taiwan's role is to be an active player in the global marketplace by keeping its economy open to other countries in the region, by aggressively venturing into other territories where it can pour in investments and where it can impart and acquire technological know-how. Despite not being a member of multilateral groupings such as ASEAN and the East Asia Summit, countries adhering to the One-China Policy still keep their economic doors wide open to Taiwan. In fact, bilateral economic relationships with Taiwan remain healthy and Asian countries recognize the importance of continuously engaging Taiwan in the economic sense to take advantage of the

opportunities that the latter has to offer. They also acknowledge the fact that Taiwan's economy has been among the most dynamic in Asia and look up to it as a model for developing countries. Taiwan is lauded for weathering the Asian financial crisis that crippled most regional economies in 1997. Asian countries are fully cognizant that it does not only have lessons to learn from Taiwan, but it needs Taiwan's active cooperation to ensure economic and financial stability in the region. Meanwhile, Taiwan's membership to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) is very important. It must make full use of this membership by endeavoring to play, or be seen to play, a more pronounced role in these economic groupings. Taiwan may also be included in the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), which aims to create a framework of bilateral currency swap arrangements in the Asian region in order to avert another financial crisis. Proposed by former ASEAN Secretary General Rodolfo Severino during the Asia-Pacific Security Forum in Taiwan, the CMI is a purely financial undertaking whose success will largely depend on more countries or territories' participation. Taiwan should not be excluded, especially since it was the only economy in Asia that was able to respond positively to the Asian crisis.

In all these economic undertakings, Taiwan should strive to separate the economic from the political agenda. Political ends may be pursued without putting a strain on the economy, without harming existing relationships with partners.

Finally, Taiwan has a role to play in addressing nontraditional security threats. Taiwan supports the fight against international terrorism and has provided humanitarian assistance to victims of terrorist attacks in New York and Afghanistan. It has taken actions in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1371¹⁸ despite not being a member of the international organization. Taiwan's response to terrorism has been immediate and

¹⁸ Taiwan's Goodwill: Furthering Human Rights and Peace.
<http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/human/antiterrorism/anti.html>

comprehensive. With regard to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in 2000, Taiwan was suspected of developing chemical or biological weapons, which it has strongly denied (Taipei Times 2000). In order to assure the international community, Taiwan must take concrete actions to show its commitment to non-proliferation. Taiwan is also being criticized for its failure to curb human trafficking. Much needs to be done in order to convince the international community that Taiwan is bent on preventing and addressing human trafficking. In the areas of energy security and climate change, Taiwan, just like any country, is not immune. Already, talks of how looming power shortages have started could have an adverse effect on the Taiwanese economy. The lack of progress in power-related projects and the ban on the establishment of nuclear plants could cause a serious power crisis as reserve margin is seen to go down by 8.5 percent in 2010. Taiwan needs 1,200 megawatts of generating capacity, equivalent to four percent of the island's production, each year to meet demand (Bloomberg 2007). As in other countries, Taiwan must look at alternative ways to source energy if it is to avert a future power crisis. Taiwan also needs to lend a hand in addressing environmental problems. These "soft issues" can actually provide Taiwan with the best entry point to participate in regional or international programs or initiatives since they are not political in nature.

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