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THE ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY: ASEAN SECURITY COOPERATION ON COMBATTING TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES AND TRANSBOUNDARY CHALLENGES

Adi Kusumaningrum¹

Abstract

The Asean Security Community (ASC) is a framework to facilitate political and security cooperation in ASEAN. The ASC is a framework based on the idea of comprehensive security with the strategic thrusts of conflict prevention, peaceful conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building. A framework of this nature represents one of the ultimate goals of ASEAN, which has achieved a record of political cooperation since its inauguration. All nations of Southeast Asia except Timor Leste are now members of ASEAN. There are any ASEAN's Security Challenges, such as old and new insurgencies - southern Philippines, southern Thailand, Myanmar, West Papua, political uncertainty and instability - Myanmar, Thailand, inter-state disputes and tensions - Thai-Cambodia border, South China Sea conflict, power shift and great power rivalry - China/US, China-India, China-Japan, and transnational/non- traditional security threats – terrorism, transboundary haze, maritime piracy, pandemics, transnational crime, drug trafficking, people smuggling, natural disasters). This paper discuss about security cooperation in ASEAN and some achievements of ASEAN as regional organization on combating transnational crimes and transboundary challenges.

Komunitas Keamanan ASEAN (ASC) merupakan sebuah pedoman untuk memfasilitasi kerjasama di bidang politik dan keamanan di ASEAN. ASC merupakan pedoman yang didasarkan pada ide keamanan menyeluruh dengan cara pencegahan konflik, penyelesaian kondlik secara menyeluruh, dan upaya damai pasca konflik. Pedoman jenis ini merepresentasikan salah satu tujuan tertinggi ASEAN, yaitu untuk mencapai kerjasama politik semenjak pembentukannya. Semua negara-negara Asia Tenggara kecuali Timor Leste merupakan anggota-anggota ASEAN. Meskipun begitu, terdapat tantangan keamanan yang dimiliki oleh ASEAN, misalnya pemberontakan lama dan baru – Filipina Selatan, Thailand Selatan, Myanmar, Papua Barat, ketidakpastian dan ketidakstabilan politik – Myanmar, Thailand, sengketa-sengketa dan tekanan antar negara-negara anggota – Perbatasan Thailand-Kamboja, konflik Laut Cina Selatan, pergantian kekuasaan dan persaingan kekuasaan – Cina/Amerika Serikat, Cina-India, Cina-Jepang, dan ancaman-ancaman keamanan – terorisme, ketidakjelasan perbatasan, pembajakan di laut, wabah pandemic, kejahatan-kejahatan transnasional, penyelundupan obat-obatan terlarang, penyelundupan manusia, bencana alam. Tulisan ini akan membahas mengenai kerja sama keamanan di ASEAN dan beberapa keberhasilan yang telah diraih ASEAN sebagai organisasi regional dalam memberantas kejahatan-kejahatan transnasional dan tantangan antarperbatasan.

Keywords: ASEAN, transnational crimes, security cooperation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967 at a meeting in Bangkok between the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia.² It was the de facto founding declaration of ASEAN, states the objective for the creation of ASEAN as, first and foremost, cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres; it only touches on political and security cooperation in abstract terms, however, stating that a goal of ASEAN is “to promote regional peace and stability.”³

To concretise the ASEAN Vision 2020, the ASEAN Heads of states/ Governments adopted the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) in 2003, which establishes an ASEAN Community by 2020. The ASEAN Community consists of three pillars, namely the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). APSC includes Asean Security Community (ASC). It was announced in the chairman’s statement of the November 2007 ASEAN Summit in Singapore.⁴

The Asean Security Community (ASC) is a framework to facilitate political and security cooperation in ASEAN. The ASC is a framework based on the idea of comprehensive security with the strategic thrusts of conflict prevention, peaceful conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building. A framework of this nature represents one of the ultimate goals of ASEAN, which has achieved a record of political cooperation since its inauguration.⁵

ASEAN’s first explicit commitment to security cooperation only

² Abd Hamid, Redo Abduh, ASEAN Security Cooperation: Challenges and the Way Ahead, *The Journal of Defence and Security*, Vol. 1, No. 1: , 2010.

³ Tomotaka, SHOJI, ASEAN Security Community: An Initiative for Peace and Stability, http://www.nids.go.jp/english/publication/kiyo/pdf/2008/bulletin_e2008_3.pdf, p. 17, 10/10/2013

⁴ When Indonesia first raised the suggestion, it ambitiously proposed that the activities of the security community include nontraditional security cooperation such as establishment of a counterterrorism center and joint peacekeeping exercises, but it was unable to secure other members’ agreement.

⁵ *Ibid.*

came with the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and in the 1992 Singapore Declaration during the fourth ASEAN Summit Meeting. The 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord stated "*the continuation of cooperation on a non-ASEAN basis between the member states in security matters in accordance with their mutual needs and interests*".⁶ Although not a security organisation itself, ASEAN can be regarded as an umbrella under which member states may take up bilateral or multi-lateral security activities.⁷ Bilateral border and maritime security agreements between two or three members have become common practice since the early 1970's.

Discussions relating to ASC formation began within ASEAN in 2003, stemming from a proposal put forward by Indonesia. The ASC discussions are still underway and the cooperative framework has yet to be fully formed. However, over the period from 2003 to 2006, the discussions gave rise to a number of concrete results paving the way toward the establishment of the ASC, including the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (the Bali Concord II) of 2003, which called for the establishment of the ASC; the Vientiane Action Programme of 2004, which put forward the policy challenges to be overcome in order to form the ASC; and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), which represents the first step in the formation of the ASC. At the ASEAN Summit in Cebu, the Philippines, held in January 2007, it was agreed that the ASC would be formed by 2015, five years earlier than originally planned. Moreover, the Second ADMM, which took place just before the Singapore Summit, issued a three-year work program for defense cooperation.⁸

II. THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA NATIONS (ASEAN)

Southeast Asia consists of 11 countries squeezed between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.⁹ All nations of Southeast Asia except

⁶ See Declaration of ASEAN Concord 1976. Available from <http://www.aseansec.org>. (Accessed on 15 January 2010)

⁷ See note 2

⁸ See note 3

⁹ Since ASEAN was established in 8 August 1967, ASEAN organization was only

Timor Leste are now members of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). The total population of Southeast Asian in 2010 was 593 million. The population had doubled in the 38 years since 1972, and had increased by 40 percent over the quarter century since 1985.¹⁰ According to Asean Finance and Macroeconomic Surveillance and IMF- World Economic Outlook April 2011, Asean population, territory, and economy as below:¹¹

Table 1

ASEAN: Population, Territory and Economy, 2010

Country	Total land area (sq km)	100% population (thousand)	Gross Domestic Product at current prices		Product per capita	
			(US\$ Mn)	(PPP\$ Mn)	(US\$)	(PPP\$)
Brunei Darussalam	5,765	415	12,402	19,406	29,915	46,811
Cambodia	181,035	15,269	11,168	28,985	731	1,898
Indonesia	1,860,360	234,181	708,032	1,030,998	3,023	4,403
Lao PDR	236,800	6,230	6,508	16,105	1,045	2,585
Malaysia	330,252	28,909	238,849	415,157	8,262	14,361
Myanmar ⁹	676,577	60,163	43,025	76,601	715	1,273
Philippines	300,000	94,013	189,326	351,686	2,014	3,741
Singapore	710	5,077	223,015	291,934	43,929	57,505
Thailand	513,120	67,312	318,709	585,698	4,735	8,701
Viet Nam	331,051	86,930	107,650	291,260	1,238	3,351
ASEAN	4,435,670	598,498	1,658,683	3,107,829	3,106	5,193
CLMV ²	1,425,463	168,592	168,351	412,951	999	2,449
ASEAN6 ⁴	3,010,207	429,907	1,690,332	2,694,878	3,932	6,269

joined by five countries. Established in 1967 (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) with the goal “to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter”. Nowadays, ASEAN roles and influence has strong base in Southeast Asia and South Asia regions. ASEAN has taken place as important body in Asia Pacific political stream through Asian Regional Forum (ARF), where it is successful to create attention of various countries not only in Asia region but also United States of America and Europe involvement.

¹⁰ Jones, Gavin W., *The Population of Southeast Asian*, Working Paper Series 196 Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapura, 2013. Page 3.

¹¹ *Asean Community in Figures 2011 (ACIF 2011)*, Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, April 2012. Page 1.

Southeast Asia is generally divided into “mainland” and “island” zones. The mainland (Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) is actually an extension of the Asian continent. Muslims can be found in all mainland countries, but the most significant populations are in southern Thailand and western Burma (Arakan). The Cham people of central Vietnam and Cambodia are also Muslim.¹²

Island or maritime Southeast Asia includes Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, and the new nation of East Timor (formerly part of Indonesia). Islam is the state religion in Malaysia and Brunei. Although 85 percent of Indonesia’s population of over 234,000,000 are Muslims, a larger number than any other country in the world, Islam is not the official state religion. Muslims are a minority in Singapore and the southern Philippines.¹³ The Southeast Asian countries in alphabetical order consist of:

Picture 1 The Southeast Asian countries



Sources : <http://latitudes.nu/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/map-+-flags.jpg>

¹² Introduction to Southeast Asia: History, Geography, and Livelihood, <http://asiasociety.org/countries/traditions/introduction-southeast-asia>, 10/18/2013.

¹³ *Ibid.*

The Southeast Asian region is region that was once been fought over and colonized by superpowers such as Britain, the United States, France and Spain. In the early stages before World War II, countries in Southeast Asia was not recognized as a region, on the other hand they were identified merely by the country's own name and not seen as a country from a particular region. For instance, Burma, Malaya or Sumatra among others. However, just before World War II, for the first time in history these countries which were colonized by superpowers (Allied Forces) in this region were called Southeast Asia. The word Southeast Asia was used in Quebec Conference in August 1943.¹⁴

Asean is a multipurpose regional organization promoting economic integration and cooperative security. Asean is not a military alliance, but through its Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, 1976, sets up principles of conduct, including non- interference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes, now signed by all major world powers. The norms that the countries in the region espouse appeared in the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia binding these countries:¹⁵

- a. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations;
- b. The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;
- c. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
- d. Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means;
- e. Renunciation of the threat or use of force;
- f. Effective cooperation among themselves.

¹⁴ Keling, Mohamad Faisal, *The Development of ASEAN from Historical Approach*, Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education, Vol. 7, No. 7; July 2011. Page 171.

¹⁵ See Art. 2 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, As Amended by The First Protocol Amending The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, 1987, The Second Protocol Amending The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, 1998 and The Third Protocol Amending The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, 2010.

III. ASEAN'S SECURITY CHALLENGES: TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES AND TRANSBOUNDARY CHALLENGES

Transnational is defined as any activity that originates from within society (rather than from within the decision structure and resources of the state),¹⁶ is commissioned and undertaken by agents operating in several national jurisdictions, and is transmitted or replicated across national borders.¹⁷ Following international conventions, „*Crime*“ is defined as conduct constituting an offence according to the laws adopted by states and international organisations.¹⁸ Whereas, *transboundary challenges* is a challenges that were crossing a territorial or national boundary or border. A *security threat*“ is deemed to be an activity or known intent to degrade the safety, property, or values of a society, and ultimately the independence or viability of a state.¹⁹

Transnational crime and security threats have existed for decades, in Asia and more broadly, but have increased in number, range, aspiration and virulence with the quickening pace of globalisation. It is important to note that the areas of greatest growth in transnational criminality are regions in which there have been substantial increases in cross-border flows of people, money and commodities.²⁰ There are seven basic types of transnational crime and security threats in the Asian region,²¹ such as *Violent Religious Radicalism and Separatism, People Smuggling and People Trafficking, Illicit Drug Production and Smuggling, Money Laundering, Fraud and Extortion, Prostitution, Paedophilia, Child Sex Tourism, Pornography, Piracy, Violent Rob-*

¹⁶ The involvement of state agencies makes an activity international rather than transnational.

¹⁷ Transnational activities are those that are advanced intentionally by their agents; trans-boundary“ phenomena are events that occur across national borders but not as a result of the intentional efforts of agents to carry out these effects; thus terrorism and crime are transnational, while pollution, pandemics and resource degradation are trans-boundary.

¹⁸ Wesley, Michael, “Transnational Crime and Security Threats in Asia”, available at: http://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/169254/michael-wesley-paper.pdf, accessed on 15 November 2013. See Article 2 (c) United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, December 2000.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

bery, Kidnap and Extortion, Illegal Resource Exploitation.

There are any ASEAN's Security Challenges, such as *insurgencies* (southern Philippines, southern Thailand, Myanmar, West Papua), *Political uncertainty and instability* (Myanmar, Thailand), *Inter-state disputes and tensions* (Thai-Cambodia border, South China Sea conflict), *Power shift and great power rivalry* (China/US, China-India, China-Japan), and *Transnational/Non-traditional security threats* (terrorism, transboundary haze, maritime piracy, pandemics, transnational crime, drug trafficking, people smuggling, natural disasters).²² Furthermore, ASEAN would have to absorb new conflicts and disputes of the kind that has been largely defused amongst the original ASEAN members.

Preah Vihear Complicates the Thai-Cambodian Relationship is one of another issues in ASEAN Intraregional Security. The struggle over which country will claim the Preah Vihear temple and the surrounding area along the Thai-Cambodian border reignited in 2008 when Cambodia applied to have the temple designated as a World Heritage Site.²³ During 2011, Myanmar moved forward with political reform with the inauguration of a new "civilian" government in March, bringing major expansion of political freedoms.²⁴ Myanmar has completed its transition to a civilian rule that still reflects the strong political influence of its military. The new government has embarked on a bold policy of expanding political freedom, and has significantly improved its relations with the United States and other nations.

In recent years, territorial disputes have reignited in the South China Sea between the Southeast Asian countries. The tension between the Southeast Asian countries and China over the South China Sea continued during 2011. In March, Chinese patrol boats harassed a Philippine resource survey vessel, leading the Philippines to ratchet up its diplomatic activities aimed at checking China. In addition to increasing

²² Amitav Acharya, *Security Challenges in the ASEAN Region*, Presentation to the Securing Asia Conference, London, 25-26 June, 2012, Page 9. See *Non Traditional Security Challenges, Regional Governance, and The ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC)*, Asean Security Initiative Policy Series, Working Paper No.7 September 2010.

²³ *Southeast Asia: Challenges in Creating an "ASEAN Political-Security Community"*. East Asian Strategic Review 2012. Page 128.

²⁴ *Ibid.* Page 132.

its multilateral and bilateral cooperation on South China Sea issues in ASEAN, the Philippines also sought to strengthen its security cooperation with the United States. Tension again increased between Vietnam and China after the May incident where a Chinese patrol boat obstructed a Vietnamese resource survey ship. Vietnam subsequently moved forward cautiously to increase its security cooperation with the United States and also made efforts to cool some of the tension with China.²⁵ The joint military exercises that the United States conducted separately with the Philippines and Vietnam also reflect the increasing salience of the South China Sea issues.

IV. AN OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN ASEAN'S POLITICAL COOPERATION: SECURITY COOPERATION

The "ASEAN Political-Security Community" (APSC) is designed to promote political and security cooperation among the ASEAN member states and seeks to make it possible for the member states to "live in peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment." ASEAN formally opened its discussion on creation of an "ASEAN Security Community" (ASC) in 2003 at the Senior Officials' Meeting.²⁶ The members of the Community pledge to rely exclusively on peaceful processes in the settlement of intra-regional differences and regard their security as fundamentally linked to one another and bound by geographic location, common vision and objectives. It has the following components: political development; shaping and sharing of norms; conflict prevention; conflict resolution; post-conflict peace building; and implementing mechanisms.

This section gives an overview of developments in ASEAN's political cooperation, which represent the preliminary steps in the formation of a security community. ASEAN's first explicit commitment to security cooperation only came with the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN

²⁵ *Ibid.* Page 127.

²⁶ *Ibid.* Page 131.

Concord²⁷ and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC),²⁸ and in the 1992 Singapore Declaration during the fourth ASEAN Summit Meeting. The Bali Concord II (2003) was ASEAN's next big step in formalising and institutionalising the ASEAN's community vision into a concretely targeted Community by 2020,²⁹ envisioned an ASC that was not a military alliance but a comprehensive security framework to provide peaceful settlement of disputes based on the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC).

Work was later conducted on an action program to give substance to the ASC, but there was out-of-hand opposition to Indonesia's ambitious proposal of elements such as an ASEAN peacekeeping force. As a result, the Vientiane Action Programme that was adopted in November 2004 was no more than a listing of abstract goals for future efforts, faithfully echoing ASEAN's past security principles as found, for example, in the TAC. The Twelfth ASEAN Summit expanded the concept of an ASC to include political cooperation in an "ASEAN political-security community" (APSC) and voted to move its formation five years forward to 2015.

Later an APSC Blueprint was adopted and work pushed forward on

²⁷ This declaration orders each ASEAN country members to expand political cooperation among members and other countries outside ASEAN. This declaration also demands that ASEAN member countries resolve conflicts either with country members or non ASEAN country member through method of negotiation and peace. Each dispute and conflict must be resolved immediately to avoid the growth and persistent of the matter. This declaration also compels members to take every action collectively and stand for ASEAN's basic principle.

²⁸ This treaty is based on the non intervention policy principles of a country's internal affairs, mutual respect of each country's sovereignty and effective settlement of the intra region issues through peace and cooperation among country member. This agreement designed a peaceful settlement procedure code for each contention and mandated the establishment of a supreme council which comprises of Ministers of parties involved as a solving mechanism for conflict and dispute. To this date, TAC still remains the sole regional diplomatic tool providing mechanism and the process to solve regional conflicts peacefully. Kamboja's conflict is one of ASEAN diplomacy's success which was resolve peacefully It is one of ASEAN's methods which is known as the solution diplomacy or preventive diplomacy.

²⁹ Son, Nguyen Hung, *The ASEAN Political Security Community: Challenges and Prospect*, available at: http://www.aseancenter.org.tw/upload/files/OUT-LOOK_004_02.pdf. accessed on: 19 Oktober 2013.

establishment of the community, but specific elements are still under development. It is worth noting, however, that based on the Action Programme, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) has been meeting annually since 2006, representing establishment of a system for consultations to promote cooperation among the ASEAN member states' defense ministers. Further, an expanded ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) has been at work since 2010 and includes eight countries from outside the ASEAN region (Japan, the United States, Australia, South Korea, India, New Zealand, China, and Russia), marking the successful creation of a new security cooperation framework covering the Asia-Pacific region.

The ASEAN APSC Blue Print adopted by the 14th ASEAN Summit in 2009 specified 3 key areas where the APSC is to be built on: (i) a rules based community with shared values and norms; (ii) a cohesive, peaceful and resilient region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security; (iii) a dynamic and outward looking region.³⁰ The APSC Blueprint envisages ASEAN to be a rules-based Community of shared values and norms; a cohesive, peaceful, stable and resilient region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security; as well as a dynamic and outward-looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world. The APSC Blueprint is guided by the ASEAN Charter and the principles and purposes contained therein. It provides a roadmap and timetable to establish the APSC by 2015. It also leaves room for flexibility to continue programmes/activities beyond 2015 in order to retain its significance and have an enduring quality. The APSC Blueprint was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 14th ASEAN Summit on 1 March 2009 in Cha-am/Hua Hin, Thailand.

Security cooperation of Asean Political Security agreed some Asean Declarations, Joint Declarations, and Statement on Combating Transnational Crime and Terrorism, as bellow:

1. Transnational Crime
 - a. ASEAN Declaration on Transnational Crime, Manila, Philippines, 20 December 1997
 - b. Manila Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Transnational Crime (1998), Manila, Philippines, 25 March 1998

³⁰ Son, Nguyen Hung, Op. Cit.

- c. ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime, Yangon, Myanmar, 23 June 1999
- 2. Counter-Terrorism
 - a. 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, 5 November 2001
ASEAN-US Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, 1 August 2002
 - b. Declaration on Terrorism by the 8th ASEAN Summit, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 3 November 2002
 - c. Joint Declaration of ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the Field of Non- Traditional Security Issues, 6th ASEAN-China Summit, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 4 November 2002
 - d. Joint Declaration on Cooperation to Combat Terrorism, 14th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting, Brussels, Belgium, 27 January 2003
 - e. ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Bali, Indonesia, 8 October 2003
 - f. MoU between the Governments of Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Issues, Bangkok, Thailand, 10 January 2004
 - g. ASEAN-Australia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1 July 2004
ASEAN-Russian Federation Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2 July 2004
 - h. ASEAN-Japan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 30 November 2004
 - i. ASEAN-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 27 July 2005
 - j. ASEAN-New Zealand Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 29 July 2005
 - k. ASEAN-Pakistan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 29 July 2005
 - l. ASEAN-Canada Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 28 July 2006

- m. ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT), Cebu, Philippines, 13 January 2007
 - n. ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 30 June 2009
3. Drugs
- a. Joint Declaration for a Drug-Free ASEAN, Manila, Philippines, 25 July 1998
 - b. Joint Statement by the 33rd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 24-25 July 2000
 - c. Bangkok Political Declaration: In Pursuit of a Drug-Free ASEAN 2015, Bangkok, Thailand, October 2000
 - d. ACCORD Plan of Action on Drug Free ASEAN (2005-2010), Beijing, China, 20 October 2005
 - e. ASEAN Work Plan on Combating Illicit Drug Production, Trafficking and Use (2009-2015), Siem Reap, Cambodia, 17 November 2009
4. Consular and Immigration
- a. ASEAN Framework Agreement on Visa Exemption, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 25 July 2006
 - b. The Guidelines for the Provision of Emergency Assistance by ASEAN Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of ASEAN Member Countries in Crisis Situation, Manila, Philippines, 29-30 July 2007

V. ASEAN SECURITY COOPERATION ON COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES AND TRANSBOUNDARY CHALLENGES: SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past 45 years, ASEAN, along with the Southeast Asian region, has overcome historical ups and downs, turning Southeast Asia from a region of suspicions and polarization into a united Southeast Asia striving for common goals of peace, stability, cooperation and development. ASEAN today comprises all 10

Southeast Asian nations which are looking towards building the ASEAN Community by 2015. ASEAN has made active contributions to and is considered an indispensable factor for peace, stability and se-

curity in the region.³¹ ASEAN's great contributions are demonstrated in the following aspects:

Firstly, for ASEAN, ensuring an environment of peace, stability, security and cooperation in the region is always an overall and key objective. Accordingly, ASEAN pursues a policy to ensure that not only regional countries live together peacefully but also other countries coming to the region need to make constructive contributions to the peaceful, cooperative and harmonious environment of the region. Therefore, peace, security and development cooperation are always prioritized in the agenda of ASEAN and between ASEAN and its outside partners.

Secondly, ASEAN has made active contributions to building and sharing common standards of conduct in the region, which have been recognized by countries in and outside the region and have become important documents and tools for peace and security in the region. In this effort, ASEAN always gives prominence to the principles of respecting a nation's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, settling disputes by peaceful measures, and respecting international law and the UN Charter. Noteworthy are the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (DOC), the Declaration of the East Asian Summit on the principles for mutually beneficial relations in the region, an example is the TAC, which now has 30 member countries, including large nations and important partners of ASEAN. It is now recognized as a document to regulate the relationship and the common conduct of countries participating in cooperation in the region.

Thirdly, ASEAN plays an increasingly important key role, defining the orientation for the building of a structure of regional cooperation on peace, security and development, through the initiative to establish and guide a network of regional cooperative organizations inside ASEAN and between ASEAN and its partners such as ASEAN +1, ASEAN +3, ARF, the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+) and the

³¹ Deputy Foreign Minister Pham Quang Vinh, ASEAN Political-Security Cooperation Achievements, available at: <http://biengioilanhtho.gov.vn/eng/aseanpolitical-securitycooperationachievements-nd-864ffb1b.aspx>, accessed on 20 November 2013.

East Asia Summit (EAS). These forums have become effective cooperation and dialogue frameworks for building confidence, ensuring peace, stability and security in the region. At the same time, they also serve ASEAN in further boosting cooperation within the bloc and between ASEAN and its partners in order to effectively cope with emerging non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, terrorism and maritime security...

Fourthly, ASEAN is consistent with the policy of settling disputes by peaceful measures on the basis of international law, the UN Charter and the ASEAN Charter. Accordingly, ASEAN has made active contributions to solving hot spots or complications in the region. ASEAN affirms its support for building a peaceful and nuclear weapon free Korean Peninsula and dialogues to resolve differences, especially through six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula. In 2011, with the consent of Cambodia and Thailand, ASEAN also actively assisted the two countries to peacefully settle emerging border disputes.

Fifthly, noteworthy is the East Sea issue. ASEAN always affirms that ensuring peace, stability, maritime security and safety in the East Sea is the common concern of the region, and ASEAN and all countries should join hands in contributing to these goals; and at the same time underscored the principles of exercising restraints, non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes and respecting international law, the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and fully implementing DOC.

In the context of recent complicated developments in the East Sea, ASEAN laid a special stress on the necessity to early reach a Code of Conduct in the East Sea (COC), in order to ensure peace, stability and security in the East Sea more effectively. On July 20, ASEAN unanimously adopted a Declaration on six principles in the East Sea issue, reaffirming the aforementioned principles and the common interest of ASEAN and the region in the East Sea issue.

VI. CONCLUSION

According to Deputy Foreign Minister Pham Quang Vinh opinion, Southeast Asia and East Asia - a region of important strategic geographical position and increasingly dynamic development – is enjoying great opportunities for peace, stability and development cooperation but facing challenges and difficulties at the same time. In the time to come, ASEAN needs to focus on following tasks:

Firstly, ASEAN needs to speed up the implementation of its priority objectives in order to ensure an environment of peace, stability and security in the region. In particular, ASEAN should effectively deploy the master plan on building the ASEAN Politics-Security Community, promote cooperation measures, build trust, prevent conflicts, not use force or threat to use force, settle disputes via peaceful means, respect international law, the UN Charter and the ASEAN Charter.

Secondly, ASEAN should bring into play cooperation tools, mechanisms and forums for regional peace and security, ensure the compliance and strict implementation of existing principles and agreements, bring into play the value and validity of tools such as TAC, SEANWZ, DOC, ARF, EAS, ADMM+... as well as continue to build and share the region's common standards of conduct

Thirdly, ASEAN needs to enhance solidarity and further bring into play its voice and key role and responsibility in issues relating to ASEAN and the region's common interests as well as developments that are likely to affect regional peace, security and stability, including the East Sea issue. This is a heavy responsibility but also a condition for ASEAN to uphold its indispensable central role for peace, stability and security in the region.

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