

# From ARF to ADMM+: Is the Asia-Pacific Finally Getting Multilateralism Right?

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The story of security multilateralism in the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific has been described as a frustrating enterprise,<sup>1</sup> and not without good reason. Feted when it was launched in 1994, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has since become a poster child for what, in the view of many, is fundamentally wrong about Asia-Pacific multilateralism—the absence of institutional leadership as embodied in a weak and disunited Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the destabilising impact of great power rivalry on the stability and security of the region. Against this insipid backdrop, the surprise package has been regional defence cooperation in the form of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM+). Only eight years young, the ADMM+ has hitherto outstripped the ARF in terms of its progress in enhancing regional security. That said, there remain significant challenges that, if left unattended to, can and will hinder the progress of the ADMM+ and even undermine its hard-earned achievements. Comparing the evolutionary paths of the ARF and the ADMM+, this chapter seeks to answer the question of whether the ADMM+, to the extent it has learned from the mistakes of the ARF if at all, is an indication that the Asia-Pacific region has finally succeeded in developing a brand of multilateral security cooperation that works. The chapter begins by reflecting on Asia-Pacific multilateralism against multilateralism more broadly before undertaking a systematic comparison of the ARF and ADMM+.

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<sup>1</sup> Deepak Nair, “Regionalism in the Asia Pacific/East Asia: A Frustrated Regionalism?,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (April 2009): 110-142.

## ASIA-PACIFIC MULTILATERALISM: NOT SO CURIOUS A CASE?

One thing supporters and critics of Asia-Pacific multilateralism alike do not quibble over is that the region's security architecture appears messy and disjointed.<sup>2</sup> Why, for example, would the region require two multilateral security institutions, like the ARF and the ADMM+, especially since both are ostensibly centred upon ASEAN? Why make institutions whose organisational density and depth lag far behind that of the European Union (EU), which remains for many the "gold standard" of multilateralism,<sup>3</sup> and whose efficacy seems so suspect to its critics—to the point that Kevin Rudd, the former prime minister of Australia, publicly advocated the replacement of the ARF with an EU-like superstructure?<sup>4</sup> With no semblance of grand architectural or of strategic coherence,<sup>5</sup> the multilateral house that ASEAN and its external partners have built in a highly ad hoc fashion looks far from the finished article. But while Europe's experience has led its champions to advance the idea of institutional singularity as destiny—one shared by Asia-Pacific leaders alike—others have been at pains to explain that multilateralism globally looks less like Europe's and more like the Asia-Pacific's with its plethora of formal standing multilateral institutions as well as interest-based coalitions referred

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<sup>2</sup> Asia-Pacific multilateralism has been described variously as a "complex", an "ecosystem", a "multiplex", and/or a "patchwork" of institutional arrangements. See, Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2014); Victor D. Cha, "Complex Patchworks: U.S. Alliances as Part of Asia's Regional Architecture," *Asia Policy*, No. 11 (January 2011): 27-50; Stephen D. Haggard, "The Organizational Architecture of the Asia-Pacific: Insights from the New Institutionalism," in *Integrating Regions: Asia in Comparative Context*, eds. Miles Kahler and Andrew MacIntyre (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 195-221, in 195; T. J. Pempel, "Soft Balancing, Hedging, and Institutional Darwinism: The Economic-Security Nexus and East Asian Regionalism," *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (May-August 2010): 209-238.

<sup>3</sup> Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse, *Diffusing (Inter-)Regionalism: The EU as a Model of Regional Integration*, KFG Working Paper, No. 7 (Berlin: Free University, September 2009); Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston, "Comparing Regional Institutions: An Introduction," in *Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 1-31.

<sup>4</sup> Tim Colebatch, "Rudd's grand vision for Asia-Pacific," *The Age*, June 5, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> William T. Tow and Brendan Taylor, "What is Asian Security Architecture?," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (January 2010): 95-116.

to as “minilaterals” or “plurilaterals”.<sup>6</sup> This has led Francis Fukuyama to assert that ours is a “multi-multilateral” world: one “far too diverse and complex to be overseen properly by a single global body” and better served by “a diversity of institutions and institutional forms to provide governance across a range of security, economic, environmental, and other issues.”<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the EU, the ARF and ADMM+ are intergovernmental in character and its members do not pool their sovereignty. Despite the enhanced powers granted to its secretariat as sanctioned within the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN lacks a strong independent secretariat—indeed, the ARF and ADMM+, together with other arrangements among the ASEAN suite, share the same secretariat housed within ASEAN—in order that all decision-making powers are retained by the member states themselves. Decisions are based on consensus and not majority vote.<sup>8</sup> In the case of economic integration, subsets of likeminded ASEAN member economies can undertake cooperative initiatives on the basis of the “ASEAN minus x” and “two plus x” principles codified in the Charter, so long as there is consensus among all ten members to proceed.<sup>9</sup> With the possible exception of the establishment and entry into force of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) in 2007 and—in the basis of ratification by only six out of ten member states—in 2013 respectively, these principles have not been formally invoked in minilateral or sub-ASEAN security cooperation.<sup>10</sup> However, as evidenced by initiatives such as the maritime and air patrols in the Malacca Straits—involving Indonesia,

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<sup>6</sup> Moisés Naím, “Minilateralism: The Magic Number to Get Real International Action,” *Foreign Policy*, June 22, 2009, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/18/minilateralism>; Stewart Patrick, “Prix Fixe and à la Carte: Avoiding False Multilateral Choices,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (2009): 77-95; Thomas Wright, “Toward Effective Multilateralism: Why Bigger May Not Be Better,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (2009): 163-80.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 163.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion on the institutional design of ASEAN-led institutions like the ARF and ADMM+, see, See Seng Tan, *Multilateral Asian Security Architecture: Non-ASEAN Stakeholders* (Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, 2015), 8-12.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter VII, Article 21, Paragraph 2 of the ASEAN Charter.

<sup>10</sup> See Seng Tan, “Minilateralism: A Way Out of ASEAN’s Consensus Conundrum?,” *ASEAN Focus* (Special Issue on ASEAN’s 50th Anniversary), No. 5/2017, October (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017), 9. On ASEAN counterterrorism cooperation from a legal perspective, see, See Seng Tan and Hiroshi Nasu, “ASEAN and the Development of Counter-Terrorism Law and Policy in Southeast Asia,” *UNSW Law Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2016): 1219-1238.

Malaysia and Singapore (MALSINDO) initially and subsequently Thailand over a decade ago—and in the Sulu Sea—involving Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines in 2017—minilateral security cooperation among ASEAN states has been taking place with or without formal blessing from ASEAN. Rather than hinder multilateralism, such sub-ASEAN forms of cooperation, which reflect the shared security concerns and interests of ASEAN states on a bilateral, trilateral and/or even quadrilateral basis, arguably serve as building blocks for a more robust multilateralism. “Any solution must improve bilateral relationships and base institutional cooperation on a pre-existing commonality of interest,” as Thomas Wright has argued about effective multilateralism. “States should work to convert their strongest bilateral relationships into multilateral arrangements. Beyond mere shared commitment to an aspirational goal, true common interests are rooted in considerable overlap of how countries see and reach solutions to problems.”<sup>11</sup>

Finally, an inescapable fact of multilateral life is the propensity of members in institutions to engage in what has been termed “institutional balancing”.<sup>12</sup> The perceived need to engage in “intra-balancing” drives states to balance and hedge against one another within their respective institutional cum intramural contexts.<sup>13</sup> While the formation and maintenance of the Asia-Pacific’s “multi-multilateral” architecture has been driven in part by the perceived need to mobilise collective action among regional states and to ensure regional coordination and collaboration, those institutional settings have also become arenas where states engage with as well as balance against each other. Moreover, these dynamics are not restricted to state-to-state interactions within institutions. The multiplicity of institutions in the Asia-Pacific—the

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<sup>11</sup> Wright, “Toward Effective Multilateralism: Why Bigger May Not Be Better,” 164.

<sup>12</sup> Kai He, “Institutional Balancing and International Relations Theory: Economic Interdependence and Balance of Power Strategies in Southeast Asia,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2008): 489-518.

<sup>13</sup> Yuen Foong Khong, “Coping with Strategic Uncertainty: The Role of Institutions and Soft Balancing in Southeast Asia’s Post-Cold War Strategy,” in *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency*, eds. J. J. Suh, Peter J. Katzenstein, and Alan Carlson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 172-298; Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2005/06): 145-67; Pempel, “Soft Balancing, Hedging, and Institutional Darwinism: The Economic-Security Nexus and East Asian Regionalism”. On intra-balancing, see, Seungjoo Lee, *The Evolutionary Dynamics of Institutional Balancing in East Asia*, EAI Asia Security Initiative Working Paper, February (Seoul: East Asia Institute, 2012).

“oversupply of region”, according to one formulation<sup>14</sup>—also leads states to engage in “inter-balancing”, that is, balance one another across institutions,<sup>15</sup> as Japan and other regional countries allegedly sought to accomplish with the East Asia Summit against Chinese dominance of the ASEAN+3.<sup>16</sup> Hypothetically, the region’s multi-multilateralism allows states to mitigate the impact of the predominance of any single state in one institutional context by shifting the locus of regional activity and attention to other institutional contexts.<sup>17</sup> By the same token, it has also been argued that interstate relations that face gridlock in one institution could be taken up in other institutional settings where breakthroughs could be sought.<sup>18</sup> On the one hand, institutional balancing among ARF member states have arguably led to gridlock in the Forum, such that the requisite consensus for the Forum to progress towards preventive diplomacy could not be achieved. On the other hand, as we shall see, the fact that the ADMM+ has been able to progress to the extent it has could perhaps be attributed in part to the determination of ADMM+ members who are also ARF members to avoid rehashing their negative experiences with gridlock and failure in the ARF.

### **ARF: AN OVERLY AMBITIOUS MULTILATERALISM?**

The ARF was formed in 1994 to considerable fanfare and with the declared aim “to develop a more predictable and constructive pattern of relations for the Asia-Pacific region.”<sup>19</sup> Its 27 members include the 10 ASEAN member states, the 10 ASEAN dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the US), one ASEAN observer (Papua New Guinea), as well as North Korea,

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<sup>14</sup> Shaun Breslin, “Comparative Theory, China, and the Future of East Asian Regionalism(s),” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July 2010): 709-29.

<sup>15</sup> See, Lee, *The Evolutionary Dynamics of Institutional Balancing in East Asia*.

<sup>16</sup> See Seng Tan, “Spectres of Leifer: Insights on Regional Order and Security for Southeast Asia Today,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2012): 309-337, see 323.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher W. Hughes, “Japan’s Response to China’s Rise: Regional Engagement, Global Containment, Dangers of Collision,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (2009): 837-56.

<sup>18</sup> Cha, “Complex Patchworks: U.S. Alliances as Part of Asia’s Regional Architecture”.

<sup>19</sup> “Chairman’s Statement: The First ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 25 July 1994,” US Department of State Archive, 25 July 1994, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/ac/csbm/rd/4377.htm>.

Mongolia, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The ARF informally issued a concept paper in 1995 that laid out a three-staged roadmap on security cooperation that envisaged the institution evolving from serving as a mechanism for confidence-building to preventive diplomacy and finally to conflict resolution (the last of these amended subsequently, at China's insistence, to "elaboration of approaches to conflicts"). The concept paper also introduced two "baskets" of measures, the first comprising low-hanging fruits readily harvestable, the second comprising more ambitious and challenging activities. Modalities such as Inter-Sessional Support Groups and Inter-Sessional Meetings were established to support the implementation of the ARF's goals. However, progress proved painfully slow to achieve with the ARF seemingly unable to evolve beyond confidence-building. Differences arose between activist ARF members such as Australia, Canada, the EU, Japan and the US, which advocated the establishment of concrete preventive diplomacy (PD) mechanisms—early warning systems, fact-finding missions, enhanced good offices of the ARF chair for mediation—and those like China, Myanmar and Vietnam that were reluctant to do so for fear that their sovereignty could be compromised. Despite their adoption of a paper detailing the concept and principles of PD in 2001, ARF members took another decade to agree to and issue a PD work plan in 2011. The work plan furnished so conservative a conception of PD that one might wonder why it could not have been achieved earlier if that was as far as the ARF was prepared to go on PD. Nor did it help that the ARF's unwieldy institutional design and rigid consensus-based convention—which member countries adroitly wielded as a diplomatic weapon in their attempts to balance one another—came at the expense of progress.<sup>20</sup>

In the post-9/11 era, a "practical" dimension has been added to the activities of the ARF, chiefly in selected non-military or non-traditional areas such as antiterrorism, disaster relief, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament. In 2009 at the 15th ARF meeting in Bangkok, the ARF adopted the ARF Vision Statement, which committed its twenty-seven participants to "building a region of peace, friendship and prosperity" by 2020. A year later, the ARF members adopted a "plan of action" for implementing the vision statement, which outlined goals for enhanced collaboration in a number of "areas of cooperation", namely, terrorism, transnational crime, disaster relief,

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<sup>20</sup> Ralf Emmers and See Seng Tan, "The ASEAN Regional Forum and Preventive Diplomacy: Built to Fail?" *Asian Security*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2011): 44-60.

maritime security, and non-proliferation and disarmament.<sup>21</sup> Supporters praised this development as a step forward in the anticipated evolution of the ARF from a talk shop to a “more action-oriented” organisation.<sup>22</sup> This move has been welcomed by many as a logical step given that the Asia-Pacific region has increasingly played host to militancy, natural disasters and humanitarian crises, maritime disputes and the like.<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, in so doing and as a consequence of its assiduous avoidance of addressing strategic challenges facing the region—China-Taiwan tensions, nuclear proliferation in the Korean Peninsula, territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas and the like—it could also be argued that the ARF has unwittingly disqualified itself as a PD actor, let alone one of consequence. If anything, the ARF has garnered an unfortunate reputation for avoiding major concerns and doing little when such issues happen to force their way in.<sup>24</sup> Worse, the ARF plays second fiddle to the ADMM+ in the effort to implement practical cooperation since the former lacks the operational capabilities and dispositions apposite to the latter. Crucially, the widespread perception that the ARF had become irrelevant led a number of regional leaders to call for a new regional security architecture, such as the “Asia-Pacific Community” idea introduced by Kevin Rudd in 2008 or (of considerably lesser diplomatic impact) that of the “East Asian Community” proposed by then Japanese leader Yukio Hatoyama in 2009, which ASEAN member countries rejected out of concern that ASEAN would be marginalised by any new architecture not built around it.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Rodolfo C. Severino, *The ASEAN Regional Forum* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Tan See Seng, “ARF: Ad hoc Regional Forum?,” *The Straits Times*, 30 July 2010, <http://admpreview.straitstimes.com:90/vgn-ext-templating/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=58b1a1016ae1a210VgnVCM100000430a0a0aRCRD&cvgnextchannel=0162758920e39010VgnVC M1000000a35010aRCRD&cvgnextfint=print>.

<sup>23</sup> Jürgen Haacke, “The ASEAN Regional Forum: From Dialogue to Practical Security Cooperation?,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (2009): 427–449.

<sup>24</sup> Tan See Seng, “ASEAN Regional Forum at 18: Dealing with regional flashpoints,” *East Asia Forum*, 22 July 2011, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/07/22/asean-regional-forum-at-18-dealing-with-regional-flashpoints/>.

<sup>25</sup> Tommy Koh, “Rudd’s reckless regional rush,” *The Australian*, 18 December 2009, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/rudds-reckless-regional-rush/news-story/69b186cd010b73769b0ab32f8f82b299>.

## **ADMM+: A PRACTICAL MULTILATERALISM?**

The ADMM+ was inaugurated in October 2010 in Hanoi on the basis of papers endorsed by the ASEAN defence ministers when they met as the ADMM between 2007 and 2010. Its 18 members include the 10 ASEAN countries and Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the US. It started off as a triennial arrangement but became a biennial arrangement on the basis of a recommendation made by the sixth ADMM meeting in 2013. At the ADMM Retreat held in Singapore in February 2018, it was announced that the ADMM+ would meet annually from its October 2018 meeting onwards. Not unlike the ARF, the ADMM+ is designed both as a mechanism for multilateral security dialogue and consultation as well as a framework for non-traditional security cooperation. To date, seven areas of practical collaboration, namely, maritime security, counterterrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), peacekeeping operations, military medicine, humanitarian mine action (or demining), and most recently, cyber security, have been mandated by the ADMM+ for its member countries. Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) have been formed to facilitate efforts in each of those areas.

Since the ADMM+'s inaugural meeting in Hanoi in 2010, joint activities undertaken by all 18 members have grown in frequency and complexity. Between 2011 and 2017, a total of 49 EWG planning sessions and/or table-top exercises, and at least six combined military exercises took place. The scale and scope of these activities are by no means trivial; for example, in a combined maritime security and counterterrorism exercise held in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore (as well as the waters between them) in May 2016, a total of 3,500 personnel, 18 naval vessels, 25 aircraft and 40 special forces teams participated.<sup>26</sup> At the ADMM Retreat in February 2018, the ASEAN countries worked at developing a set of protocols in support of the code of unplanned encounters at sea (CUES) agreed upon by the ADMM+ in 2017. ASEAN and China established their own CUES and "hotline"—what the ASEAN states refer to as the Direct Communications Link (DCL)—arrangement in 2016. As the 2018 chair for the ADMM+, Singapore is pressing for a similar

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<sup>26</sup> See Seng Tan, "The ADMM-Plus: Regionalism That Works?," *Asia Policy*, No. 22 (July 2016): 70-75.



code to cover the region's congested airspace.<sup>27</sup> And although not tied specifically to the ADMM+, a joint maritime exercise between ASEAN and China planned for late 2018 and a corresponding exercise between ASEAN and the US (the date of which remains to be determined) can not only contribute to confidence-building between ASEAN and those two major powers,<sup>28</sup> but also strengthen ASEAN's putative "centrality" in Asia-Pacific multilateralism.

In contrast to the ARF, what has also been interesting about the ADMM+ is its development of a capacity to engage in PD, even though the grouping has never formally declared its intentions to be a PD actor. In 2015, the ASEAN core of the ADMM+ adopted a concept paper on ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on HADR and endorsed standard operating procedures (SOP) for the utilisation of military assets for HADR under the framework of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). This new SOP was meant to augment the existing Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), a template defining the roles and terms of reference for both provider countries and recipient countries that would enhance interoperability among ADMM+ defence establishments in collective disaster management.<sup>29</sup> In 2016, the terms of reference for the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group were adopted. In the ASEAN countries themselves, supporting infrastructures and assets include the Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC) based in Singapore and the UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) based in Malaysia.

The potential of the ADMM+ for PD is there, but so too the manifold constraints. There are reputational costs as the lesson of the ARF has clearly

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<sup>27</sup> Danson Cheong, "Code to manage unexpected encounters in the air will help mitigate security threats in South China Sea: Ng Eng Hen," *The Straits Times*, 7 February 2018, <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/code-to-manage-unexpected-encounters-in-the-air-will-help-mitigate-security-threats-in>.

<sup>28</sup> Kenneth Cheng, "Unanimous support within Asean for joint maritime military drills with China: Dr Ng," *Today*, 17 February 2018, <http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/unanimous-support-within-asean-joint-maritime-military-drills-china-dr-ng>.

<sup>29</sup> See Seng Tan, "Providers Not Protectors: Institutionalizing Responsible Sovereignty in Southeast Asia," *Asian Security*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2011): 201-217.

demonstrated.<sup>30</sup> Regrettably, the lack of action on ASEAN's part in addressing the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis is not just another black mark for ASEAN, but an important reminder that institutional actors with experience and success in PD—including the EU—do not always do the needful.<sup>31</sup> ADMM+ members also face the prospect of participant fatigue stemming from the high level of activity and operational tempo and—should the ADMM+ prove incapable of handling hotspots like the South China Sea<sup>32</sup>—low returns on their investments. For instance, at its ministerial meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015, member countries were forced to scrap a planned (albeit non-mandatory) joint statement on the South China Sea as a result of intractable differences among themselves.<sup>33</sup> Nor can it be ruled out that countries and militaries would not use their participation in the ADMM+ for deterrence purposes through “showcasing” their defence assets and lift capabilities.<sup>34</sup> For example, it has been argued that multinational rescue efforts in response to Cyclone Nargis, Typhoon Haiwan and the MH370 airline mishap reveal intense security competition—by proxy, for the most part—among relief-sending states.<sup>35</sup> These “competitions of compassion” comprise the use of both

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<sup>30</sup> For example, research has shown that the perceived legitimacy of the PD actor is a contributing factor to the success of PD. See, Amanda Huan and Ralf Emmers, “What Explains the Success of Preventive Diplomacy in Southeast Asia?,” *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Vol. 28, No. 5 (2016): 1-17.

<sup>31</sup> Megan Greene and P. Daniel Kelemen, “Europe’s Failed Refugee Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, 28 June 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2016-06-28/europes-failed-refugee-policy>.

<sup>32</sup> This point is made in the broader context of defence diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region, including the ADMM+. David Baldino and Andrew Carr, “Defence Diplomacy and the Australian Defence Force: Smokescreen or Strategy?,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (2016): 139-158.

<sup>33</sup> Tan See Seng, “Claims of Asean disunity at summit unfounded,” *The Straits Times*, 26 November 2015, <http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/claims-of-asean-disunity-at-summit-unfounded>.

<sup>34</sup> This much is implied in the literature on strengthening the abilities of militaries to deal with “full spectrum threats”. For example, see, LTC Irvin Lim, “Credible Deterrence: Reviewing Discourse & Reframing the SAF to deal with Full Spectrum Threat Complex,” *Pointer: Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2005), <https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/publications/pointer/journals/2005/v31n3/features/feature2.html>. Also, see, Senthil Kumar Sathasivam, “Defence Diplomacy as Significant Instrument for Enhancing the Concept of Deterrence in National Defence Policy,” unpublished paper, <https://www.scribd.com/document/61350593/Defence-Diplomacy>.

<sup>35</sup> Jun Yan Chang and Alan Chong, “Security Competition by Proxy: Asia Pacific Interstate Rivalry in the Aftermath of the MH370 Incident,” *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2016): 75-98.

hard and soft powers.<sup>36</sup> But even if deterrence is not the prime motive behind a nation's involvement in HADR, unintended consequences could at times arise.<sup>37</sup> The irony is that at times, even "altruistic" missions like HADR and search-and-rescue could end up unintentionally exacerbating security dilemmas and driving security competition between would-be rivals.

## CONCLUSION

Why has the ADMM+ progressed hitherto where the ARF failed? Significantly, both arrangements share the same institutional design: both operate on the basis of consensus and are centred on ASEAN. But if the ARF has shown itself unwieldy in terms of the size of its membership and scale of its putative ambitions, the ADMM+ reflects the coalescing of a more manageable number of relatively likeminded states with sufficiently common interests and aversions who have eschewed grandiose aspirations in favour of functional, practical and actionable cooperative activities.<sup>38</sup> What the ADMM+ has shown is its ability to bypass (or at least shelve) security dilemmas that have incessantly prohibited cooperation in the ARF. The fact that the ADMM+ has been successfully implementing its goals also encourages its member states to take seriously their commitment to and investment in the ADMM+. Needless to say, member countries will likely continue to engage in institutional balancing. Such dynamics form a necessary feature of Asia-Pacific multilateralism, which logically comprises both collaboration and competition. Furthermore, when countries that are members of both institutions invest more in the ADMM+ than in the ARF—as appears to be the case

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<sup>36</sup> Alan Chong and Il Woo Lee, "Asia's Security Competition by Proxy: Competitive HADR as a Respectable Arena?," in *International Security in the Asia-Pacific: Transcending ASEAN towards Transitional Polycentrism*, ed. Alan Chong (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 377-400.

<sup>37</sup> For example, in the wake of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004, Singapore activated Operation Flying Eagle, its biggest-ever deployment of men and materiel to Indonesia and Thailand. See, David Boey, *Reaching Out: Operation Flying Eagle—SAF Humanitarian Assistance after the Tsunami* (Singapore: SNP Editions, 2005). The operation elicited quiet concerns around the region regarding what Singapore, with its force and lift capabilities in full display, could do to its neighbours if it harboured bellicose intentions.

<sup>38</sup> See Seng Tan, "Talking Their Walk? The Evolution of Defence Regionalism in Southeast Asia," *Asian Security*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2012): 232-250. On big versus small multilateralism, see, Miles Kahler, "Multilateralism with Small and Large Numbers," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Summer, 1992): 681-708; and, Wright, "Toward Effective Multilateralism: Why Bigger May Not Be Better".

today—they are engaging in “forum shopping” or a la carte multilateralism.<sup>39</sup> Herein lies perhaps the paradox in contemporary Asia-Pacific multilateralism: to the extent regional countries are getting multilateral cooperation right through the ADMM+, they do so at the expense of the larger and putatively “principled” form of multilateralism in the ARF.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Stewart Patrick, “Multilateralism and Its Discontents: The Causes and Consequences of U.S. Ambivalence,” in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 1-44, in 12.

<sup>40</sup> Jürgen Rüländ, “The rise of ‘diminished multilateralism’: East Asian and European forum shopping in global governance,” *Asia Europe Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2-4 (2012): 255-270.