Collective Security in Asia

MANFRED HAACK

1 Which Asia?

In the wider sense, Asia and Pacific can be seen as a world region like Europe, the Americas and Africa. However, the common subdivision into East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia doesn't make too much sense. *West Asia* is an artificial term as the respective region usually is addressed as *Middle East* inclusive of Egypt and Cyprus. Likewise *East Asia* does not clearly associate with China, Japan and Korea but merely reflects a kind of geographic formalism. More common in usage is *Southeast Asia,* as it looks synonymous with ASEAN – although Indonesia could regionally be assigned to *Pacific/Australia* too. Similarly, the extent of *South Asia* seems to be fixed by SAARC but occasionally Afghanistan as well as Burma is being included. On the other hand, there are different regional compositions. BIMST-EC for example connects Bangladesh, India, Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka and Thailand with a view to economic cooperation. South Korea carries since 1991 the status of a dialogue partner to ASEAN, where it economically would well fit in. Similar links have been established between ASEAN and Australia and ASEAN and New Zealand respectively in the mid-seventies.

With regard to existing or future multilateral structures in Asia, the two major players China and India deserve to be considered as singular entities and further sub-regions should be defined in the political rather than purely in the geographical context. Accordingly, Southeast Asia with its working network of economic cooperation obviously qualifies as sub region, which might be extended northwards up to the Republic of Korea and eastwards up to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan and Pakistan have at present more in common with Central Asia than with South Asian countries beyond India. Such terminological dissolution of South Asia may regrettably leave Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal somewhat alienated, but although the latter has merits as host of regional activities, all three remain lightweights in regional affairs. Undoubtedly, Russia and Japan are major players in Asian politics too but because of the formers inclination to Europe and the latter's self-sufficient attitude, both appear as outside actors and will contribute to collective security more in a global context.

2 Threat scenarios

The end of the East-West conflict and the appearance of international terrorism have changed the paradigm of security policy. Since then, there is much talk of „new security threats" which range

from dirty bombs in the hands of rogues to border-crossing epidemics. Attempts at categorisation either remained vague or did not really grasp the abundance of new terms. In his popular book „Global Disorder", Robert Harvey has drawn an almost comprehensive scenario of twelve main security threats, though significantly showing a Western perception[1]. The Asian view is quite different:

- Islamic fundamentalism for example has arisen in Asia as a common phenomenon, which occasionally could be purposefully tolerated or fiercely stifled, but before converting to terrorism is not seen as an actual threat.

- Most of Asian countries still do not share the obsessive fear of affluent societies in the West that oil supply could be cut off.

- Rogue states are widely understood as creation of American propaganda and thus appear more as fiction and less as threat.

- Opinion leading middle classes in Asia may acknowledge poverty as a shame but generally not as a potential security hazard. Awareness of poverty as the breeding ground of violent upheavals seems to be limited to few sensitive sections of civil society.

- As with Western countries at their time of industrialisation, now Asian countries on fast track of economic growth tend to give little priority to guarding environment and human rights.

- In an Asian scenario, the threat „disintegration of countries" would be split according to its causes in „separatism" and „intercommunal riots".

- Asian uneasiness about supremacy of superpowers, which originally was triggered off by China, has now materialised with the American war on Iraq.

- Eventually, the more traditional dangers of revisionist claims like border disputes and change-over demands are potential threats to regional security in Asia.

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[1] Terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, dependence on oil, new nationalism, proliferation of WMD, rogue states, disintegration of countries, poverty, overpopulation, destruction of environment, globalisation of crime, violation of human rights.

2.1 Terrorism

Of course, September 11 has elevated terrorism atop the threats' hierarchy also in Asia. There is little doubt that this new globalised terrorism, although rooted in Islamic fundamentalism, solely aims at destroying secular sovereignty. Unfortunately, such realisation was considerably confused by attempts of concerned parties to jump on the bandwagon while indiscriminately denouncing any separatist and any anti-regime movement as terrorist. But in contrast to the largely peaceful Europe where militant Basques and Corsicans are rare leftovers, in Asia numerous ethnic and religious minorities have adopted terrorist means in pursuance of their political objectives. This requires a distinction between terror, which is executed by the weaker party in order to increase the costs of oppression for the superior one, and hate-driven terrorism without any political agenda.

2.2 Supremacy of superpowers

After World War II, most internal conflicts in Asia were caused by a haphazard abolition of colonial rule. Regional big powers occasionally participated as minor players in the East-West conflict. Although the looming dominance particularly of China raised some misgivings, the prospect that a single regional power could gain supremacy was seen as far remote. This perception has been radically changed by the American-led war on Iraq, which impressively demonstrated the prospective hegemony of the United States and elevated the likelihood of further pre-emptive interventions to a major threat. Ironically, most Asian countries regard continuous American military presence as indispensable pillar of Asian security.

2.3 Nuclear armament and proliferation

Proliferation undisputedly increases the risk that deterrence as genuine purpose of nuclear weapons might be replaced by blackmailing, if anarchic states like North Korea get them. On the other hand, proliferation is not a burning issue in Asia where the turning up of new nuclear powers, irrespective of some dismay, was also seen as appropriate response to some self-assertion of the old American/European nuclear club. That occasionally expressed belief in a superior maturity for possessing nuclear weapons contradicts particularly with India's self-reliance of being sovereign in deciding on necessary means of her defence. From this point of view, even the Pakistani accession to nu-

clear power could hardly be seen as sacrilege. Nevertheless, the nuclear tests of both in 1998 aroused fierce displeasure from Japan and a number of Southeast Asian countries. Compared with this, the recently revealed secret trade by Pakistan's chief nuclear scientist brought about much noise but little worry. However, the ongoing proliferation of missile technology in Asia seems to be definitely more alarming. Mid-range rockets even if launched as threatening gestures lower the threshold for military escalation, while much cheaper bazookas and the widespread distribution of small arms only enable local insurgency and terrorism to convert into persistent low-intensity war.

2.4 Separatism

Since the territorial scale of Asian countries originates to a large extent from colonial rule, their borders quite often have arbitrarily divided ethnic or religious entities and twined many of them into minorities in their homeland. In the course of decolonisation and hasty nation building, an integration of those minorities into the mainstream was generally neglected. On the contrary, numerous attempts of forcible assimilation accompanied by cultural deprivation and demographic manipulation have almost naturally led to separatist resistance. Although more centralist and authoritarian regimes were affected by that vicious circle, even democratic and federalist systems have not been spared. That is, for instance in the case of India, because of an imbalance of the desire for national identity and the urge for keeping regional diversity. Such obvious contradiction frequently obstructed viable solutions like autonomy within the national framework. Basically, separatism undermines the integrity of countries since it proves that secession breeds secession. Also exaggerated autonomy which denies minimal national loyalty leads finally to disintegration, as the example of local warlord regimes in Afghanistan shows.

2.5 Inter-communal riots

By similar root cases as of separatism, communal riots can go cross-border, particularly when scattered ethnic or religious minorities are harassed. Interethnic tensions are commonly caused by missing communication and thus by unhindered growth of resentments. Religious hostility comes seldom by itself but is usually fabricated by extremist cheerleaders, which sometimes serve sinister vested interests. However, every violent outbreak of such confrontation speeds up social polarisation and segregation to the bitter end of a permanent pre-civil-war climate. While such dissolution of social cohesion goes on, any development in the opposite direction toward progress and prosperity is unlikely.

Furthermore, inter-communal riots cause severe doubts in the capability of state authorities to keep life and property of their citizen unharmed – and consequently in the legitimacy of the state's power monopoly. This will further weaken the country's international position, generally by its declining credibility and in particular by likely interventions of neighbours, which claim patronage for persecuted minorities close to them.

2.6 New nationalism

Mainly three factors, colonialism, more or less compulsive alliances along the East-West conflict and, alternatively, internationalist attitudes within the Non Aligned Movement have retarded the development of national identity in Asian countries. When such constraints vanished in the early nineties, the bigger ones shifted to an explicit unilateralism, the others cultivated their fledgling sovereignty. In this context, identifying one's own country, taking pride in common achievements and demanding precedence for the ethnic mainstream became ingredients of a new nationalism. That was further driven by a recent „feel-good" enthusiasm of affluent middle classes but this way, it lent itself to a resort for frustrated petty bourgeois. Particularly after the Asian financial crisis in 1992, many, and not only authoritarian, governments seized the chance to divert from their failures by inflaming nationalist surge which, once unleashed, could hardly be kept under control. The consequences are severe set backs for an integration of multiethnic societies and a curtailment of foreign-policy options by self-induced denouncements of selling out national interests.

2.7 Revisionist claims

Another legacy of colonialism is that various border disputes in Asia are yet unsettled. Huge areas along the Indo-Chinese border at the Himalayas are not mutually recognised. Numerous islands in the East and South Chinese Sea as prominently the Spratly Islands are persistently claimed by two or even more countries. Regarding Kashmir and Taiwan, revisionist attempts aim at transferring sovereignty. In Nepal, a civil war with more or less

obvious foreign intervention is about a change of regime respectively preventing that. Revisionist claims by nature jeopardise regional stability, especially if principles like renunciation of force are not effective.

2.8 International crime

In Asia, organised crime is still based on traditional smuggling networks, feudal clan regimes, shadow economies and widespread cronyism. Since the borderline between illegal and informal business is less clearly marked than in the West, organised crime reaches far into the informal sector. By that reason, Mafia-like organisations can operate more visibly as for instance in Europe and therefore, resorting to white-collar crime behind respectable facades is dispensable. From the Asian view, organised crime and its international outfits become a security threat, if they serve as logistics of insurgency and terrorism. In Tajikistan for instance, illicit drug trade is the financial resource of all military factions. Afghanistan has the biggest world-market share in opium production, which helps scores of farmers to get a healthy income and also is the economic backbone of the numerous militias. Particularly worrying is a pragmatic cooperation of secular crime and Islamist insurgents on women trafficking, drug trade, all kinds of smuggling, and extortion throughout Central Asia. Another hot spot of drug trade is the „Golden triangle" of Burma, Thailand and Laos and its old trade route via North East India.

A modern version of piracy combining ruthless brutality and high-tech equipment threatens vital arteries of international trade as especially the Strait of Malacca and other passages through the Indonesian Archipelago. Finally, high-level corruption – far above widespread schemes of additional income earning for poorly paid minor officials – can reach up to dimensions of organised crime and this way erode the rule of law and the reliability of politics.

2.9 Scarcity of resources

At present, water resources have become a main focus of struggle in Central Asia. In other regions, scarcity of clean water appears increasingly as major threat in the near future. In 1960, the Indus treaty between India and Pakistan and in 1996 the Ganges Water-Sharing Treaty between India and Bangladesh were sole steps to reasonable solutions but numerous disputes on water in southern

Asia remain unsolved. As long as a reliable frame of regional cooperation is missing, the cut of water supply lines might secretly remain in the toolbox of coercive diplomacy, although its devastating impact can be similar to weapons of mass destruction.

Especially in Central Asia, transition processes in the form of rush privatisation and free market schemes led to massive plunder of public property and natural resources by privileged groups. That ruthless exploitation and finally destruction of small-scale industries has caused enormous unemployment, which produced huge crowds of losers as recruitment reservoir for militias, terrorist groups and other violent outfits. Another fervently contested resource is agricultural land especially in overpopulated areas. In 1989 for example, the pogroms on Meskhetians in Uzbekistan were triggered by suspicions that they had unjustly acquired dominance on the agricultural sector.

Oil fields, mineral resources and even seemingly less important resources like fishing grounds are still contentious issues, as the hostile competition for some uninhabited islands in the South Chinese Sea has exemplified.

3 Simmering conflicts in Asia

At times of the Cold War in Europe, which was famous for being an extremely dangerous conflict without turning to a real shooting war, more than 150 wars elsewhere took a higher death toll than World War II. Asia accounts for one-third of that sad outcome (see Table 1 in the appendix). The root causes of these incidents are almost the same as of the numerous simmering conflicts today.

Be it ongoing fighting in fragmented Afghanistan, violent rivalry in Kashmir, Maoist uproar in Nepal, secession war in Sri Lanka, ethnic and religious separatism in Indonesia and Philippines, the potentially explosive decline of North Korea, or sabre rattling between China and Taiwan, the Asian map is full of simmering conflicts. For most of them, solutions are conceivable, but a few look quite insoluble. Some conflicts seem to be domestic affairs, but a closer view shows that really all of them have a regional dimension. In Asia, the awareness of these virulent conflicts raises less anxiety than it would in Europe. The reasons are probably a certain familiarity with devastating wars through the last decades and the peculiarity that human life in Asian cultures is seemingly less highly valued than in the West.

3.1 The China-Taiwan conflict

China's pressurising change-over demand on Taiwan is not only the most dangerous conflict in Asia but an example for a deadlocked one too. Both, mainland China's concept of returning the broken away province under its sovereignty and Taiwan's hardening desire to keep its independence are mutually exclusive. On both sides, the conflict has been ideologically overloaded when China made it a case of national identity while Taiwan resorted to dogmatising the principle of self-determination. Therefore, neither of the two can indefinitely live with the current status quo. A lasting incapability in making progress on that front would inevitably erode the authority of China's over-aged leadership. Also Taiwan cannot stay at the crossroads of either pursuing further a reunification by overthrowing the Communists' rule at the mainland or finalising its secession by officially declaring independence. That dilemma of dual uncertainty confuses the perception of own intentions as well as those of the other side, particularly since old schemes of coercive diplomacy predominate the mutual communication. That way, both walk a tightrope. China would do well to mete out its threatening gestures in order to discourage Taiwan's aspirations without provoking unintended effects. Exaggerated pressure could lead to pre-emptive action by the United States and subsequently to a radicalisation of Taiwan's policy. On the other hand, threats without considerable pressure would make China appear as paper tiger and rather encourage Taiwan in its course.

In this particular scenario, the stick-and-carrot approach of coercive diplomacy does not work. Both sides command effective deterrence capacities, but any balancing reassurance is missing. However, power politics without alternative options bears the misperception that show of strength was the rule of the game and thus, being moderate means cowering. The logical consequence is an armament race with little distinction between defensive or offensive weapons, and accordingly the risk of miscalculations. Both, China's provocative missile tests and Taiwan's forceful forward defence are running the risk of triggering a war they basically seek to avoid. At present, Taiwan still keeps air supremacy at the Strait of Taiwan and a cutting edge in naval forces. China tries to balance its respective disadvantage by massive build up of missile systems, a step which inevitably will be followed by deployment of antimissile systems by

Taiwan and so on. If this vicious circle cannot be brought to a halt, Taiwan will predictably acquire nuclear armament as the „weapon of last resort".

At that stand, the conflict seems to be insoluble. While China assesses the diplomatic isolation of Taiwan and its expulsion from the United Nations as a major achievement, it is exactly this that prevents it now from defusing the conflict by asking for multilateral mediation.

3.2 North Korea's brinkmanship

Nothing illustrates better the urgent need of collective security in Asia than the ongoing threat from North Korea. The reasons of state of that late-Stalinist regime seem to be reduced to a bizarre personality cult and obsessive fears of enemies around. Thus an incalculable foreign policy and its ruthless use of blackmailing may reflect an imminent collapse but that in itself is a security risk for the region. Regarding its programs for weapons of mass destruction, massive violation of human rights and threats against neighbouring countries, North Korea qualifies perfectly for the rogue-state cliché. Nevertheless, its geographical key position explains that for the time being the global big powers treat it with kid gloves. Any pre-emptive action by whom ever would shake the fragile balance of the strategic interest of China, Japan, Russia and the Americans in South Korea. At least their unflagging efforts to bring about a diplomatic solution show concurrent concerns. Eventually, it is difficult to say if warlike adventurism by North Korea or an implosion of the totalitarian regime would be more devastating for the region.

3.3 The Kashmir-Conflict

Divided Kashmir is a conflict in itself but vehicle of the broader confrontation between India and Pakistan as well. This rather fundamental conflict is rooted in the forcible foundation of an independent Moslem state after the decline of colonial rule in British India. Since then, the ideological rift between India and Pakistan has widened by the different ways of nation building. In Pakistan, where the founding motif of being an Islamic country left little space for further reasons of identification, past feudal structures became predominant. By contrast, India emerged as secular democracy with a federal system accommodating much ethnic diversity. Although in India a Muslim minority of the same size than Pakistan's entire

population is fairly integrated, the confrontation of the secular democracy with the Islamic State has gradually escalated to mutual malevolence. For that, Kashmir is not the sole venue but the focal point.

The Kashmir-conflict is simmering with different intensity on three levels. The ground level is the fate of the Kashmir people who since two decades have lived under alternating oppression by separatist guerrillas and Indian military. The medium level is the insecurity along the Line of Control through cross-border terrorism and occasional gun battles between Indian and Pakistani front lines. The upper level is the long lasting but basically academic controversy on suzerainty over Kashmir, which will lose relevance as soon as adequate autonomy will be given to the Kashmir people. Before that, however, an Indo-Pakistan peace process must become sustainable enough that both sides can refrain from misusing Kashmir as political lever. In the past, such prospect was blocked by a relentless discord on whether to settle the Kashmir problem first and then negotiate peace or the other way round.

The basic conflict is asymmetric insofar as India has taken a status-quo stand while Pakistan pursues a revisionist position. For the latter, the liberation of the Indian occupied part of Kashmir is a matter of national concern while the former could live with a final partition along the Line of Control. Beyond that, crisis shaken Pakistan is still on the brink of becoming a failed state while India looks quite sated and moves ahead becoming a major player in the arena.

Meeting each other half way can naturally not compromise conflicts between revisionist and status quo powers. Instead, asymmetric conflicts require asymmetric solutions, commonly in favour of the revisionist. That will probably include reasonable changes of the status quo as well as some compensation for waiving the revisionist claim. The recent détente between India and Pakistan has such solution made conceivable.

3.4 Instability in Central Asia

All five Central Asian states, which emerged after the decline of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgistan and Tajikistan, are still in the process of nation building. Although some interstate disputes over resources and borders didn't expand to war-like dimensions, the sources of future conflicts are ethnic tensions,

state-driven radicalisation of Islam and authoritarian regimes. This mixture fuels a self-feeding process of oppression, resistance, counteraction, insurgency, military crack down and finally terrorism. This way, the authoritarian regime of Uzbekistan created its own terror scene by persecuting the non-violent Muslim group Hizb ut-Tahrir to the effect that now the Al Qaida affiliate Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan gets support for its terrorist activities. Changes for the better are unlikely as Uzbekistan is next to Pakistan the most important ally of the United States which sees authoritarian regimes usually as more reliable than embryonic democracies.

At the immediate neighbourhood are crisis shaken countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan and not so far the troubled Caucasus. In that environment and in spite of its attachment to the „axis of the evil", Iran looks more as stabilising factor. In contrast to that, Iraq has become another pole of instability. In all these countries, about 20 million alienated and unemployed youngsters are available as low cost fighters and thus an urging potential for the economy of war. In this respect, the warfare in Iraq has won the battle on changing the regime but was counterproductive for security and overall stability in the region.

3.5 Moro separatism at the Philippines

At the Philippines, the lesson can be learned again that forcible attempts to curb separatism even stir up it. The independent sultanates of the Islamic Moros at Mindanao and the Sulu Islands resisted the colonial rule by Spain and became integrated in the Philippines only when the United States took over in 1898. This did not change after the Philippines were granted formal independence in 1946, what was seen by the Moros as betrayal. Their claims for autonomy were repeated by massive migration of Christians to the South, what soon after made the Moros a minority in their own land. Systematic preference and support to the Christian Filipinos and corresponding discrimination of the Moros triggered growing unrest, which turned to rebellion in the early seventies. The first peace accord between the Government in Manila and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Tripoli Agreement from 1976, was obstructed by Christian hard-liners. A second one led in 1996 to the foundation of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) but was also half-heartedly implemented. The more radical and forceful Moro Islamic Liberation Front continues

fighting out of the ARMM. In the wake of Islamist radicalisation in the nineties, a somewhat mysterious Abu Sayyaf entered the scene and got disproportionate attention by bloody kidnappings of Christians. After September 11, Abu Sayyaf became the target of the American „War against Terrorism" and was heavily defeated by a joint campaign of the Armed Forces of Philippines and the US Navy named *Balikatan*. However, the actual problem of the Moro rebellion yet remains unsolved.

3.6 Separatism in Indonesia

Although the unitary state of Indonesia is a creation of colonialism, the country has kept its integrity in spite of several political shock waves. However, separatism became virulent after federalism was abandoned in the early fifties and the then established central state did not meet the requirements of ethnic and religious diversity. Consequently, numerous uprisings by ethnic, religious or simply federalist groups took place, not always with separatist intentions but with an anti-Java impetus instead. Most of these insurgencies were cracked down by military force, which has maligned the army's reputation.

There has been a genuine demand for separatism in Aceh and Papua since the beginning. Aceh was not under Dutch colonial rule but came to Indonesia in 1949 in the wake of decolonisation. In 1953, the Darul Islam proclaimed the Islamic State of Indonesia in Aceh, *Negara Islam Indonesia*, actually aiming at an autonomous province. Nevertheless, the observation prevailed that Aceh gave much more – particularly Liquefied Natural Gas – to the centre than it got in return. Since 1976, the Free Aceh Movement, *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM)* restarted fighting for independence and provoked in the eighties fierce counteraction by the army culminating in military rule from 1988 to 1998 after which in 2000, a "humanitarian pause" was declared. The prospect of an independent Islamic Republic of Aceh did not find much international support. The other ASEAN countries, Australia and the USA would be rather concerned on further Islamist insurgency in Southern Philippines and Thailand and in the aftermath on vast refugee waves to Malaysia, Singapore and otherwhere in the region.

At the end of the Dutch colonial rule in 1949, West New Guinea, the homeland of Melanesian Papuans, did not become part of the Republic of Indonesia but its status was disputed up to the sixties. Urged by the – at that time explicitly anti-colonialist – United States, the Netherlands in 1962 transferred sovereignty to a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) which was to prepare for an exercise of self-determination. What really happened under the promising title „Act of free choice" was a farce in the pay of Indonesian interests, when a gathering of hand-picked delegates decided against the will of the indigenous Papuans that West New Guinea should join the Republic of Indonesia. Since then, the rising resistance has got a voice by the Free Papua Movement, *Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)*, which mainly campaigned against systematic immigration of non-Papuans and exploitation of the province's resources by the centre without public investment in exchange. The authoritarian government of President Soeharto responded with brutal military action. That is why first peace gestures by Interim-President Habibi, after Soeharto was toppled, like renaming the province "Papua" and some pioneering legislation on decentralisation may be to late. The Melanesian Papuans – different to most Indonesians being of Paleo-Mongolian origin – who by 60 percent are Protestant Christians now insist on becoming independent.

4   Conflict mediation

Conflicts in Asia have merely been perceived through their appearance and immediate impact, not necessarily from their mostly complex causes. As elsewhere worldwide and for centuries in Europe too, forcible action by the more powerful side was seen as appropriate solution. A lesson yet to be learned is that crushing down adversaries does not solve but normally aggravates conflicts. However, the rapid upswing of Asian economies has produced abundant assets, in view of which the awareness of vulnerability to warfare has increased.

4.1 Causes of conflict

Three main causes of conflicts in Asia can be identified. First, especially asymmetric conflicts can escalate if harassed people are obstructed in using non-violent means of resistance. In these cases, the suffering from unjust treatment and the realisation of their helplessness will culminate in desperation and make them resort to violence regardless of own casualties.

Secondly, conflicts independent of their objectives will be perpetuated as long as the profits of confrontation are estimated bigger than a possible peace dividend. Particularly authoritarian regimes tend to draw proxy-legitimacy out of continuing uprising. Also non-state entities like associations, religious movements, trans-border Diaspora, bazaar vendors, media and criminal networks are all together part of the economy of conflicts.

A third cause of conflicts is simply lack of communication. Misperception of one's own situation, misunderstanding of the adversary's motives, miscalculation of action, reaction and the ratio of power are components of conflict scenarios without clear objectives. Furthermore, lack of communication means missing prerequisite for understanding of people, peaceful interaction and definitely for integration of minorities in a civil society.

The Asian experience with mostly violent struggle for independence and some forcible overthrows of dictatorship gives credit to a kind of productive conflict. In Europe where the memory of revolutions rests in history books, such beneficial assessment would contradict with the fundamental dedication to renunciation of force. However, the popular assumption, that costs of violent conflicts were always higher than possible benefits, reflects more wishful thinking than reality. Hierarchical structures of societies are sometimes cemented to an extent that a peaceful transformation would not succeed. The same applies to persistent occupational regimes of superior powers. A sophisticated analysis of conflicts would even encompass practices of apartheid, slavery and systematic deprivation of rights, which also legitimise resistance, if necessary, by use of force.

4.2 Peacekeeping in Asia

In Asia, conflict mediation took place in the context of decolonisation but later happened rather occasionally or by chance. Consistent with the unilateralist attitude and the dogma of non-intervention in internal affairs, conflict resolutions were usually sought bilaterally. A legendary exception was the mediation between India and Pakistan by Soviet Prime Minister Alexey Kossygin 1966 in Tashkent. In the early eighties, India's involvement in the civil war in Sri Lanka was labelled as peacekeeping mission but seemingly misperceived at least by the Tamil Tigers as intervention. Multilateral mediation in the narrowest sense took place if at all under the UN umbrella.

The four main UN interventions in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Tadjikistan and East Timor showed the full spectrum of conflict treatment the UN is able to render. It includes preventive diplomacy in the approach of conflicts, peace making as an attempt to defuse tensions by non-forcible means, peace keeping as de-escalation by control of cease fire and shaping buffer zones, peace enforcement by use of military force. An actual and more comprehensive concept is post-conflict peace-building aiming at disarmament and demobilisation of fighters and their social reintegration, election support, assurance of internal security by new police, political institutions and administration, and minesweeping.

In 1988, UNGOMAP (United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan) served as observer mission. From 1991-92 UNAMIC (United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia) started for securing a cease-fire and assessment on land mines. In 1992-93 it was replaced by UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) for ensuring human rights, supporting electoral, military and civil administration as well as police, and supervising repatriation and rehabilitation. From 1994 onwards UNMOT (United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan) was set up as a genuine peacekeeping mission. In 1999 UNAMET (United Nations Mission in East Timor) was put in charge for preparing and monitoring of an agreed referendum. After violent counteraction by Indonesian militia, UNAMET was replaced by UNTAET (United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor).

4.3 Track-two diplomacy

Observations that Asian governments are unwilling to introduce appropriate instruments for conflict prevention and conflict resolution have led to increasing activities out of the civil society. In the wake of globalisation, chambers of trade and commerce, other business associations and all kinds of non-profit organisations laid the foundation of what soon became famous as „track-two diplomacy". The main objective of these widely uncoordinated initiatives was to counteract official policies of non-talking by keeping communication running on all reachable levels. In the case of the SAARC, which was obstructed for years by the stubborn confrontation between India and Pakistan, the track two developed to a substitute venue of South Asian cooperation. In the wider frame, the continuous exchange of semi-official

visits and an increasing number of regional conferences in Asia as well as the globalisation via media and Internet have paved the road for various networks of regional cooperation. Eventually, the public awareness of these extended activities on track two put the official politics under some pressure to overcome the self-created hurdles on track one.

5 Preconditions for collective security in Asia

5.1 Multilateralism

As many in Asia see it, multilateralism appears as quite a suspicious concept since it comes from the West along with globalisation and likewise reminds of neo-colonialism. Particularly the idea of transferring some elements of sovereignty to supranational entities, which are not based on common historic or cultural ground, will not gain much public approval. India for instance has a hard time carrying her long history of foreign rule and thus guards her independence as inalienable value. Seen from this viewpoint, all prospective synergies of multilateral systems are not believed to balance out the imaginary loss of sovereignty. On the other hand, the perception that the global system at present is dominated by a still robust alliance of a unilateralist American superpower and an increasingly multilateral European Union has created some apprehensions. However, considering that Asia if remaining a gathering of a few major players surrounded by a lot of minors could not withstand the tough competition with the West, some new exercises in multilateralism have been tried upon existing structures.

5.2 Regional associations

The Association of South East Asian Nations of originally five, now ten member countries started as purely economic cooperation but re-emerged after the devastating Asian financial crisis in the nineties with more political ambitions. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is yet the only multilateral venue for official discussions of security issues in the region. Joint commitments on confidence building measures (CBM), preventive diplomacy and non-proliferation as well as arms control have already been achieved.

The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation, although portrayed as a counterpart to ASEAN, has not really proved as a multilateral entity. Six member states of SAARC border on India but do not have any other joint frontier. Furthermore, the imbalance between India as subcontinent and her much smaller partners hampers adequate cooperation. India is not willing to play the „pivotal role" in terms of charitable responsibility, and the others are not ready to play the satellite role. Therefore and in spite of a recently heralded free trade zone, the survival of SAARC will be restricted to the sphere of symbolic policy but in terms of realpolitik may well have to be replaced by other regional alliances.

The recently established Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) categorises itself as „open regionalism" what obviously is thought as alternative to multilateralism. At present, it seems rather to be an „open question" as to what extent a group of 19 member countries from three continents can sustain regional cooperation beyond non-committal declarations.

The example of ASEAN as a well working association of countries of similar size and adjustable differences in development looks more suitable for Asia than the geographically over-stressed and extremely heterogeneous IOR-ARC.

5.3 China and India

China and India are still taking the byroad while improving bilateral relations but are obviously eager to participate in the expanding partner network of ASEAN. Both of them had to learn the lesson from the pre-emptive war on Iraq that, for the time being, unilateralism remains a monopoly of the United States. Consequently, India followed China in shifting partially toward multilateralism – although still exploring whether the synergies on political influence will predominate the concomitant limitations. However, the two emerging superpowers probably keep the ulterior motive of having it both ways, taking advantage of multilateralism and, if required, relapsing to unilateral action. This latent ambiguity bears out a common suspicion among other Asian countries and, thus, will definitely prevent China as well as India from obtaining full membership of ASEAN. The alternative status of "dialogue partner" seems basically more appropriate as it keeps the two big powers at a healthy distance without excluding them from full-scale cooperation. Such tripartite partnership between ASEAN, China and India could balance the, compared with Europe significant, asymmetry

between big and smaller countries in Asia and thus become a nucleus of a future system of collective security.

On the long road from a self-sufficient patron of the non-aligned movement, India recently achieved a historic break-through in her precarious relationship with Pakistan. After both of them have acquired nuclear weapons, the intended deterrence obviously works to an extent that power politics has come to limits. During the fierce confrontation in early 2002, the mutual military threats remained rhetorical though some hawkish generals within the superior Indian armed forces were eager to take action. The current détente between the previous arch-foes and the decisive improvement of the relations to China as well have enabled India to strive more reliably and effectively for a major role in Asia and in global politics. Though, the on behalf of a billion people not unjust claim for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council seems rather unrealistic. Concerning regional security, India pursues an explicitly defensive strategy based on "minimal deterrence" of a measured potential of nuclear weapons and a strategic naval power at the Indian Ocean which soon will be reinforced by an aircraft carrier.

5.4 Collective security

Collective security works only as far as it accommodates the security requirements of the smaller countries. Their vital interests can not be left to the good will of big powers but need to be advocated independently by effective political and legal means. For that reason, mutual commitments have to be assured by a partial transfer of sovereignty in favour of a joint legal authority. Subsequently, that creation of supranational law will restrict the use of power and thus counterbalance the pivotal role of big powers.

Naturally, all those in possession of nuclear weapons have to submit to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to accept the control regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Another way of strengthening collective security is the mutual exchange of vulnerable assets. In an early approach of confidence building, ancient Asian dynasties sent their daughters to rival courts. Today, a calculated vulnerability consists of cross-border investment, regional infrastructure, communication networks, scores of tourists and widespread expatriates' communities.

Although the security situation in Asia has its own complexity, some principles and procedures of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) might be applicable in Asia too. Particularly, a variety of confidence-building measures have proved as highly efficient. The principle of renunciation of force, although having been a cornerstone of the European détente, seems in the present Asian context of prevailing asymmetries rather idealistic. Nevertheless, it will be indispensable before the completion of any system of collective security.

On the author:

Manfred Haack is resident representative of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in India.

Table 1: Conflicts in Asia

Interstate wars

1947-48: First war on Kashmir, following partition of India and Pakistan

1950-53: Korea War with intervention of China and an American-led coalition

1950: Chinese invasion of Tibet

1954-58: Quemoy/Matsu skirmishes between China and Taiwan

1955-75: Vietnam War

1961: Indian invasion of Goa in order to end Portuguese colonial rule

1962: Border war between India and China along the McMahon-Line

1965: Second war between India and Pakistan on Kashmir

1969-78: Border skirmishes between China and the Soviet Union

1970: US intervention in Cambodia followed by civil war

1971: Secession war between East and West Pakistan with Indian intervention

1974: Occupation of Paracel Islands by China

1974: Rivalling seizure of Spratley Islands by China, Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam

1978: Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia

1979: Border war between Vietnam and China

1979-89: Soviet occupation of Afghanistan

1999: Third war between India and Pakistan on Kashmir in Kargil area

2001: American war against Taliban regime in Afghanistan

2002: Show down between India and Pakistan

Separatist uprisings

1948-62: Insurgency of Darul Islami in West Java, Indonesia

1951-64: Insurgency of Darul Islami in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

1956-63: Rebellion of tribal Nagas in North East India

1963: Uprising of Papuans in West New Guinea, Indonesia

1965-67: Rebellion of Mizos in North East India

1985: Insurgency in Assam in North East India

1989-98: Insurgency in Aceh, Indonesia, followed by violent military rule

1999: Massacres after agreed secession of East Timor

Civil wars

1960-75: Uprising of national-communist Pathet Lao in Laos

1961-62: First Maoist rebellion in Nepal

1966-69: Raids of Naxalites in Eastern India

1971: Clashes between the Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka

1975-81: Civil war in Cambodia with Vietnamese interference

1980-84: Civil war between Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka

1998: Tiananmen assault on students' movement in China

1989-96: Civil war in Afghanistan

1992-97: Civil war in Tajikistan

1996: Civil war in Afghanistan and take over by Taliban

1996: Renewed Maoist insurgency in Nepal

Inter-communal riots

1970: Uprising of Muslim Moros at the Philippines

1980: Sikh uprising in India

1989: Pogrom against Meskhetian Turks in Uzbekistan

1990: Clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyzes in Kyrgistan

1992: Demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya followed by riots in India

1999: Uprising in Maluku in Indonesia

1999: Uprising of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

2001: Islamic insurgency in Thailand

2002: Pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat, India

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