Third World Quarterly, Vol 18, No 3, pp 421–441, 1997

CARFAX

Regional institutions, the UN and international security: a framework for analysis

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> …Under the Charter the Security Council has and will continue to have primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, but regional action as a matter of decentralization, delegation and cooperation with United Nations efforts could not only lighten the burden of the Security Council but also contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs. Regional arrangements and agencies have not in recent decades been considered in this light…Today a new sense exists that they have contributions to make.
>
> Boutros-Boutros Ghali, 1992

Termination of the Cold War reinvigorated the United Nations (UN) and simultaneously reinforced the trend towards security regionalism. The new found unity of the Security Council enabled the world organisation to act in a relatively large number of conflicts, and in the process raised expectations with regard to its 'primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security'. The UN had several successes—the Gulf War, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador and Haiti—but there have also been several tragic failures—Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda. These failures and the growing political, financial and operational problems have greatly tempered the earlier enthusiasm and support. Unable to meet the ever increasing demand for help, the United Nations has actively explored task-sharing and cooperation with other intergovernmental (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as coalitions led by major global and regional powers. Regional institutions (regional arrangements and agencies) have been increasingly looked upon as one way of addressing the growing gap between demand and supply, and reducing the burden on the United Nations. In the words of Boutros-Boutros Ghali 'regional arrangements or agencies in many cases possess a potential that should be utilized'.

The role of regional institutions (constituted under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter) in maintaining international peace and security has commanded renewed attention in policy and intellectual communities from the mid-1980s. Such interest has become more pronounced in the post-Cold War era. Regionalisation of international politics, collapse of the Cold War security architecture,

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0143-6597/97/030421-21 $7.00 ©1997 Third World Quarterly

inability of any one state or organisation to manage the resulting world order, the growth of regional powers and the desire on their part as well as on the part of other regional states to seek greater control over their strategic environment, and growth of economic regionalism are some of the reasons that underscore this growing interest and attention.* They inform, in various degrees, the attempt to broaden and deepen regional security arrangements and agencies in Europe, to update and revitalise those in Latin America and Africa, and to forge new ones in Asia.

In contrast to the formative years of the UN, when regional arrangements were seen as competing with and detrimental to the universal approach embodied in the UN,[1] it is now widely accepted that global and regional institutions can and should work together in promoting international peace and security. Regional actors have a deep interest in conflict management in their respective regions, and they can provide legitimacy, local knowledge and experience, and some resources especially in the form of personnel. However, they also suffer several limitations, including a lack of mandate, the difficulty of maintaining impartiality and forging common positions, limited resources and organisational shortcomings. Regional institutions often require the support and involvement of the United Nations in managing conflicts. The latter has the mandate, legitimacy, structure, greater access to resources, and is often the most impartial and preferred means for extra-regional involvement in local conflicts. Thus, the need and rationale for task-sharing and cooperation between the UN and regional organisations is clear; and there have been many instances of such cooperation in the course of the last decade—notably in the former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Georgia, Central America and Haiti, the cases analysed in this volume. Such cooperation, however, has not always been smooth, and in several cases has produced tension.

Effective task-sharing between the UN and regional institutions requires an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of each as well as the development of principles, rules and procedures to govern such a partnership. This has been difficult in practice. Regional institutions vary widely in terms of purpose, structure and capacities. Often several regional and subregional institutions with overlapping responsibilities exist in a region. Further, the type and intensity of conflicts varies widely. It is impossible to decide in advance as to which would be the most appropriate regional institution for managing a specific conflict. This ‘choice’ and consequently the basis for task-sharing and cooperation with the UN have often been *ad hoc* and quite distinct as demonstrated by the four case studies in this volume—the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO) in former Yugoslavia, the Economic Community Organization of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Georgia and the Organization of American States (OAS) in Central America and Haiti.

Although it is difficult to formulate and adhere strictly to a division of labour that would be applicable to each and every, or even most occasions, this does not preclude a general analytically orientated discussion of the basis for task-sharing between the UN and regional institutions. Working on the hypothesis that UN task-sharing with regional security arrangements can contribute to the

maintenance of international peace and security, this chapter seeks to develop an analytical framework to investigate the following questions: what are the roles and strategies available to regional institutions in managing peace and security? What are possibilities and limitations of regional institutions in managing domestic and international conflict in their respective regions? What factors determine the effectiveness of regional institutions? What criteria should be deployed in determining the division of labour between the UN and regional agencies? Finally, how should coordination and accountability be achieved when regional institutions cooperate with the UN in maintaining international peace and security? We begin with a definition and discussion of some key terms.

Definitions

As observed by Gareth Evans,[2] there is no shared vocabulary and even the meanings of commonly used terms differ with audiences. It is therefore crucial to define and develop a common set of concepts to guide enquiry.

Regional arrangements and agencies

Considerable effort was made in the intellectual community in the 1960s and early 1970s to define regions and regional subsystems.[3] Comparatively less effort was devoted to defining *regionalism*.[4] And almost no effort was made to define regional arrangements and agencies. The UN Charter, which is the initiator of these terms, does not define them. Notwithstanding this, the meaning of regional arrangements is similar to that of regionalism. Both relate to cooperation among regional states to enhance their national well-being through collective action. Building on this, 'regional arrangements' or 'regionalism' (these two terms are used interchangeably in this paper) may be defined as 'cooperation among governments or non-governmental organisations in three or more geographically proximate and interdependent countries for the pursuit of mutual gain in one or more issue-areas'. Although NGOs can undertake regional cooperation, the concern in this paper and hence the ensuing elaboration is on cooperation among governments. Regionalism can be issue specific—a collective self-defence arrangement (alliance) to confront a specific external threat, or a collective security arrangement to maintain order among member states, or a nuclear free regime to regulate nuclear activities. Or it can encompass an issue-area or a number of issue-areas.[5] Often, as for example in the case of the OAS, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), it is a broad framework within which several specific regimes and accompanying bureaucratic organisations in a number of issues and issue-areas can and do nest.[6] 'Regional agencies' refers to formal and informal regional organisations (with physical and organisational infrastructure, staff, budget, etc) with responsibility for implementing regional arrangements. Regional agencies or organisations are usually coterminous with regional arrangements but not necessarily so. The term 'institutions' is used in this paper to cover both arrangements and agencies.

Peace and security

The United Nations, which has as its principle purpose the maintenance of international peace and security, neither defines these terms nor specifies the relationship between them. They appear to be used rather loosely and often interchangeably. Peace and security carry distinct meanings within the academic community, but there is no agreed definition. The schism and debate between the proponents of negative and positive peace has been a central feature of peace studies.[7] Similarly, there is an ongoing debate in security studies over the definition of security. Realists insist on a definition in terms of an international structural problem whose focus is international military threats to the political survival of the state. Others have argued for broadening the referent, scope and approach to security.[8] We cannot resolve the definitional problems in this paper.

The dependent variable in this paper is 'security', which is defined as 'the protection and enhancement of values deemed vital for the political survival and well-being of a community'. This definition is deeper and broader than realist definitions of security but not indiscriminately so. The security referent in this definition is 'community', which usually, though not always, is the nation-state.[9] Communities at the subnational, regional and global levels may also be referents of security. The definition excludes non-human entities like the international economic system or the ecological system as security referents in their own right because of the logic that security is for and about people, who normally provide for their security by organising themselves into communities. The focus on political survival and especially the well-being of a community enables the inclusion of non-conventional issues as security concerns, either because of their impact on political survival or because of their consequences for the well-being of the community. Such issues, however, must be vital. Only those concerns that are grave and urgent, that require the mobilisation of a substantial part and ultimately, if necessary, all of a community's intellectual and material resources, should be labelled as security concerns.

This definition does not seek to include or exclude on the basis of specific issues, dimensions, nature and type of problems, threats or means, but on the basis of the gravity and urgency of issues or problems. This approach sidesteps the unresolvable debate between the proponents of narrow and broad conceptions of security. It permits considerations of security at the intra-state and international levels, and does not limit the pursuit of security only to competitive means with emphasis on military power. However, it restricts the scope of security to political problems with zero-sum and distributional characteristics. This is necessary to keep the exercise manageable. It should be noted here that this definition is much broader than allowed for by realists and incorporates some features of the minimalist or negative definition of peace.

Sources of insecurity

Most states are confronted with internal and international sources of insecurity. For analytical purposes these sources of conflict may be discussed separately, but in reality they are often interconnected. The international source of insecurity is

rooted in anarchy, a condition that is taken by realists to be the fundamental fact of international political life.[10] In a system of sovereign states, there can be no central political authority. The structure of the system is necessarily anarchic, with each state retaining the right to judge its own cause and decide on the use of force. The incentives for aggression, risk of tension, conflict and war in such a system are high. In arming for their security, states set in motion a vicious circle. Attempts to increase the security of one state undermine the security of another, creating a security dilemma.[11]

This structural aspect, a 'tragic consequence' of the desire for state autonomy, is, however, only one of the two component layers that constitute the security dilemma.[12] The second component is more intentional and dynamic, a product of state policy rooted in the ideological beliefs and goals of the state, and in its orientation towards the international political and territorial status quo. A policy seeking revolutionary change, hegemony or domination will intensify the struggle for power and sharpen the insecurity caused by the anarchic structure. Although these two layers of the security dilemma (structural and policy driven) are often intertwined in practice, distinguishing them is analytically useful in investigating when, why and how regionalism can promote international security.

Domestic sources of insecurity are rooted in problems of political identity, legitimacy and socioeconomic inequality. The idea of the nation as the basis of political community and the related construct of the nation-state have now become universal norms. But the nation is an 'imagined community' and, in many cases, the idea of the nation on the basis of which the state is constituted is not deeply rooted.[13] Supposedly, colonial states have in many cases been transformed into nation-states. The arbitrary state boundaries drawn by the colonial powers resulted in 'multi-ethnic territorialisms' that had no political rationale for existence other than as dependencies of the metropolitan powers.[14] With the dissipation of the unity fostered by anti-colonial nationalism and experience of 'internal colonialism', ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious consciousness have been on the rise in some countries, contributing to disenchantment with the nation and nation-state rooted in the colonial state.[15]

Dissonance between power and legitimate authority is a second domestic source of conflict. This is relevant to states in which the normative and institutional frameworks for the acquisition and exercise of political power are not well established. In situations where the exercise of state power is not rooted in moral authority, the legitimacy of the regime (political system) as well as that of the incumbent government is likely to be contested by rival claimants to power on the basis of competing ideologies, promise of better performance or greater force.[16] In the absence of accepted mechanisms and procedures to manage them, such competition is likely to translate into extra-legal and violent means, including *coups d"etat*, rebellion and revolution. Political legitimacy has been and is likely to continue to be an acute and persistent problem for most modern states.

Large and growing socioeconomic inequality is yet another source of domestic conflict. Socioeconomic grievances can fuel peasant rebellions or protests and strikes by farmers and industrial workers, but their consequences are likely to be

limited unless they feed into the conflicts over political identity or legitimacy. Often there is an overlap. Economically backward regions provide fertile ground for the development and support of separatist movements or for political organisations that challenge the legitimacy of incumbent regimes and governments on the basis of competing ideologies or promises of better performance.

Insecurity and conflict at the international level are inherent in the principle of anarchy, which underpins the international system and cannot be resolved as long as sovereign political units (states or some other entities) exist. At the domestic level, the problems of political identity, legitimacy and socioeconomic grievances are rooted in the nation- and state-formation processes, and they cannot be resolved quickly. Creation of political identities takes decades if not centuries; the cultivation of political legitimacy is unending; and the attainment and maintenance of socioeconomic equality requires continuous monitoring and action. These problems are not amenable to a once-and-for-all solution. Still, though the sources of conflict cannot be eliminated, they can nevertheless be managed and ameliorated.

Conflict management

Although in practice they overlap, for analytical purposes conflict management may be divided into three stages: prevention, containment and termination. In ‘conflict prevention’, the goal is to forestall conflict situations and prevent the outbreak of hostilities or other forms of disruptive behaviour. Conflict prevention will require the redefinition of the identity, interests and capabilities of the communities concerned. In ‘conflict containment’, the goal is to deny victory to the aggressor and to prevent the spread of conflict. Denial of victory includes stopping aggressors short of attaining their full goal and persuading them to undo their action. Preventing the spread of conflict includes stopping horizontal escalation in which other communities and issue-areas become involved. It may also be directed to halt vertical escalation up the ladder of violence, including the use of weapons of mass destruction.

In ‘conflict termination’, the goal is to halt and bring hostilities to a satisfactory conclusion through settlement or resolution. A satisfactory conclusion includes defeating the aggressor and reestablishing the *status quo ante*, achieving a compromise through splitting the difference, or removing the source of the conflict. ‘Conflict settlement’ focuses on achieving an agreement to end the use of violence and resolve the more immediate and overt dimensions of the conflict.[17] ‘Conflict resolution’, however, seeks to remove the source of conflict altogether. This requires changes in the goals, attitudes and perceptions of the conflicting parties. While these two aspects of conflict termination are not mutually exclusive, conflict resolution usually follows conflict settlement and requires long-range political and economic strategies to alter, if not transform, the underlying dynamics of the conflict. In a sense, this brings conflict management back to conflict prevention.

Regional institutions: assets, roles and strategies

In theory, regionalism should facilitate communications and socialisation, information sharing, increase in consensual knowledge, and growth in power through the pooling of resources and collective action.[18] Based on these assets, regional institutions should be able to avail themselves of one or more of the following interconnected strategies: norm-setting, assurance, community-building, deterrence, non-intervention, isolation, intermediation, enforcement and internationalisation. Norms can define identities of states as well as regulate their behaviour. Through norm-setting, regional institutions can influence the collective expectations and the internal and international behaviour of member states in the political, economic and security arenas.

Assurance strategies can increase transparency, reduce uncertainty, limit and regulate competition, and thus help to build confidence and avoid unintended outbreak and escalation of hostilities. The purpose of assurance strategies is to mitigate the security dilemma and minimise and regulate the use of force, not to eliminate them. Community-building strategies take this one step further and seek to eliminate the role of force in the resolution of political disputes. The culmination point is a security community in which ‘there is real assurance that the members of the community will not fight each other physically but will settle their disputes in some other way’.[19] Deterrence strategies—collective security, collective defence—seek to deter aggressive behaviour on the part of member states as well as non-member states.

Collective security comprising political, diplomatic, economic and military measures is the more appropriate measure for maintaining order among member states, since it is not directed against a specific country or group of countries which are identified as posing a threat.[20] Collective defence (alliances like NATO, the now defunct Warsaw Pact), based on an identified common threat, is more appropriate in dealing with external aggression. These two strategies are not, however, mutually exclusive, as illustrated by the provisions of the Rio Treaty. Assurance, community-building and deterrence strategies are primarily concerned with conflict prevention, although many of the specific arrangements, particularly alliance and collective security, have a role in conflict containment and termination as well.

Non-intervention is an option when, for whatever reason, a regional institution does not seek to become involved in a particular conflict. Closely linked to non-intervention, but quite distinct, is isolation, the purpose of which is to prevent geographical spill-over or widening of the conflict through the involvement of other parties. The intent in adopting these strategies may be to allow the protagonists to resolve a conflict among themselves, or to preserve a future intermediation role for a regional institution. Intervention refers to direct and active involvement in a conflict through the application of a regional organisation’s collective political, economic and military resources to contain and terminate conflict. Intervention can be undertaken to enforce collective security and collective defence or to keep the peace among the warring parties. Collective security and collective defence are implemented against an identified aggressor. Peacekeeping, the interposition of forces between belligerents to prevent

TABLE 1.1
Regional institutions and security: a framework for analysis

Domestic conflicts
Issues of contention: identity, legitimacy, socio-economic grievances

	Tasks	Measures/strategies
Conflict prevention	1. Protection of individual and minority rights 2. Support for socio-political development 3. Support for economic development 4. Early warning	1. Norm-setting 2. Redress by regional institutions 3. Encourage and facilitate dialogue 4. Preventive deployment 5. Collective inducement and sanctions 6. Regional economic cooperation 7. Maintain a stable and conducive regional environment
Conflict containment	1. Prevent escalation 2. Preventive torture, killing and genocide 3. Humanitarian relief	1. Preventive deployment 2. Enforce sanctions 3. Isolate conflict 4. Peace-keeping 5. Internationalise conflict 6. Humanitarian assistance
Conflict termination	1. End violence 2. Negotiate and guarantee settlement 3. Election monitoring 4. Address underlying issues	1. Encourage dialogue 2. Intermediation 3. Enforcement action 4. Encourage and support long range strategies for nation and state building 5. Internationalisation

Conflict among member states
Issues of concern: identity, legitimacy, autonomy, territorial disputes

	Tasks	Measures/strategies
Conflict prevention	1. Ameliorate security dilemma 2. Deter aggressive behaviour 3. Build a society leading eventually to a community of nations 4. Encourage dispute resolution	1. Foster development of normative context that rejects threat and use of force as an instrument of state policy 2. Built regimes—assurance and regulatory 3. Regional dispute resolution mechanisms 4. Collective security arrangement 5. Regional integration measures
Conflict containment	1. Deny victory to aggressor 2. Prevention escalation 3. Humanitarian relief	1. Enforce collective security arrangements 2. Isolate conflict 3. Peace-keeping 4. Internationalisation 5. Humanitarian assistance
Conflict termination	1. Stop armed conflict 2. Negotiate and guarantee settlement 3. Resolve dispute	1. Encourage dialogue among parties to conflict 2. Intermediation 3. Enforcement action 4. Internationalisation

Conflicts with external actors
Issues of concern: security dilemma, specific issues in dispute, aggressive behaviour by external actors

	Tasks	Measures/strategies
Conflict prevention	1. Ameliorate security dilemma 2. Deter aggressive behaviour 3. Encourage dispute resolution	1. Dialogue and negotiations 2. Security regimes—assurance and regulatory 3. Collective self-defence
Conflict containment	1. Deny victory to aggressor 2. Prevent escalation 3. Humanitarian relief	1. Implement collective self-defence 2. Internationalisation 3. Humanitarian assistance
Conflict termination	1. Defeat aggressor 2. Negotiate settlement 3. Resolve dispute	1. Implement collective self-defence 2. Internationalisation 3. Intermediation

further fighting, is undertaken to provide a cooling off period and to facilitate mediation.

Intermediation and internationalisation are two strategies applicable to conflict termination. Intermediation refers to a non-partisan and usually non-coercive approach to settlement. Regional institutions may urge conflicting parties to use regional or global mechanisms and procedures for pacific settlement of disputes, or they may attempt to play a more direct and active role by engaging in conciliation and mediation.[21] The strategy of internationalisation becomes relevant when conflict prevention, containment and termination are beyond the capabilities of the regional arrangements or when extra-regional actors become involved. Through internationalisation, regional organisations can mobilise the resources of external actors and organisations in support of their strategies, while denying the same resources to their adversaries.

The possible relevance of these strategies for managing internal and international conflicts and enhancing the security of member states is summarised in Table 1. Discussion in the ensuing sections highlights some critical aspects with regard to the possible roles and tasks of regional institutions in conflict management.

Regional institutions and conflict management

The ability of regional institutions to manage conflict depends, in part, upon the type of armed conflict that is to be managed. Three types in particular concern this analysis.

Domestic conflicts

Conflicts at the domestic level pose serious security problems for many countries including some developed ones. Domestic conflicts often spill over into neighbouring countries and/or invite major power intervention, threatening regional security as well. Yet the basis on which governments enter into regional cooperation often precludes any formal role for regional institutions in the management of internal armed conflicts.

The principles of sovereignty and non-intervention form the cornerstones of regional arrangements like the inter-American system, the OAU and ASEAN.[22] Based on these principles, regional institutions have been deliberately excluded from domestic conflict management (OAU, ASEAN) or accorded a role subject to the invitation of member states (ECOWAS, and until recently the OAS). The sanctity of the principle of non-intervention, however, is now under challenge. A growing number of Western policy-makers and scholars makes the case for intervention by the international community on humanitarian grounds and to protect democratic regimes.[23] Although this case is contested in many quarters, some change, particularly with regard to gross violation of human rights, may be in the offing.[24] Beginning in 1993 by giving priority to the goal of safeguarding democracy in the hemisphere, the OAS relaxed the commitment to the principle of non-intervention. In what has come to be known as the Santiago commitment, the foreign ministers of the OAS pledged to adopt 'timely and expeditious

procedures to ensure the promotion and defence of representative democracy'. The OAS has since condemned the coups in Guatemala, Haiti and Peru and has applied economic sanctions to back its demand for return to democratic rule in these countries. While the Santiago commitment emphasises the protection of democratic regimes at the expense of the principle of non-intervention, the latter is far from dead.[25]

Humanitarian considerations and incipient rethinking of the basis of political community are also forcing a re-examination of the principle of non-intervention in Africa. Nevertheless, this crucial principle is still very much in evidence and effectively precludes any direct intervention by regional and other international institutions until armed conflicts erupt.

Often the conflict prevention role of regional institutions in relation to domestic conflicts has to be indirect, and relevant strategies may include norm setting, development of collective regional identities that may mitigate internal identity conflicts, prevention of external meddling in domestic conflicts, and creation of a stable and conducive environment for economic development of member states. Early warning systems, and mechanisms and procedures to encourage pacific settlement of domestic disputes, may also be part of the inventory. Once a conflict has erupted, regional institutions have the options of non-intervention, isolation, intervention or mediation and conciliation.

Non-intervention has been the preferred strategy of most regional institutions, for a variety of reasons: adherence to the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs; lack of invitation from the incumbent government; lack of capability; intractability of conflict; anticipated human and material costs, especially if recent experiences have been negative (Britain's experience in Northern Ireland influenced its and several other European Union EU members' approach to the ongoing conflict in Bosnia; the OAU's experience in Western Sahara and Chad influenced its approach towards the Liberian conflict); difficulty in forging a common position (the EU in relation to Yugoslavia); difficulty in determining aggression and aggressor; tension between competing principles (territorial integrity versus self-determination in the case of Yugoslavia, or non-intervention versus the promotion of democracy in several Latin American cases); and a firm belief that external actors can have only a marginal impact on the resolution of domestic conflicts and that these have to be resolved by domestic contestants even if the political, economic and human costs are high. The OAU, for example, has traditionally restricted its involvement to internal conflicts related to decolonisation and apartheid. A common position was not difficult to formulate in these situations. It did not intervene in the numerous other internal conflicts on the continent.

Concurrent with non-intervention, regional organisations often seek to isolate conflicts to prevent external interference and escalation, urging contestants to resolve the conflict by themselves. This has been the preferred option in ASEAN. In February 1986 when the Philippines was confronted with a critical situation which 'portended bloodshed and civil war', the other ASEAN member states called upon all Filipino leaders to join efforts to pave the way for peaceful resolution.[26] But as demonstrated in the case of the Philippines, as well as by the ECOWAS experience in Liberia, isolation can be rather difficult. Domestic

contestants will appeal for and, in the absence of unanimity in the international community, are likely to receive external support.

Non-intervention in the context of endemic internal conflict, as in Africa, projects an image of regional institutions as irrelevant and useless. The OAU's reputation in and out of Africa has suffered much because of its reluctance to become involved in domestic conflicts. Such considerations are pushing it to become more involved. But intervention too carries its own limitations and dangers. Difficulty in forging and maintaining unity among member states, difficulty in maintaining the neutrality of the intervention force, limited authority and capability of regional institutions, lack of financial resources and difficulty in arriving at and implementing an international settlement limit the containment and termination roles of regionalism.

The above discussion suggests several observations. First, regional institutions are severely limited as an agent of domestic conflict management. Preclusion from domestic politics and the complex and intense dynamics of domestic conflicts severely limit their possibilities for conflict prevention. They may have a relatively greater role in conflict containment (isolation) and termination (mediation), but this is likely to be limited to a select few situations. Even then regional institutions may have to enlist the support of the UN or other external actors. Second, to the extent that regional institutions do have a role in domestic conflict management, their status quo character leads them to favour incumbents. Governments tend to support one another. As former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere is reported to have said, 'The OAU exists only for the protection of the African Heads of State'.[27] Similarly, the primary rationale for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is the protection of the incumbent monarchs and their conservative kingdoms.[28] Even non-intervention and isolation, as noted above, are likely to work in favour of the incumbent power holders. Third, instead of containing and terminating domestic conflict, regionalism can also prolong and intensify it. By strengthening the hand of the government, as for example in Burma, regional support increases the persecution and insecurity of groups seeking political change.

For the most part, international actors and dynamics, including those at the regional level, will have only an indirect impact and will be relevant only to the extent that they influence the domestic political discourse and affect the power resources of the domestic contestants. In light of the dilemmas and limitations, the optimal strategies of regional institutions in dealing with domestic conflicts would appear to be non-intervention, isolation, diplomatic pressure urging peaceful settlement of the dispute, offering of good services and enlisting the support and role of the United Nations or a key external power.

Conflict among member states

Regionalism has its greatest value at the intramural level when the policy-driven power struggle component of the security dilemma has abated. In this situation, regional strategies can be effectively deployed to reduce the uncertainty inherent in anarchy and the misperception that can issue from it. Because of the commitment of member states to the status quo, regionalism can be particularly

effective in conflict prevention. Through the construction of security regimes in the areas of confidence- and security-building and pacific settlement of disputes, and promoting defensive defence, it can mitigate the negative effects of anarchy. The resulting secure environment can foster cooperation in other issue-areas, increase interdependence, alter the cost-benefit calculus in favour of peaceful resolution of disputes and contribute to the forging and consolidating of shared norms and values. This will further strengthen international society and in the long run make for the development of a pluralistic security community.

Regionalism is much less useful in coping with the policy-driven power struggle component of the security dilemma. When the latter operates unabated, as is the case at the intramural level when hostilities break out among member states and most of the time at the extramural level, the collective power that regionalism can bring to bear will be the crucial determinant of its role in conflict prevention, containment and termination. The power of a regional organisation should, in theory, be greater than that of individual states. But the realisation of this potential will be dependent upon the unity of purpose among member states and their willingness to pool national power and act collectively on the issue in concern. Even when these stringent conditions are met, the power of the collective may still be insufficient to redefine the interests and goals of the parties to the conflict. Usually regional organisations are strong only in terms of diplomatic power, which can be useful in mobilising international support and structuring international, especially UN, action.

To be effective in terms of deterrence, however, diplomatic power must be complemented with economic and military power. This will require a regional organisation to ally or align with one or more major powers or seek the assistance of the UN. Though the diplomatic power of a regional institution can be deployed to harness international power in support of its policies, success will depend on the pattern of relations among the major powers and the congruence of interest the regional institution can establish with the target actor. The internationalisation strategy will also constrain the freedom and flexibility of regional institutions. Generally, the effectiveness of a regional institution in conflict containment and termination is much more limited than its effectiveness in conflict prevention. And because of its partisan role in conflict containment, its conflict termination role may be even more limited.

Conflicts with extra-regional states

The security goal of regional institutions here is the protection of member states from insecurity created by other states and organisations. There is no sense of community at this level, and regional institutions would have to deal with countries that are not necessarily committed to the status quo. Some may even be categorically opposed and seek to overthrow it. Regionalism could be perceived by these countries as directed against them, provoking counter-groups and exacerbating the security dilemma. In this situation it may not be possible to implement far-reaching assurance strategies. Limited regimes to avoid mutually undesirable outcomes, such as that between Israel and Egypt after the 1973 war, may however, be feasible.

Conflict prevention at the extramural level has to address both aspects of the security dilemma, with power being much more significant in the reduction of insecurity. In theory, regionalism can and should enhance the power (defined broadly to encompass military, economic and diplomatic power) of the collective. In practice, regional institutions, especially among developing countries, seldom command the required power and/or a common threat perception for an effective alliance. They can seek to enhance their power through alliance or alignment with extra-regional powers, as for example the ASEAN countries with China to contain the Vietnamese and Soviet threats, but there is the possibility that the interests of regional states may be overridden by those of the major powers. Beijing's own objectives of punishing Vietnam and containing the Soviet threat overrode ASEAN's concerns and its peace proposals on several occasions. Even the EU has not been exempt from this. During the Cold War, US interests and policies frequently took priority over Western European concerns.

Although militarily weak, regional institutions may be relatively strong in diplomatic or economic power. If such power constitutes critical mass, they can then play a critical role in shaping the rules of the larger regional game, as with the European Union in relation to Eastern Europe in the post-1989 period and ASEAN in relation to Indochina. Even when the power of regional institutions does not constitute critical mass, they may be able to take the initiative in constructing the larger regional order, as is currently the case with ASEAN's successful initiative in creating the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to begin a dialogue on security matters in the Asia–Pacific region. But for this to be possible, the status quo has to be acceptable or at least tolerable to all the major powers, and they must support, or at least not oppose such initiatives. The abatement of the struggle for power among the major countries is a necessary precondition for such initiatives to succeed.

The diplomatic power of regional institutions can also be deployed to contain extramural conflict. It may be particularly useful in influencing UN debate and action. The arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia was sanctioned by the Security Council at the request of the EU. Indeed, the UN became involved in trying to negotiate an end to that conflict at the EU's urging. Similarly, the support of the OAS was crucial in getting the Security Council to impose sanctions on Haiti. The OAU successfully pushed for UN sanctions against territory under the control of Charles Taylor in Liberia. Diplomatic power, however, is only enabling, providing regional institutions with the power of initiative. It cannot guarantee success. That will still depend on the disposition of non-member states, the dynamics of the larger international system and the competence of member states in harnessing the power of external states in the service of their cause.

Effectiveness of regional institutions

As noted earlier the roles, tasks and strategies identified in Table 1 should in theory be available to all regional institutions. Their feasibility in practice and the effectiveness of regional institutions in conflict management, however, are

contingent upon a number of factors, and therefore likely to vary considerably across institutions. Five factors—type of institution and commitment to it; shared interests in relationship to a specific armed conflict; institutional capacity; resource availability; and legitimacy and credibility—appear to be crucial in determining the effectiveness of regional institutions.[29]

In ascertaining effectiveness, one must begin with the purpose, scope and commitment of an institution, which will determine whether and to what extent a regional institution can become involved in conflict management, and the roles and tasks that it can undertake. The purpose and scope of all inclusive multipurpose regional organisations like the OAS or OAU will differ from sub-regional ones like ECOWAS and ASEAN, which in turn will differ from specific task orientated institutions like NATO. Further, it is necessary to explore what roles and tasks are allowed or prohibited by the principles and purposes of the charters of these institutions and whether practice has deviated. This will help ascertain the likely roles in conflict management and the legal basis for them. Intimately connected to the purpose and scope is the identification with an institution and commitment to the norms, rules and procedures governing regional order. The stronger the identification and commitment from member states, the more effective the regional institution and vice versa.

Commitment of member states, however, will often vary by issue. Thus shared interests in a specific conflict and common purposes with regard to strategy and outcome are crucial in the effectiveness of regional institutions. In their absence, even a strong regional organisation like the EU will be inhibited from playing an effective role, as was the case in Bosnia.

Institutional capacity refers to the ability of a regional institution to make decisions, as well as the existence of organs, rules and procedures to implement them. Of concern here are the capacity and efficacy to collect, collate and analyse data; the principles and procedures to make decisions; the necessary subsidiary organs to carry out these decisions; command, control and communications capabilities; and administrative and logistics support.

Closely linked to institutional capacity is the availability of financial and manpower resources, both of which are crucial. They include trained mediators and negotiators, military and police forces, civilian administrators and NGOs. Financial and manpower resources, and military strength will circumscribe the types of roles and tasks that a regional institution may be able to undertake.

To be effective, regional institutions must command the respect and authority of the parties to the dispute in concern. For this to be the case, they must be perceived to be impartial and strong, and with a good track record. Recognition and support by other regional and global institutions as well as cooperation with them may also enhance credibility. Lack of coordination and especially competitive behaviour by other institutions may undermine legitimacy and credibility.

Strength in these areas will enhance the role and effectiveness of regional institutions in managing conflicts, but they by no means guarantee success. As noted earlier, regional institutions have considerable potential, but their actual role in conflict management has been much more limited. Regionalism has to be viewed as part of a package that includes national self-help, regional and global

balances of power, alliance with extra-regional powers and the UN collective security system. Often regional institutions will have to enlist the involvement and support of the UN or other extra-regional actors.

Regional institutions and the United Nations

The Charter, assigning primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the Security Council, envisions a hierarchy with regional arrangements serving global interests as defined by the Council. It requires regional institutions to keep the Security Council fully informed of activities undertaken or contemplated with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. The single exception relates to the provision for collective defence under Article 51. Even here, the Security Council must be informed of the exercise of this right which is allowed only until the Security Council takes action. In practice, however, the relationship between the UN and regional institutions has been rather loose and subject to considerable variation across institutions. On occasion, the UN and some regional institutions have interacted as envisioned in the Charter. But there have also been occasions when regional institutions were used to circumvent and/or undermine the United Nations. During the Cold War, American- and Soviet-led regional alliances played key roles in maintaining international peace and security, with the United Nations on the periphery. Even now the hierarchy envisioned in the Charter does not hold. The UN is still not the key player where the security concerns of major powers, especially those of the Permanent Five members of the Security Council, are concerned. The world organisation can act in support of but not against them. The UN is not in a position to dictate to regional institutions, although it can deploy its moral authority and access to resources to influence regional institutions in certain situations.

The United Nations and regional institutions may occasionally be able to cooperate, one serving the interests of the other. At other times they may compete. Tension is always present in interactions between the UN and regional institutions, even when they are cooperating. Each may derive benefits from cooperating with the other, but both will also incur costs especially in terms of their purpose and autonomy. Often, each will try to preserve its independence while attempting to use the other to serve its own purposes. This tension can only be managed, not eliminated. The actual relationship between the UN and regional institutions will vary by specific institution, issue and context. A flexible approach is needed, along with some general principles or criteria to facilitate the interaction of the United Nations and regional institutions in situations when it is in their mutual interest to cooperate. Of particular relevance here are the basis for division of labour between the two institutions as well as the means to ensure accountability.

Division of labour

The earlier abstract discussion of conflict management suggested that prevention is perhaps the strong suit of regional institutions. At the intrastate level they can

play an indirect role in conflict prevention as well as encourage the pacific settlement of disputes. Regional institutions should be particularly strong in preventing the outbreak of armed conflicts among member states, but less so in preventing conflicts initiated by extra-regional actors. Regional institutions, for a number of reasons, are likely to be less strong in conflict containment and even weaker in conflict termination. This suggests that regional institutions may have a comparative advantage and therefore should take the lead in conflict prevention, while the UN or other actors may be better able to take the lead in the other stages of conflict management. This functional division of labour, however, is an abstract one that should be modified for specific cases. Several factors should be taken into account in ascertaining which institution is better placed to take the lead, and which kinds of support should be provided by other institutions.

Depth of Interest and Consequences. Regional institutions will usually have greater interest as they will be most affected by the outcome of regional conflicts. Further, a global institution like the UN may not have equal concern with all conflicts. It would therefore appear logical for regional institutions to take the lead. But this logic may be negated by other considerations.

Acceptability. This is a crucial consideration, for non-acceptance by one or more parties to the conflict will undermine the potential of an operation. As regional institutions are close to a conflict and their members are likely to have vested interests, it is difficult for them to remain impartial, at least not for long. Consequently they may be less acceptable to one of more parties to the conflict.

Institutional capacity. The organisational capacity to make decisions and implement them is critical. The components of this capacity have been identified earlier and will not be repeated here. A further capacity question to consider is whether an institution can handle an additional responsibility or is already fully stretched, if not over burdened.

Resource availability. Which institution has or can harness the necessary financial, human and military resources necessary to carry out the operation, and for how long? It is possible that one institution may be strong in one resource and weak in another. This will better indicate who can provide what.

Consequences for an institution. What will be the consequences of taking on this new responsibility for the institution? Will its credibility be enhanced or undermined? Although it may be difficult to correctly anticipate the consequences, it is a question that must be given due consideration. Taking on a responsibility which is unlikely to succeed can damage the institution and negate its other positive benefits. Consideration of these factors provides a basis to decide who should take the lead role and what support can be provided by the other institution. Often, however, the division of labour is not decided a priori.

It evolves over time, sometimes fortuitously. Further, the lead role may pass from one institution to another in the course of a conflict. The key requirement is to remain flexible and make adjustments as required by the situation.

When the UN and a regional institution are cooperating in conflict management, the ultimate responsibility, and hence ultimate political control, must rest with the Security Council. All other responsibilities may be shared or delegated. The UN or a regional institution must take the lead role in managing a certain operation with the other limiting itself to providing support. There should be no ambiguity as to who is in control. Otherwise, not only will the success of the operation be hampered, it may also make for tension between institutions, complicate the chain of command and present enormous problems of coordination and accountability.

Accountability

When a regional institution is engaged in conflict management with the endorsement and support of the United Nations, it must remain accountable to the Security Council. Accountability means 'the ability to ensure that a mission subcontracted by the international community to a powerful state (or regional institution) reflects collective interests and norms and not merely the national imperatives and preferences of the subcontractor'.[30] Accountability applies to mission and objectives; principles governing the conduct of the operation including impartiality and use of force; and utilisation of resources provided by the United Nations, which must retain oversight and not lose control of the operation. At the same time, however, it must not seek to micro-manage an operation that is being led by a regional institution. A proper balance between losing control and micro-managing has to be struck. Accountability may be difficult to achieve in practice, especially if a major power is the driving force of a regional institution. The leverage available to the UN to ensure accountability is limited to its moral authority and, at times, the resources that it can make available. The latter is only a consideration with respect to regional institutions in the developing world. It is therefore important to define clearly mission, objectives and principles at the outset, and make UN endorsement and continued support conditional upon strict adherence to the initial terms. That changes to the initial terms can only be authorised by the Security Council must also be stipulated at the outset.

One or more of several measures may be employed to ensure accountability. First, the initial authorisation of a mission should be for a specific, often limited, duration. Each extension will have to be re-authorised by the Security Council. This would provide an opportunity for the council to exercise oversight and retain control over the mission. Second, UN personnel may be injected into the command and control system to provide guidance and assistance, as well as to report back to the UN. Third, a separate joint body comprising personnel from the UN, a regional institution and other interested parties may be constituted to oversee the implementation of a mission. Fourth, the UN may appoint a special envoy to undertake the same function. The choice of measures will depend on

the situation and the degree of oversight sought. This cannot be determined without reference to context.

A related issue is action when UN terms are violated or if the delegated power and authority have been abused. Here the options available to the world organisation are limited. It can withdraw its endorsement, but this may not be possible if the target institution has influence in the Security Council. The only option then would be not to re-authorise the mission. But for this to be possible, the initial endorsement must be for a limited duration and must expire at the opportune moment. Failing this, the UN may have to resort to mobilising international norms and opinion through the General Assembly and/or attempting to persuade the regional institution or actor to comply with the initial mission, goals and principles.

Conclusion

Approaches to international security in the post-cold war world have to be multilayered, comprising several arrangements and actors. No single arrangement or actor will be sufficient. Regional institutions and the United Nations can each play an invaluable role in conflict management, but there are clear limitations for both. Task-sharing and cooperation could help overcome some of these limitations. An effective partnership between global and regional institutions depends on a good understanding of the possibilities and limitations of each, an efficient division of labour and accountability of the various institutions involved in managing a specific conflict. Although no firm basis can be applied to all occasions and flexibility is required, this article has set forth an analytical framework to investigate and understand the possible roles and limitations of regional institutions, identified factors that must be considered in the division of labour between global and regional institutions, and suggested some ways of ensuring accountability when regional institutions cooperate with the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

Notes

* For an elaboration, see Muthiah Alagappa, 'Regionalism and conflict management: a framework for analysis', *Review of International Studies*, Vol 21, No 4, 1995, pp 359–387.

[1] For a good account of the deliberation on regionalism versus globalism in the context of the formulation of the UN Charter, see Inis J Claude, Jr, 'The OAS, the UN, and the United States', *International Conciliation*, 547, March 1964, pp 3–60. See also his *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization*, New York: Random House, 1971, pp 102–117.

[2] Gareth Evans, 'The United Nations: co-operating for peace', address to the Forty Eighth General Assembly of the United Nations, 27 September 1993.

[3] For an overview of the effort to define a region, see Bruce M Russett, 'International regions and the international system', in Richard A Falk & Saul H Mendlovitz (eds), *Regional Politics and World Order*, San Francisco: W H Freeman, 1973, pp 181–187. On the effort to define a regional subsystem and specify the necessary and sufficient conditions for it, see William R Thompson, 'The regional subsystem: a conceptual explication and a propositional inventory', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol 17, No 1, 1973, pp 89–117.

[4] Among the few definitions of regionalism are those by Donald J Puchala and Stuart I Fanagan; and by Joseph Nye. See Puchala & Fanagan, 'International politics in the 1970s: the search for a perspective',

International Organization, Vol 28, No 2, 1974, p 259; and Nye, *International Regionalism*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1968, p vii.

[5] 0n issues and issue-areas, see Ernst B Haas, 'Why collaborate? Issue-linkage and international regimes', *World Politics*, Vol 32, No 3, 1980, pp 364–367.

[6] On 'nesting', see Vinod Aggarwal, *Liberal Protectionism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p 27.

[7] On negative and positive peace, and the debate among peace studies scholars, see Johan Galtung, 'Violence, peace and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol 6, No 6, 1969, pp 167–191; and Carolyn M Stephenson, 'The evolution of peace studies', in Michael Klare & Daniel Thomas (eds), *Peace and World Order Studies: A Curriculum Guide*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989, pp 9–19.

[8] See Muthiah Alagappa, 'Defining security: a critical review and appraisal of the debate', in Muthiah Alagappa (ed), *Asian Conceptions of Security: Ideational and Material*, forthcoming.

[9] There is a growing body of literature that questions the effectiveness of the sovereign state and its continued relevance as the referent unit of security. It should be acknowledged here that (1) the scope of state sovereignty in a number of issue-areas like human lights, monetary and financial matters, and production is becoming substantially limited; (2) non-state actors (subnational and international) have proliferated and in some cases play a central role in domestic and international regulation in the specific issue-area of their concern; and (3) the state can protect as well as oppress its citizens. These developments, by no means uniform across states, should be given due consideration in analysis and policy making, but they should not be interpreted as eclipsing the importance of the state. The sovereign state continues to be the most effective unit with respect to political identity and allegiance as well as to the fulfillment of the security and welfare functions, and it is the principal actor in the international system. The proliferation of secessionist movements, while reflective of the weakness of the constitution of specific states, is not indicative of the obsolescence of the state. On the contrary, it is a vindication of the state's continued vitality. The goal of the secessionist movements is to create new states in which the fit between ethno- or religious-nation and state will be closer and in which their ethnic or religious group will become the *Staatsvolk*, the dominant ethnic group that controls state power.

[10] See Kenneth N Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: Random House, 1979, pp 102–128.

[11] On the security dilemma, see John H Herz, 'Idealist internationalism and the security dilemma', *World Politics*, Vol 2, No 2, 1950, pp 157–180; Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, pp 72–76; and Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991, ch 8.

[12] The two components of the security dilemma derive from Waltz's three-image analysis of world politics. He posits the third image (the structure) as describing the framework of world politics and as the permissive cause of war, and the first and second images (man and the state) as the forces of world politics, the immediate or efficient causes of war. See his *Man, the State and War*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. Barry Buzan terms the two components the power dilemma and the security dilemma, and their combination as the power–security dilemma. See his *People, States and Fear*, pp 294–298.

[13] Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 1992, p 6. See also Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp 317–319.

[14] For a discussion of the formation of national-territorial states in the Third World, see Anthony D Smith, *State and the Nation in the Third World*, New York: St Martin's, 1983, ch 7.

[15] The phrase 'internal colonialism' is used by Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

[16] For an expanded discussion of the problem of political legitimacy, see Muthiah Alagappa (ed), *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The Quest for Moral Authority*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1995, chs 1–3.

[17] For the differences between conflict settlement and resolution, see C R Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict*, New York: St Martin's, 1981, pp 275–277.

[18] This and the next section draw extensively on Alagappa, 'Regionalism and conflict management'.

[19] See Karl Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*, Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1957, pp 5–7.

[20] See Claude, *Swords into Ploughshares*, pp 245–285. See also Jerome Slater, *A Re-evaluation of Collective Security: The OAS in Action*, Mershon National Security Program Pamphlet Series No 1, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965, pp 9–23; George W Downs (ed), *Collective Security Beyond the Cold War*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994; and Thomas G Weiss (ed), *Collective Security and Changing World Politics*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1993.

[21] On intermediation, qualifications required and the intervenor's repertory of practice, see Oran R Young, *The Intermediaries*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967, pp 50–79.

[22] For a discussion of the evolution of the principle of non-intervention in the inter-American system, see G

Pope Atkins, *Latin America in the International Political System*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989, pp 215–218.

[23] See Laura W Reed & Carl Kayson (eds), *Emerging Norms of Justified Intervention*, Cambridge: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1993.

[24] On the growing force of human rights regimes in Latin America, see Kathryn Sikkink, 'Human rights, principled issue-networks, and sovereignty in Latin America', *International Organization*, Vol 47, No 2, 1993, pp 411–441. On the weakness of the regime in Africa, see Claude E Welch, 'The OAU and human rights: regional promotion of human rights', in Yassin El-Ayoutty (ed), *The Organisation of African Unity Thirty Years On*, Westport, CO: Greenwood, 1994, pp 53–76.

[25] Richard J Bloomfield, 'Making the Western Hemisphere safe for democracy? The OAS defense-of-democracy regime', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol 17, No 2, 1994, pp 157–169, quote at p 162.

[26] ASEAN Joint Statement on the Situation in the Philippines', in *ASEAN Document Series 1967–1986*, issued by the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, 1986, p 469.

[27] Yassin El-Ayoutty, 'An OAU for the future', in El-Ayoutty, *The Organization of African Unity Thirty Years On*, p 179.

[28] According to R K Ramazani, 'the overriding pre-GCC concern of Saudi Arabia with the security and stability of the House of Saud and other royal families' contributed to the creation of the GCC. See his *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Record and Analysis*, Charlottesville, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988, pp 1–11.

[29] For a similar discussion of a somewhat different list of factors, see Michael Barnett, 'Partners in peace? The UN, regional organizations, and peace keeping', *Review of International Studies*, Vol 21, No 4, 1995, pp 420–424.

[30] Jarat Chopra & Thomas G Weiss, 'The United Nations and the former Second World: coping with conflicts', in Abram Chayes & Antonia Chayes (eds), *Preventing Conflict in the Post-Communist World*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1996, p 529.

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Volume 8, 1997, 3 issues. ISSN 0959-6410.

Carfax Publishing Company
PO Box 25 • Abingdon • Oxfordshire OX14 3UE • UK
Tel: *+44 (0)1235 521154* • ***Fax:*** *+44 (0)1235 401550*
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