

Strengthening Canada-Asia Relations through Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy

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“We’ve built this reputation for coming but not coming back.
With Asia becoming a much more important part of the global economy, you really can’t get
away with that.”

– John Manley, October 2011

Introduction

It has become increasingly clear over the last few decades that a growing number of policy issues transcend national borders, forcing states to work more closely together and consider the impact of their policies on the broader international community. Contemporary and non-traditional threats to global security such as the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; the unpredictability of international terrorist groups; the competition for petroleum and other strategic resources; illegal immigration; the spread of pandemic disease; illicit drug trafficking; human rights abuses; and environmental degradation including climate change¹ have pressured states and different regions across the globe to engage in a more concerted effort towards tackling these transnational challenges more cooperatively.

In Europe for instance, the emergence of multilateral institutions such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1961, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 1975 as well as the European Union (EU) in 1993 have enabled and encouraged consultation and cooperation among participating members of the Atlantic region.

In the Asia-Pacific region however, official (Track One) multilateral processes of this sort began to emerge a little later and were supported by unofficial (Track Two) mechanisms and processes, particularly in the sub-region of Southeast Asia. A clearer distinction between these two tracks will be provided in the first and second part of this paper, but according to Desmond

¹ NATO. “Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement: Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO,” *The Experts Report*, May, 2010, p.13.

Ball and Brendan Taylor, second track processes in the Asia-Pacific region provided much of the momentum required to drive a purposeful and productive Track One security cooperation process forward.² As Asian countries increasingly see the need for different kinds of diplomatic configurations to address challenges, global and local, facing the region,³ a number of formal multilateral institutions have emerged in the Asia-Pacific over the years, including: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967; The Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum, founded in 1989; The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), created in 1994 and; The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), established in 2001.

This paper will argue that Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy, also known as ASEAN Track Two, is a cost effective way for Canada to re-engage in the Asia-Pacific. In order to support this thesis and to explain why it is important for Canada to regain a bigger presence in Asia, the following arguments will be made:

First, Canada invested long-term efforts in developing stronger and deeper ties with ASEAN Governments as a way of establishing a place for itself in the post-Cold War era, and was able to build a good reputation for itself as both a strong middle power and a multilateral country. In trying to help solidify ASEAN itself as a more effective mechanism for regional cooperation at the official level, Canada promoted informal, regular and systematic dialogue among ASEAN-member countries for over a decade. It took on significant intellectual leadership in Southeast Asia by advancing notions of cooperation through multilateral forums, international institution-building and creative diplomatic skills, such as generating new security concepts and

² Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. "Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy," Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p.108.

³ Evans, P., "Canada and Asia Pacific's Track Two Diplomacy," *International Journal*, Autumn, 2009, p.1037.

leading in the promotion of new policy ideas.⁴ Among these new security concepts, then Foreign Minister Joe Clark set out the notion of cooperative security, which represented Canada's attempt to reconceptualise security, in order to take into account the end of the Cold War and the new complexity of regional security issues.⁵ According to David Capie and Paul Evans' Asia-Pacific security lexicon, "the broad objective of cooperative security was to replace the Cold War conception of security based on bipolarity, deterrence, and the balance of power with a multilateral process and framework based on reassurance."⁶

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) worked in partnership with the leading Track Two institution in Southeast Asia at the time; the ASEAN Institutes for Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN ISIS) and funded over 80% of its annual meetings on broad regional security issues pertaining to gender and equality, environmental degradation, social dynamics and so on. Although Canada also funded other Track Two projects in Southeast Asia, such as the ASEAN-UN Workshops on Cooperation in Peace and Preventative Diplomacy and The South China Sea Initiative, it mostly anchored its liberal institutionalist roots in the region through ASEAN ISIS. This institution represented the glue that connected Canada to Southeast Asia for over a decade, and allowed Canada to make important contributions to the peaceful development of Asia's security environment.⁷ For these reasons, the focus of this paper will be on ASEAN ISIS.

Second, it is important for Canada's long-term growth and economic prosperity to remain a relevant and competitive player in emerging global markets, as well as in the development of a

⁴ Kawasaki, T., "Formulating Canada's Grand Strategy in Asia," *International Journal*, Winter 2000-2001, pp. 135-136, 139 and 148.

⁵ Dewitt, D., "Common, Comprehensive and Cooperative Security", *Pacific Review* 7, issue 1 1994, pp. 1-16.

⁶ Capie, D. And Evans, P., "The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon", Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2002, p. 99

⁷ Kawasaki, T., "Formulating Canada's Grand Strategy in Asia," *International Journal*, Winter 2000-2001, p. 135.

new Asia-Pacific security architecture by diversifying its economic and political ties beyond the United States and the Americas and into Asia, a region where half of the world's population lives and which currently accounts for more than a quarter of the world's real gross domestic product (GDP.) As it stands, Canada has been politically disengaged from Asia for the last five years, and has paid "scant attention to increasingly important regional organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations."⁸ According to Wendy Dobson, Canada has "invested little in understanding Asian norms and conventions [in recent years, and] often appears to be out of step with the region's long-term thinking and evolving relationships."⁹ Some may argue that under the current fiscal climate, Canada needed to focus its international priorities on expanding its *economic* relationships with emerging markets such as China and India through bilateral agreements, as a more effective way of ensuring direct commercial and economic gain for Canadians at the domestic level. However, there have been significant economic repercussions to Canada's steady withdrawal from *political* matters of peace and security in the region.

According to a recent article in the Globe and Mail, Canada has been "blocked from talks over the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which could emerge as an Asia-Pacific trade regime including both Asian nations and countries like Australia and the U.S."¹⁰ Canada has also presented a weak image of itself at the 9th annual International Institute for Strategic Studies' (IISS) Asian Economic Summit, the 2010 Shangri-La Dialogue¹¹, by choosing to be represented

⁸ Clark, C., "Ottawa Urged to Create Asian Trade Strategy" *The Globe and Mail: Report on Business*, October 19, 2011, Available at: <http://m.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/ottawa-urged-to-create-asian-trade-strategy/article2205592/?service=mobile>

⁹ Dobson, W., "Canada, China, and Rising Asia : A Strategic Proposal", *A study report sponsored by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Canada China Business Council*, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, October 19, 2011, p.8

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ The Shangri La Dialogue initially began as an unofficial defence summit in 2002, but has since become primarily an inter-governmental Track One event involving Defence Ministers, chiefs of defence staff and permanent heads of defence ministries from various countries across the Asia-Pacific region. It also engages non-official delegates such as legislators, academic, experts, distinguished journalists and business delegates, which preserves a certain aspect

at a lower level. “While Canada’s major security partners such as the US, Australia, Japan and South Korea chose to send their highest defence officials to [this Summit], Ottawa’s highest official was its Vice Chief of Defence Staff.”¹² By neglecting to send a higher official to this inter-governmental summit, which as of 2006, has “set itself the target of ensuring participation at the highest level”¹³, Canada was consequently not invited to “participate in an upcoming meeting of the defence ministers of the 10 ASEAN members plus eight others, including the US, China, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Korea, Russia and Japan.”¹⁴

These numerous concerns, coupled with the fact that the current economic climate in Europe and the United States has increasingly shifted the global center of economic gravity towards Asia, leave Canada in a dangerously weak and vulnerable position. At a time when global economic uncertainty is greater than ever, especially in the Western world¹⁵, Canada has failed to show up on a number of economic and political fronts in Asia, has developed a reputation for being unreliable¹⁶, and is now consequently faced with the unfortunate risk of remaining a marginal participant in the transformation of the world’s economic and geopolitical landscape. The danger for Canada therefore lies in potentially restricted trade opportunities with Asia-Pacific countries and in isolating itself from a part of the world it simply cannot afford to ignore.

of the Track Two process. For more information see:

<http://www.iiss.org.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=57967&type=full&servicetype=Attachment>

¹² Acharya, A., “Shangri La Dialogue: China’s Regional Security Doctrine: Is Canada Listening?” *The Asia Pacific Foundation*, June 11, 2010. Available at <http://www.asiapacific.ca/category/keywords/shangri-la-dialogue>

¹³ Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)., “A Decade of the Shangri La Dialogue”, *Introduction for the 10th Asia Security Summit*, Singapore, June 3-5, 2011, p.9. Available at

<http://www.iiss.org.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=57967&type=full&servicetype=Attachment>

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Pau Woo, Y., “Governor-General Shows Canada is Getting Serious in Asia”, *The Globe and Mail*, November 15, 2011. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/governor-general-shows-canada-is-getting-serious-in-asia/article2236086/>

¹⁶ Dobson, W., “Canada, China, and Rising Asia : A Strategic Proposal”, *A study report sponsored by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Canada China Business Council*, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, October 19, 2011, p.8

Third, Track Two Diplomacy is an inexpensive and invaluable way for Canada to sustain an active involvement in matters of peace and security in Asia by fostering norms and principles of dialogue and cooperation. By increasing its participation in Track Two processes and informal dialogues on regional issues, not only would Canada gain a better understanding of Asian thinking on emerging regional norms, but it would also have the opportunity to help shape regional outcomes and be better positioned to re-engage more actively at the official level. It should be noted that increased engagement in Track Two processes will inevitably create the expectation that Canada will become more engaged at the Track One level, which may lead to the Government of Canada having to incur higher costs for greater participation in more official forums in Southeast Asia. But recent developments have already demonstrated that the current government is beginning to recognize the importance of re-engaging with ASEAN Governments, and that it is increasingly willing to invest in strengthening its ties with Southeast Asian officials. On November 15, 2011 for instance, Prime Minister Harper deployed Governor-General David Johnston to three Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore, where he is expected to “send a powerful message about Canada’s enduring interest in the region and make the case for stronger ties, especially in higher education and innovation.”¹⁷ Other recent headlines indicate that Canada is now willing to join the TPP and that it also hopes to become a member of ASEAN’s East Asian Summit.

Fourth, protecting interests and promoting our ideas remain essential parts of Canada’s role in the Asia-Pacific world.¹⁸ According to Paul Evans, Canada has a modest approach to leadership, not in dictating new frameworks but in facilitating their creation and shaping their

¹⁷ Pau Woo, Y., “Governor-General Shows Canada is Getting Serious in Asia”, *The Globe and Mail*, November 15, 2011. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/governor-general-shows-canada-is-getting-serious-in-asia/article2236086/>

¹⁸ Evans, P., “Canada and Asia Pacific’s Track Two Diplomacy,” *International Journal*, Autumn, 2009, p.1038.

direction.¹⁹ He argues that particularly in the 1990s, Canadians were extremely successful at leading from the middle, encouraging Asians to drive the agenda and allowing them to develop a sense of ownership of Track Two processes. Evans suggests that Canada's success in fulfilling its role as a middle power gave it good willed and longstanding credibility. Generating new norms and ideas on a consensual basis²⁰ is a salient feature of Track Two Diplomacy and it is one that Canada has the ability to foster in its current and future relationships with its Asian partners.

In order to further develop the aforementioned arguments, this paper will be divided in the four sections described below.

The first section will provide a general definition of Track Two Diplomacy and a brief overview of how the concept came to be. Different aspects of the term will be illustrated by explaining various interpretations of Track Two and other related concepts such as Track One and a Half (Track 1.5) and Track Three.

The second section of this paper will draw on some on the broader concepts of Track Two presented in the first section in order to highlight those which are particular to ASEAN Track Two Diplomacy. Making these linkages to provide a more tailored definition of ASEAN Track Two should facilitate a better understanding of how it is different from Track Two Diplomacy in other parts of the world, and how it is actually closer to Track 1.5. This second section will also focus on how ASEAN Track Two has evolved over the course of its existence and on how it will continue to grow and evolve in the future.

The third section will examine the relationship between ASEAN Track Two and Canada over the following four periods of time: (a) Final years of the Cold War and transition into Post

¹⁹ Evans, P., "The Emergence of Eastern Asia and its Implications for Canada," *International Journal*, Summer 1992, p.525.

²⁰ Evans, P., "Canada and Asia Pacific's Track Two Diplomacy," *International Journal*, Autumn, 2009, p.1038.

Cold War era (1989-1991); (b) Post Cold War era (1992-1995); (c) Axworthy years (1996-2000); (d) Post-September 11th to present (2001-2011). Analyzing Canada's involvement in ASEAN Track Two Diplomacy through these four periods should paint a clearer picture of what Canada's role has been in developing multilateral approaches to peace and security in Southeast Asia as well as in helping to create new frameworks for broader Asia-Pacific cooperation over the last few decades. Canada's hallmark contributions will be highlighted and the degree of its engagement in the region will be assessed over time. It will then be possible to identify the kind of reputation that Canada has earned in Southeast Asia over the last three decades and to evaluate whether or not it is important for Canada to uphold this reputation in the future.

The fourth section of this paper will explore options for Canada to remain involved in shaping the future of ASEAN Track Two. Questions about what Canada's interests would be in pursuing a stimulatory role in Track Two initiatives in Southeast Asia will be addressed and arguments in favour of Canada sustaining such an active role in the future will be strongly defended. When discussing Canada's role in the future of ASEAN Track Two, this paper will not only refer to the role of the Government of Canada, but will also argue that like Track Two Diplomacy itself, Canada's approach to strengthening regional security in Southeast Asia (and by extension, the broader Asia-Pacific region) should be inclusive of a wide range of actors from different sectors of society, such as academia, think tanks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), relevant stakeholder groups, as well as broader engagement with civil society (Track three).

Lastly, concluding remarks will be provided as to how Canada could play a determining role in ensuring the relevance of ASEAN Track Two in the future.

Section I: Briefly Defining Track Two Diplomacy

The term Track Two Diplomacy has come to mean different things to different people as academics in the field tried to redefine certain terms, concepts and approaches to Track Two over the years. From John Burton's efforts to resolve border disputes between Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia through an approach he termed "Controlled Communication" in the mid-1960s to Herbert Kelman's "Interactive Problem-solving" model in the 1970s, to Joseph Montville's concept of Track Two Diplomacy in 1981, to Ronald Fisher's notion of "Interactive Conflict Resolution" (ICR) in the early 1990s, different aspects of the term have been stressed, but common principles have emerged nonetheless. Other scholars and practitioners have also continued to contribute new terminology to the field and have developed different interpretations of Track Two, but the approaches mentioned above remain at the heart of where most classic Track Two activities happen.

Among the common principles and recurring themes that have emerged throughout the evolution of Track Two, the following are most prominent: (1) The unofficial nature of interaction and dialogues between a small group of individuals attending in their private capacities and representing opposing sides of a conflict; (2) The general tendency of these informal dialogues being facilitated by a neutral "Third Party"; (3) The fact that participants at the dialogue sessions usually have influence on government officials in their respective countries; (4) The notion that participants seek to develop a common understanding of the conflict amongst themselves and with the opposing party; (5) The concept that participants seek to jointly come up with new and innovative ideas on how to resolve the conflict. "Outside the box" thinking is therefore highly encouraged regardless of how new ideas may be perceived by official parties; (6) The ongoing basis of dialogue sessions, which are usually held over a

relatively longer period of time; (7) The intention of addressing root-causes of a conflict in order to achieve lasting peaceful resolutions and; (8) The low-profile and quiet manner in which these unofficial meetings are held.²¹

Although it may not be possible to develop a comprehensive and all-encompassing definition of Track Two Diplomacy due to the breadth of concepts related to the term, the definition most commonly employed today is still the one that was first elaborated by Joseph Montville, a former Foreign Service Officer at the US Department of State who coined the term in 1981. Montville's idea of Track Two Diplomacy came up as he began to realize that "a second diplomatic track can [...] make its contribution as a supplement to the understandable shortcomings of official relations, especially in times of tension."²² He also began to see how track two contacts could be a "critical complement to the essential but often sterile official relations between adversaries."²³

As a result of these contemplations, Montville defined Track Two Diplomacy as "unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversarial groups or nations with the goals of developing strategies, influencing public opinion, and organising human and material resources in ways that might help resolve the conflict."²⁴

While most of the literature defines Track Two as an instrument or mechanism for conflict resolution, the term can also serve other purposes in the broader context of how it relates to and interacts with official diplomacy. Such alternative purposes include, but are not limited to:

²¹ Jones, P., *Canada and Track Two Diplomacy*, (Toronto: The Canadian International Council, 2008) available at: <http://www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/research/canadianfo/canadaandt>, pp. 3-4.

²² Davidson, W.D. and J.V. Montville, "Foreign Policy According to Freud," *Foreign Policy*, 45 (Winter, 1981-82), p.155.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.156.

²⁴ J.V. Montville, "Transnationalism and the Role of Track Two Diplomacy," in *Approaches to Peace: An Intellectual Map*, ed. W.S. Thompson and K.M. Jensen (Washington: US Institute of Peace, 1991).

(1) Contributing to the development of new approaches to regional security²⁵; (2) Developing cooperative techniques to assist states in managing their relations²⁶ and; (3) Building an international society, a critical mass of non-governmental players who are informed, inter-connected and actors in their own right.²⁷ Section two of this paper will expand on alternative purposes for Track Two, particularly when defining concepts and approaches to regional Track Two in Southeast Asia.

Based on Montville's standard definition, other concepts such as Track 1.5, Track Three, Multi-track and Circum-negotiation have been developed, among others. For the purposes of this paper, it will be necessary to further elaborate on the first two aforementioned concepts, as this will help better define ASEAN Track Two Diplomacy in section two. A brief definition of these two concepts is therefore provided below.

(a) Track One and a Half (Track 1.5)

The term Track 1.5 was developed by Susan Allen Nan, who defined it as “conflict resolution activities facilitated by non-officials and directly involving official negotiators for the conflict parties.”²⁸ That is to say that although these conflict resolution activities are unofficial dialogues, they are attended by participants who are “acting under something approaching ‘instruction’ from their respective governments.”²⁹ When defining the concept of Track 1.5, it should be made clear that all or most of the participants from each conflicting side, whether they

²⁵ Jones, P., *Canada and Track Two Diplomacy*, (Toronto: The Canadian International Council, 2008) available at: <http://www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/research/canadianfo/canadaandt>, p. 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁷ Evans, P., “Possibilities for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Track 2 and Track 1,” in *Multilateralism in Asia Pacific: What Role for Track Two?*, (Honolulu: National Defense University, Washington and the US Pacific Command and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 27 March, 2001), <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/evanspaper.htm>

²⁸ Nan, S.A., and A. Strimling, “Track I – Track II Cooperation,” published on the web by [beyondintractability.org](http://www.beyondintractability.org), and can be accessed at http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/track_1_2_cooperation.jsp

²⁹ Jones, P., *Canada and Track Two Diplomacy*, (Toronto: The Canadian International Council, 2008) available at: <http://www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/research/canadianfo/canadaandt>, p. 4.

are official or non-official actors, are still attending these unofficial dialogues in their private capacities but are somewhat following closer direction from their respective governments.

According to Peter Jones, the key element to grasp when defining this concept is that Track 1.5 “is very close to an official process, but one which the two parties do not wish to refer to as such, often because of issues relating to ‘recognition’.”³⁰ Government officials generally do not want to be recognized for taking any part in unofficial dialogues pertaining to very sensitive or controversial issues. Maintaining a high level of secrecy as well as a certain degree of separation between the official and unofficial realms therefore allow government officials to pursue ideas with a little more flexibility and creativity.³¹ Maintaining a calculated distance from official processes also provides government officials (attending in their private capacities) with the ability to deny that they have engaged in such dialogue sessions altogether.

The concept of Track 1.5 relates to Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy in terms of the close interaction with governments, the fact that it provides a quasi-official venue for regional governments to develop ideas before adopting them in the official discourse, and the fact that these ideas have to align particularly closely with official priorities.³² It will be possible to draw further linkages between these two concepts of Track Two Diplomacy in the second section of this paper, where ASEAN Track Two will be more comprehensively defined.

(b) Track Three

Today’s international landscape is characterized by the proliferation of a wide range of non-state actors emerging from civil society such as NGOs, think-tanks and various interest

³⁰Jones, P., *Canada and Track Two Diplomacy*, (Toronto: The Canadian International Council, 2008) available at: <http://www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/research/canadianfo/canadaandt>, p. 4.

³¹ Evans, P., “Possibilities for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Track 2 and Track 1,” in *Multilateralism in Asia Pacific: What Role for Track Two?*, (Honolulu: National Defense University, Washington and the US Pacific Command and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 27 March, 2001), <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/evanspaper.htm>

³² Jones, P., *Canada and Track Two Diplomacy*, (Toronto: The Canadian International Council, 2008) available at: <http://www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/research/canadianfo/canadaandt>, p. 12.

groups. According to Herman Kraft, “non-state actor participation in diplomatic processes [has contributed] to the building of an incipient regional civil society in the Asia-Pacific.”³³ He suggests that collaboration between nongovernmental actors has led to the emergence of Track Three dialogue channels,³⁴ which include meetings and conferences that are attended by nongovernmental circles. Kraft points out that the discussions at these meetings usually tend to be more academic, very informal and that the agendas are often critical of governments and their policies.³⁵

According to Ball and Taylor, “Track Three is defined as those organizations and individuals, including academics and many NGOs, which are active in the security domain but which are not directly concerned with influencing official government policies.”³⁶ The purpose of Track Three processes is therefore to deal with matters that civil society groups believe are being neglected, or which these groups feel the semi-official process is not able or willing to address.³⁷

A common criticism of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia, is that it usually tends to involve a select number of government officials, experts or academics without including various other relevant stakeholder groups among the broader regional civil society. As a result, Track Three processes provide non-official regional actors with an alternative avenue to engage in dialogues and discussions about various policy issues pertaining to security matters in the region. Unlike Track Two processes, Track Three’s relationship with Track One is much more distanced and adversarial. Instead of working within the framework of government and being

³³ Kraft, H. J., “The Autonomy Dilemma of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia,” *Security Dialogue*, 31, 3 (September, 2000), p. 350.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Ball, D., Milner, A., and Taylor, B., “Track 2 Security Dialogue in the Asia-Pacific: Reflections and Future Directions,” *Asian Security*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2006, p.176.

³⁷ Jones, P., *Canada and Track Two Diplomacy*, (Toronto: The Canadian International Council, 2008) available at: <http://www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/research/canadianfo/canadaandt>, p. 12.

concerned for developing ideas which are politically sound and feasible, Track Three processes aim to implement structural changes to the system. Although it may enable more “outside the box” thinking, this deliberately adversarial approach greatly limits Track Three’s capacity to transfer its policy ideas into the official realm.

In sum, there are many different kinds of Track Two processes, as well as different applications for them, depending on the regional context and desired outcomes. Paul Evans summarizes the various different “tracks” quite succinctly: “Track one is governments; track two is about policy experts who want to work with and influence government; [and] track three is informed citizens who want to criticize governments.”³⁸

The role of Track Three processes in Southeast Asia will be discussed throughout the rest of this paper, particularly when addressing some of the main challenges facing ASEAN Track Two Diplomacy, and in the context of defining Herman Kraft’s autonomy dilemma.

Section II: ASEAN Track Two Diplomacy: Definitions, Origins, Evolution and Future Direction

(a) What is ASEAN?

Before defining the concept of ASEAN Track Two Diplomacy, it is useful to clarify the meaning of ASEAN.

As mentioned in the introductory part of this paper, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a formal Track One institution that was founded in 1967. The establishment of ASEAN was formalized when the Foreign Ministers of the following five founding countries met in Bangkok to sign the ASEAN Declaration: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Among the seven aims and purposes set out in this declaration, it is most pertinent

³⁸ Evans, P., “Possibilities for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Track 2 and Track 1,” in *Multilateralism in Asia Pacific: What Role for Track Two?*, (Honolulu: National Defense University, Washington and the US Pacific Command and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 27 March, 2001), <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/evanspaper.htm>

for the purposes of this paper to note the objective of “maintaining close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.”³⁹

In 1976, ASEAN Member States adopted a Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). This treaty contained the following principles: (1) Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations; (2) The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion; (3) Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; (4) Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner; (5) Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and (6) Effective cooperation among themselves.⁴⁰

Since its establishment, five additional countries have joined the Association, which currently make up the Ten Member States of ASEAN. The additional five include: Brunei Darussalam, which entered in 1984, Viet Nam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999.

In many ways, the ASEAN shares similar commitments to regional integration as the European Union (EU). Indeed, EU-ASEAN relations have deepened over the years as both Communities seek to increase dialogue and cooperation with one another as well as pursue closer coordination on regional and international issues.⁴¹ They have already undertaken measures to enhance their partnership through the Nuremberg Declaration, which was adopted in 2007 as well as the joint EU-ASEAN Plan of Action, which was endorsed by the first-ever EU-ASEAN Summit on 22 November, 2007 in Singapore.

³⁹ Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), “Overview”, *ASEAN Secretariat*, 2009, available at: http://www.asean.org/about_ASEAN.html

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ European Union External Action., “Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)”, Available at http://eeas.europa.eu/asean/index_en.htm

In 2008, the ASEAN Charter entered into force and provided the Association with legal status as well as a legal and institutional framework through which it can establish a number of new organs to boost its community-building process. As a legally binding agreement among the 10 ASEAN Member States, this charter codifies ASEAN norms, rules and values; sets clear targets for ASEAN; and presents accountability and compliance.⁴²

Other official processes for negotiation and cooperation with counterparts from China, Japan and Korea are also held on the basis of ASEAN plus three as well as with Taiwan, on the basis of ASEAN plus one.

(b) What is ASEAN Track Two?

In broad terms, the notion of ASEAN Track Two Diplomacy comes from the idea of developing informal networks of policy experts, academics, researchers, retired officials, as well as government officials in their private capacities,⁴³ in order to solidify ASEAN itself as an effective mechanism at the official level.⁴⁴ According to Paul Evans, the purpose of doing so is twofold: (1) To assist ASEAN Governments and provide them with new ideas as well as policy relevant advice on political, security and economic matters on a more short-term basis and; (2) To build an international society, a critical mass of non-governmental players who are informed, inter-connected and actors in their own right, in the long-run.⁴⁵ Evans suggests that the latter may

⁴² Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), "Overview", *The ASEAN Secretariat*, 2009, Available at http://www.asean.org/about_ASEAN.html

⁴³ Evans, P., "Possibilities for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Track 2 and Track 1," in *Multilateralism in Asia Pacific: What Role for Track Two?*, (Honolulu: National Defense University, Washington and the US Pacific Command and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 27 March, 2001), <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/evanspaper.htm>

⁴⁴ Job B., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 11, 2011.

⁴⁵ Evans, P., "Possibilities for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Track 2 and Track 1," in *Multilateralism in Asia Pacific: What Role for Track Two?*, (Honolulu: National Defense University, Washington and the US Pacific Command and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 27 March, 2001), <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/evanspaper.htm>

support government initiatives, but has a life of its own.⁴⁶ In accordance with Evans, this paper argues that while ASEAN Track Two serves official purposes, it can also make long-term contributions to peace and stability in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region by strengthening security dialogues among a wider range of civil society actors and engaging them in the development of new regional security frameworks.

It should also be noted that the concept of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia emerged quite independently from other pre-existing notions of Track Two in different parts of the world. As Paul Evans points out, the definitions of Track Two developed by Burton, Kelman, Montville and Fisher for instance, which were briefly defined in the first section of this paper, were not particular to the Asia-Pacific region. He argues that these other conceptions of Track Two Diplomacy had been developed in a European context at an earlier period, where there was a well developed diplomatic protocol that would enable states to refer to non-governmental expertise in order to deal with difficult problems that could not be solved by governments alone.⁴⁷

In Southeast Asia, the term Track Two Diplomacy emerged in 1988, through the establishment of a formalized network of regional non-governmental institutions called ASEAN ISIS, which led a series of informal security dialogues on a broad range of regional security issues. A detailed overview of the evolution of ASEAN ISIS is provided in sub-section 2. c)

According to Brian Job, the impact of ASEAN Track Two institutions, such as ASEAN ISIS and CSCAP has been ideational.⁴⁸ Job argues that the development of Asia-Pacific

⁴⁶ Evans, P., "Possibilities for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Track 2 and Track 1," in *Multilateralism in Asia Pacific: What Role for Track Two?*, (Honolulu: National Defense University, Washington and the US Pacific Command and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 27 March, 2001), <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2001/evanspaper.htm>

⁴⁷ Evans, P., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 17, 2011.

⁴⁸ The term ideational can be defined as the concept of advancing new ideas, principles and norms of conduct governing economic behaviour, political decision-making and dispute settlement (Job, 2003, p.242.) From a

economic and security institutions has been rooted in the notion that ideas matter and that “norm entrepreneurship” as well as processes of socialization contribute to the advancement of concepts such as “open regionalism”, “cooperative security”, and the “ASEAN Way.”⁴⁹ The latter was briefly described in the sub-section above, in which norms, principles and values from documents such as the ASEAN Declaration, Treaty and Charter were highlighted.

The concept of norm entrepreneurship that Job refers to stems from the idea that ASEAN Track Two practitioners, who are typically from Western democracies such as Canada, the United Kingdom or Australia given their experience with concepts of human rights and democratic governance, lead and promote ongoing informal processes aimed at confronting new norms and ideas on a consensual basis. In that sense, they can be referred to as “norm entrepreneurs” whose roles are to facilitate a discussion among ASEAN officials (participating in their private capacities) about what these norms would mean, if and when applied to the regional context. Since these new and emerging norms are being discussed through methods of diplomacy and dialogue outside the formal governmental system,⁵⁰ it is important for norm entrepreneurs to ensure that realistic and credible norms, which would “fit” within both the regional and international frameworks of existing norms, are produced. According to principles one and two of the aforementioned TAC however, it is ultimately up to ASEAN Governments officials to accept these norms into the official process.

constructivist perspective, which focuses on the creation of identities (individual and collective), processes of socialization and indigenization, as well as the formation of epistemic and security communities, this concept of generating new ideas through Track Two processes of dialogue, networking and informal institutions can lead to the creation of a new regional order (Job, 2003, p.242.) According to the Asia-Pacific security lexicon, constructivism adopts more complex view of the impact of ideas on international relations in the sense that ideas do not simply help states develop more cost-efficient ways of pursuing their interests, but also redefine these interests and lead to collective identities (Evans and Davie, 2002, p.3.)

⁴⁹ Job, B., “Track 2 Diplomacy: Ideational Contribution to the Evolving Asia Security Order,” in Alagappa, M., (ed.) *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*, (Stanford: Stanford University press, 2002). p.242.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.241.

Other key principles among ASEAN Governments include the concepts of non-interference and non-confrontation, which are reflected in principles three, four and five of the TAC. As a result, many defining characteristics of ASEAN Track Two have also been founded in these principles. For instance, one of the main differences between ASEAN Track Two and the more classic types of Track Two, such as Burton's controlled communication techniques, Kelman's interactive problem-solving workshops and Fisher's ICR, is that ASEAN Track Two does not seek to address the deep-seated causes of a conflict.

In fact, Asian leaders avoid having words like conflict, dispute, issue or incident figuring in official documents or records, because they don't want it to seem like they have lost control over domestic policy matters. They strongly abide by the principle of "saving face" in front of other Asian countries and the broader international community.

That being said, Track Two processes serve as a mechanism for ASEAN Governments to "save face" when discussing controversial political or security matters because these unofficial processes provide them with an environment that allows them to disagree with one another's official positions, without the appearance of conflict. In this context, the goal of ASEAN Track Two is therefore not to resolve a particular conflict. Rather, the aim is to come up with new ideas on conflict management and prevention in order to avoid potential acts of violence to be undertaken in the future, and to incorporate these ideas into the official diplomatic agenda. The concept of defining and internalizing new ideas is important, because when it comes to defending an official position, all actors will have a mutual understanding of what these ideas mean, and be able to come to an agreement based on the fundamental concepts they have developed together. This allows ASEAN officials to avoid tension or signs of conflict between them when discussing at the official level.

The “polite fiction” of Asian leaders and government officials getting together in their “private capacities” through second track channels for preliminary talks on sensitive issues, is what allows them to arrive at a mutual understanding about *how* to resolve a conflict, without discussing the root causes of the conflict itself (like in most Track Two processes.) Agreeing to talk about these root causes would involve admitting that there was a conflict in the first place, which is something that Asian leaders are not willing to do.

According to David Capie, merely defining ASEAN Track Two Diplomacy as a forum where new norms and ideas are being pushed forward is insufficient. He argues that the success and level of influence that ASEAN Track Two processes may have on policy-makers and government officials also depends on the following three factors: (1) Structural opportunity; (2) Sound ideas, and; (3) Influential and respected proponents.⁵¹ Capie therefore suggests that each of these factors must be present if Track Two processes are to be successful.

The first factor of success stems from the notion that “ideas matter more (or at least their impact is more observable) in circumstances of uncertainty where interests are unformed or some kind of crisis disrupts established policy patterns and provokes paradigmatic revision.”⁵² Capie suggests that systemic variables and the constraining effects of structural factors are often undervalued in the literature on Asian regionalism, and that Track Two may require “an unusual window of opportunity” in order to really have influence on policy makers and government officials.⁵³ This concept of structural opportunity is very similar to the notion of ripeness, which was recognized as early as 1974, by Henry Kissinger. The idea of a “ripe moment” is based on the concept that when two conflicting parties come to a “Mutually Hurting Stalemate” – a

⁵¹ Capie, D., “When Does Track Two Matter? Structure, Agency and Asian Regionalism,” *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 17, issue 2, May 2010. p.312.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.307

⁵³ *Ibid.*

situation in which neither side can win, yet continuing the conflict will be very harmful to each – the time is most propitious for settlement.⁵⁴

The second factor comes from the idea that Track Two institutions need to represent a coherent epistemic community or policy network that is ready to provide relevant and politically feasible policy proposals to Track One officials.⁵⁵ In effect, new policy ideas that are put forward through Track Two processes need to align with government thinking and priorities in order for them to successfully transfer into the official realm. Capie argues that new ideas cannot be revolutionary or against the status quo and that they should reasonably respond to circumstances of uncertainty referred to in the first factor of success.

Finally, the third factor pertains to the need for new policy ideas to come from well respected advocates with whom government officials share a good relationship based on confidence and trust.

David Capie's three confluent factors mentioned above help illustrate how ASEAN Track Two is actually more like Track 1.5. When referring to factors two and three in particular, it becomes clearer that ASEAN Track Two shares many common characteristics with Track 1.5 in the sense that new ideas need to align with official positions, be politically sound, and agents who come up with them need to be well respected by, as well as have close ties with government officials. This being said, ASEAN Track Two can be considered as a quasi-official, pre-negotiation process, which is government-led and consists of a series of quiet and controlled dialogue sessions.

⁵⁴ Zartman, I.W., "Ripeness," published on the web by [beyondintractability.org](http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/ripeness.jsp), and can be accessed at <http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/ripeness.jsp>

⁵⁵ Capie, D., "When Does Track Two Matter? Structure, Agency and Asian Regionalism," *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 17, issue 2, May 2010, p.312.

According to Paul Evans, a striking number of senior Asian officials and political leaders have circulated through Track Two channels in Southeast Asia.⁵⁶ But contrary to Capie's perspective on the need for intricately close ties with government officials in order for Track Two processes to be successful, Evans suggests that non-official actors have been gaining significant strength and influence in the region, independently from governments. Evans argues that although traditional norms of state sovereignty remain strong in the region, "the peculiar form of Asia-Pacific Track Two [...] has been a part of the changing face of Asian international relations."⁵⁷ He characterises this change by the proliferation of civil society organisations and non-official actors, which have been playing a more prominent role in facilitating security and economic cooperation in the region.⁵⁸ In congruence, Herman Kraft argues that Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia has been instrumental in the emergence of common understandings of security and of a shared discourse on security matters affecting the region.⁵⁹

Conversely, Capie presents a more "critical analysis of the influence of institutionalized Track Two dialogue processes on regional governance in Asia."⁶⁰ He argues that non-official diplomacy *can* affect institutional change, but that it is less common than most accounts suggest given the need for the three aforementioned factors of success to coincide.⁶¹ Capie therefore argues that most literature on Asian regionalism attributes too much importance to non-governmental networks, which creates the following paradox; "On the one hand it seems states

⁵⁶ Evans, P., "Canada and Asia Pacific's Track Two Diplomacy," *International Journal*, Autumn, 2009, p.1035.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Capie, D., "When Does Track Two Matter? Structure, Agency and Asian Regionalism," *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 17, issue 2, May 2010, p.292.

⁵⁹ Kraft, H. J., "The Autonomy Dilemma of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia," *Security Dialogue*, 31, 3 (September, 2000), p. 347.

⁶⁰ Capie, D., "When Does Track Two Matter? Structure, Agency and Asian Regionalism," *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 17, issue 2, May 2010, p.292.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.291.

jealously guard their decision-making powers and sovereignty. On the other, non-official actors *seem* to play a major role in facilitating political, security and economic cooperation.”⁶²

This paper argues that second track processes *have* made significant contributions to enhancing regional security and that the relationship between official (Track One) and non-official (Track Two) should not be seen as paradoxical. Instead, it argues that the relationship between ASEAN Governments and ASEAN Track Two needs to be considered as mutually reinforcing, so that regional security issues can be addressed in the most comprehensive and cooperative manner, in a world where a growing number of non-state actors are becoming increasingly important in dealing with regional, as well as global issues and non-traditional security threats. This argument will be further developed in section 2 e) of this paper.

Additional defining characteristics of ASEAN Track Two will be provided below, as the following section reviews the origins, evolution and future direction of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia.

(c) Origins of ASEAN Track Two and the establishment of ASEAN ISIS

The first informal ASEAN network originated from a series of U.S.-ASEAN Conferences jointly organized by individual personalities from two non-governmental institutions: (1) The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta and; (2) The Institute of East Asian Studies (IEAS) at the University of California, Berkley. Under the leadership of Jusuf Wanandi in Jakarta, and of Professor Robert A. Scalapino in California, these two institutions began to develop links and interactions with officials from other ASEAN countries, with the aim of transmitting information and current thinking on relevant regional policy issues.⁶³

⁶² Capie, D., “When Does Track Two Matter? Structure, Agency and Asian Regionalism,” *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 17, issue 2, May 2010, p.292.

⁶³ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, pp. 3 and 17.

At the same time, other similar institutions had also begun to emerge across Southeast Asia. In addition to CSIS in Jakarta, the following four had become leading institutions in their respective countries: (1) The Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia; (2) The Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA); (3) The Institute of Security and International Studies (ISIS), Thailand and (4) The University of the Philippines, which eventually became the Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS), Philippines.⁶⁴

As Brian Job suggests, there was a coincidence of interests among a proactive set of personalities within these institutions, as well as across the official domain in ASEAN.⁶⁵ As the frequency of exchanges between these non-governmental actors and ASEAN officials increased, through a series of regional and international conferences and meetings, the idea of creating a more concerted ASEAN informal group of individuals emerged.⁶⁶

Eventually, key personalities from the aforementioned institutions expanded this ASEAN informal group into a more formalized network of ASEAN policy research institutions.⁶⁷ The founders of this network, and their respective institutions were, as mentioned above: (1) Jusuf Wanandi from CSIS, Indonesia; (2) Noordin Sopiee from ISIS, Malaysia; (3) Lau Teik Soon from SIIA; (4) Kusuma Snitwongse from ISIS, Thailand and; (5) Carolina Hernandez from the University of the Philippines, which later became ISDS, Philippines.

⁶⁴ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. "Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy," Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p.4.

⁶⁵ Job B., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 11, 2011.

⁶⁶ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. "Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy," Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

In 1984, the first meeting of these ASEAN Institutes took place in Bali, where it was agreed to hold subsequent annual meetings on security issues and international relations, as well as to explore the possibility of establishing a more formalized mechanism for cooperation.⁶⁸

At the Fourth Meeting of ASEAN Institutes in 1988, it was decided that this group would become a formally registered association within ASEAN. Following this formal establishment, ASEAN ISIS became the leading Track Two institution in Southeast Asia. It now consists of nine member institutions. The additional four are: (1) The Brunei Darussalam Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (BDIPSS); (2) The Cambodian Institute for Cooperation & Peace (CICP); (3) The Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, formerly known as the Institute for International Relations (IIR), and; (4) The Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) in Laos.

Since its inception, ASEAN ISIS has also contributed to the establishment of a number of other institutions, not only at the second track level, but also on both Track One and Track Three levels. Among some of the second track institutions that have emerged most recently, are: (1) The Council for Security and Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), which was established in 1993; (2) The Network of East Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT), in 2002, and; (3) The International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS), in 2008.

This paper will focus on ASEAN ISIS, which was the forerunner of what later came to be known as Track Two in Southeast Asia.⁶⁹ As Paul Evans suggests, the fact that ASEAN ISIS was Track Two before Track Two was even popular, has become an interesting subject of conversation and inquiry in the wider region of Asia-Pacific and beyond.⁷⁰ In fact, Evans argues

⁶⁸ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. "Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy," Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 5.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1. and 105.

that ASEAN ISIS helped popularize and propagate the idea of Track Two Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific.⁷¹

For these reasons, the concept of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia is generally attributed to and largely synonymous of ASEAN ISIS.⁷² The remainder of this paper will therefore have a particular focus on ASEAN ISIS when analyzing the evolution, current challenges and future direction of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia. As mentioned in the introduction, the influence of other Southeast Asian Track Two institutions, such as CSCAP and other quasi-official forums for dialogue will also be discussed.

(d) Evolution of ASEAN ISIS: APR, CSCAP, AICOHR and APA

Over the course of its evolution, ASEAN ISIS created the following three flagship activities, in addition to contributing to the establishment of CSCAP: (1) The Asia Pacific Roundtable (APR), for Confidence Building and Conflict Resolution; (2) The ASEAN ISIS Colloquium on Human Rights (AICOHR) and; (3) The ASEAN People's Assembly (APA)⁷³ Below is a brief description of these three defining activities, and of CSCAP. The goal of describing each of these flagships individually is twofold: (1) To provide a better understanding of the different forms of Track Two processes that ASEAN ISIS developed throughout its evolution in order to successfully promote open and inclusive exchanges; (2) To highlight more recent tendencies within ASEAN ISIS to engage more broadly with civil society organisations (Track Three), which supports a particular trend towards a more people-centered ASEAN Community at the official level. Other milestones that contributed to making ASEAN ISIS the

⁷¹ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. "Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy," Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 98.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

leading Track Two institution in Southeast Asia are also included throughout the following sub-sections.

(i) APR

In 1987, ASEAN ISIS took on the initiative of promoting trust and confidence in the broader Asia-Pacific region.⁷⁴ The vehicle through which ASEAN ISIS felt it could most effectively enhance confidence in the region was by creating an Asia Pacific Roundtable (APR.) The goal of this process was to gather a wider range of actors and stakeholders from both official and non-governmental circles, and encourage them to discuss ways of reducing tension in the region. The first APR was held in January 1987 in Kuala Lumpur and was structured as a three-day conference on “Conflict Reduction and Confidence Building.”⁷⁵ Participants from the U.S., China, the Soviet Union, Japan, North and South Korea, Australia, Vietnam, and the six ASEAN member countries at the time, attended the meeting, for a grand total of 77 attendees.⁷⁶

Subsequent APR conferences have been held every year since then and have been consistently attended by a growing number of participants. It now brings together over 250 participants and has gained the reputation of the “premier Track Two forum in the region, [...] bringing together think tanks, academics, media representatives and senior government officials acting in their personal capacity to engage in candid dialogue regarding the major security challenges confronting the region.”⁷⁷ The APR has therefore been “the best-known and largest Track Two forum on security in the Asia-Pacific region” for over for over two decades.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 43.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.43

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA)., “Asia Pacific Roundtable”, Available at: <http://siiainline.org/?q=node/4576>

⁷⁸ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 47.

Initially, the APR was funded by ISIS Malaysia, but from 1989 to 1992, it was sponsored by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation of Japan. From 1993-2007⁷⁹, annual APR Conferences were then made possible by the financial support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Canada's contributions to the success of APR will be further discussed in section 3 b) of this paper. Most recently, the APR has been financed by other agencies such as the CIMB Group, the Konrad Adenaur Stiftung, the Asia Foundation and the Embassy of Japan in Kuala Lumpur.⁸⁰

Since it was created, the APR has been an inclusive forum for networking among individuals who would have otherwise never improved their levels of trust and confidence in one another. By providing an informal, friendly and frank environment,⁸¹ the APR has significantly contributed to regional integration and to a culture of openness among government officials in the region.⁸²

While gaining recognition and popularity through its annual APR Conferences, ASEAN ISIS also had notable successes on a number of other fronts, which contributed to making it the leading Track Two institution in Southeast Asia. Since 1988, the ASEAN ISIS network and its members became largely involved in a series of meetings, conferences and forums that took place across Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. Initially, some of ASEAN ISIS's most notable activities included the first dialogue between Southeast Asia and China as well as the first ASEAN-Taiwan dialogue, which both took place in the fall of 1988.

⁷⁹ Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia., "Foreign Policy and Security Studies", Available at: http://www.isis.org.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=254:foreign-policy&catid=58:bureau

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. "Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy," Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 47.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

In 1990, ASEAN ISIS organized a meeting with ASEAN Governments on “Superpower military Presence and the Security of Southeast Asia: Problems, prospects and Policy Recommendations” in Bangkok. At this meeting, ASEAN ISIS submitted its first policy recommendation report to ASEAN Governments. The report aimed to recommend “constructive responses by ASEAN to the changing international and regional environment.”⁸³ More specifically, the recommendation included: (a) Creating a Framework for Regional Order; (b) Promoting ASEAN Cooperation and; (c) Measures vis-à-vis Individual Countries, which refers to the U.S., Japan, China, the Soviet Union, India and Vietnam.⁸⁴

This policy recommendation was a good starting point for ASEAN ISIS’s next annual meeting, which took place in Jakarta in 1991. During this meeting, ASEAN ISIS developed a Memorandum entitled “A Time for Initiative –Proposals for the Consideration of the Fourth Summit.” According to Soesastro *et al.*, this meeting, as well as the Memorandum that resulted from it, were “the turning point in ASEAN ISIS’s interactions with ASEAN Governments.”⁸⁵ The Memorandum recommended that ASEAN Governments take the following initiatives: (a) for an Asia-Pacific Political Dialogue; (b) for a New Regional Order in Southeast Asia; (c) for the Strengthening of ASEAN; and (d) for Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation.⁸⁶

In 1992, the ASEAN Governments held their fourth Summit in Singapore, and used ASEAN ISIS’s Memorandum as a basis for discussing new initiatives for ASEAN. According to Soesastro *et al.*, using the Memorandum for this purpose was the first reason why ASEAN Governments accepted to transfer it into the official process, the other reason being that it was the outcome of a credible second track process of deliberations amongst experts from the

⁸³ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 8.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

region.⁸⁷ This marked the beginning of ASEAN ISIS successfully carrying out a Track Two process.

(ii) CSCAP

ASEAN ISIS eventually extended its Track Two processes to include a wider region beyond member-countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This extension manifested itself through the creation of the Council for Security and Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). On June 8th 1993, CSCAP was established with the aim of “providing a structural regional process of a non-governmental nature to contribute to the efforts towards regional confidence building and enhancing regional security through dialogues, consultation and cooperation.”⁸⁸ According to Soesastro *et al.*, ASEAN ISIS’s role in the expansion of Track Two through the establishment of CSCAP was one of its biggest developments.

In addition to ASEAN ISIS’s five founding members (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand), CSCAP was also founded by representatives from strategic studies centers from five other countries: (1) Australia; (2) Canada; (3) Japan; (4) South Korea, and; (5) The United States of America.

A significant number of countries have joined CSCAP since 1992. As of 2000, CSCAP had 21 full members, which means that it currently includes almost all the major countries in the Asia-Pacific.⁸⁹ The additional twelve countries include Brunei, Cambodia, China, the European

⁸⁷ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p.8.

⁸⁸ Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia., “Networks: Council for Security and Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific (CSCAP)”, available at http://www.isis.org.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=285&Itemid=130

⁸⁹ CSCAP., “Member Committees”, *Centre for Strategic Studies:New Zealand at Victoria University of Wellington on behalf of CSCAP*, 1999-2008, Available at : <http://www.cscap.org/index.php?page=member-committees-page>

Union, India, North Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia and Vietnam. The Pacific Islands are CSCAP's only associate member in addition to the 21 mentioned above.

As a result of this large membership, CSCAP was recently described as “the most ambitious proposal to date for a regularised, focused and inclusive non-governmental process on Asia-Pacific security matters”.⁹⁰ It has been providing valuable policy recommendations to various inter-governmental bodies and has established linkages with institutions and organisations in other parts of the world to exchange information, insights and experiences in the area of regional political-security cooperation.⁹¹

According to Brian Job, Canada's participation in CSCAP was very strong throughout the 1990s but has significantly lapsed in recent years, largely because of lack of funding but also for a number of other reasons, including lack of continuity and knowledge transfer into the next generation. As a result of this lack of engagement, Job argues that Canada will not be able to sustain its membership to CSCAP in the coming years.⁹²

The fact that Canada's presence has been steadily declining since the 1990s, not only in CSCAP but in number of other Track Two institutions and processes in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region, is a serious concern that will be raised in the next two sections of this paper. This concern is primarily anchored in the fact that Canada's long standing credibility in Southeast Asia has been deeply affected by the lack of Canadian involvement in the institutional conversations about the next security architecture for the Asia-Pacific region. Given the particularly close relationship between tracks one and two in the region and the fact that ASEAN Track Two consequently serves official purposes as more of a Track 1.5 mechanism,

⁹⁰ CSCAP., “About us”, *Centre for Strategic Studies: New Zealand at Victoria University of Wellington on behalf of CSCAP*, 1999-2008, Available at : <http://www.cscap.org/index.php?page=about-us>

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Job B., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 11, 2011.

Canada is falling off the radar at both the official and non-official levels by disengaging in Track Two. As Asian countries become increasingly active and powerful within the global multilateral system, Canada cannot afford to isolate itself from its Pacific neighbours or to mute its own voice on important emerging security matters.

(iii) AICOHR

Between 1992 and 1995, ASEAN ISIS produced a large number of Memorandums, which were widely distributed among ASEAN Governments. As ASEAN ISIS's reports began to cover an increasingly wide variety of issues, its agenda also began to broaden. By 1996, ASEAN ISIS not only focused on regional security issues but also on human security, development and a broader range of social issues.⁹³

In 1994, the first ASEAN ISIS Colloquium on Human Rights (AICOHR) was held in the Philippines. According to Herman Kraft, AICOHR was conceived to be a Track Two mechanism in all aspects of the term, in the sense that it aimed to: (1) Generate a regional consensus on sensitive issues through the exchange of information and views on human rights; (2) Serve as a confidence-building measure and a forum for participants to discuss diverging points of view on human rights issues while engaging these issues pro-actively, without getting defensive or aggressive; (3) Pave the way for the establishment of a sub-regional body on human rights in ASEAN.⁹⁴

The first AICOHR involved government officials attending in their private capacities, academics and experts. Throughout this first Colloquium, ASEAN Governments held a very different position on a number of human rights issues than the NGO networks in the region.

Academics and experts who attended this meeting therefore realized that there were clear gaps

⁹³ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. "Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy," Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 10.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

between government and NGO positions and that it would consequently be quite challenging to achieve regional consensus on human rights issues.

As early as the second AICOHR, significant progress had already been made on this front, as some representatives from governments began to acknowledge the important role NGOs have increasingly been playing on issues of emerging importance, such as the propagation of human rights norms in the region.⁹⁵ According to Herman Kraft, this acknowledgment from government representatives from countries such as Laos and Vietnam “indicates a changing attitude towards NGOs amongst government officials.”⁹⁶ The relationship between Tracks one two and three was indeed changing, as nuances between different positions began to emerge, and as gaps between different regional actors’ positions were slowly being bridged through recognition, acknowledgement and consideration for one another. Since the second AICOHR, participation continued to expand and included a broader range of regional actors and stakeholders.

By the eighth and ninth AICOHR, a consistently increasing number of NGOs were participating in the Colloquium. Increased linkages between a more diverse set of regional actors have consequently led to a more concerted effort to advancing human rights in the region. More ideas are circulating through a greater number of channels and mechanisms that enhance coordination and dialogue on human rights issues. According to Herman Kraft, the expansion of the participation of NGOs has become a prevailing trend in AICOHR.⁹⁷ The lasting impact of

⁹⁵Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 80.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

this Colloquium has been the degree to which it has allowed government officials and activist organisations to get together and discuss human rights issues on an annual basis.⁹⁸

According to Paul Evans, the hope is that second track processes not only serve official purposes in the short run, but that they also have a lasting impact in the long run, by facilitating the democratization of Southeast Asian countries and by providing a process for the incipient civil society (Track Three) to engage in valuable dialogues on a plethora of security matters in the region. Track Two institutions in Southeast Asia must therefore find the right balance between sustaining a valuable contribution to policymaking at the Track One level, establishing more networks of institutions and think tanks in the region and across the broader Asia-Pacific, as well as foster a stronger dialogue with broader civil society at the Track Three level.⁹⁹

(iv) APA

In 1997, ASEAN Governments reaffirmed their commitments stated in the ASEAN Declaration of 1967 by setting out specific goals in a document they called ASEAN Vision 2020. Part of this document included a vision for ASEAN countries to be “governed with the consent and greater participation of the people.”¹⁰⁰

The following year, ASEAN ISIS submitted a report to ASEAN Governments urging them to “open up [their] mechanisms to include the participation of civil society in the region.”¹⁰¹ ASEAN ISIS pointed out that the democratization of ASEAN countries had led to a rapid proliferation of civil society organisations in Southeast Asia and argued that ASEAN Governments should improve governance by constructively engaging civil society organisations

⁹⁸ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 87.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁰ Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)., “ASEAN Vision 2020”, *The ASEAN Secretariat*, 2009, Available at: <http://www.aseansec.org/1814.htm>

¹⁰¹ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 56.

in regional security processes. In order to achieve this, ASEAN ISIS proposed the idea of creating a people's assembly as part of its interactions and activities with Track One officials within ASEAN. Engaging NGOs in ASEAN ISIS's Track Two processes, which were jointly organized by and greatly involved ASEAN government officials, was a way to bridge the gap between the activities that various NGOs were already organising in the region, and that often opposed those held by governments.¹⁰² ASEAN ISIS argued that the people's assembly would represent a "kind of regional multi-sectoral body that could develop common responses to common challenges."¹⁰³

In November 2000, the first ASEAN Peoples' Assembly (APA) was launched in Indonesia as a way for ASEAN Governments to engage with the broader civil society and any other stakeholders who shared the common interest in building a regional community in Southeast Asia. APA's inaugural meeting brought together approximately 300 representatives from prominent regional NGOs, grassroots leaders and activists, think tanks, businesses and a few government officials attending in their private capacities.¹⁰⁴

The APA has since become an important flagship activity within ASEAN ISIS and has made significant progress in creating an additional space for different sectors of the ASEAN community to be engaged and included in the processes of redefining regional security.

(e) Challenges for ASEAN ISIS and future direction of ASEAN Track Two

According to Brian Job, the initial ASEAN ISIS group of the 1990s was content with the governments they had at the official (Track One) level and worked well with them in advancing

¹⁰² Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. "Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy," Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p. 64.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.66.

similar ideas and objectives in the area of regional peace and security matters. ASEAN ISIS was therefore seen as a club or a membership that was largely interested in regime preservation.¹⁰⁵

Nowadays, Brian Job suggests that ASEAN ISIS has basically reverted to a scheduling mechanism with very little of the initial “esprit de corps” and common sense of interest that it had in the 1990s. He pointed out that there are currently some regimes among ASEAN Governments that want to advance democratization, push the envelope and move the open society agenda forward. But he also argued that there are others, like Vietnam, who are absolutely disinterested in doing so.

A number of challenges have confronted ASEAN ISIS as it sought to sustain itself as an effective Track Two mechanism,¹⁰⁶ particularly over the last five to six years. Some of the main challenges include lack of funding, capacity building and continuity issues due to generational gaps, as well as the difficulty to interact constructively with governments while maintaining an independent relationship with them.

As Herman Kraft suggests, ASEAN Track Two faces an “autonomy dilemma”, which is largely a function of the close relationship ASEAN ISIS has with governments in the region.¹⁰⁷ He further characterizes this dilemma by explaining that on the one hand, the linkages between Tracks One and Two provide Track Two with a comparative advantage in the sense that it places these nongovernmental practitioners and participants in a position to influence government thinking.

¹⁰⁵ Job B., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 11, 2011.

¹⁰⁶ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p.13.

¹⁰⁷ Kraft, H. J., “The Autonomy Dilemma of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia,” *Security Dialogue*, 31, 3 (September, 2000), p. 353.

On the other hand, the need to maintain good relations with state institutions and officials hampers Track Two's potential for critical contributions to dialogue processes.¹⁰⁸ As a result of this autonomy dilemma, Kraft suggests that Track Three networks have recently been gaining more momentum and have become an alternative venue for nongovernmental actors to "provide the critical thinking that Track Two seems to shy away from."¹⁰⁹ According to Kraft, Track Three has indeed become "a forum where marginalized groups can articulate concerns that are largely ignored in the elitist structure of Track Two mechanisms."¹¹⁰

In articulating this autonomy dilemma, Kraft illustrates the tension between actors who should in fact be acting in concert, playing on each other's strengths and using the inevitable linkages between them as a multiplier of force and efficiency in addressing complex and multi-faceted security issues together, as partners.

An underlying theme in this paper pertains to the notion that coming up with new ways of dealing with regional security matters in the Asia-Pacific is a daunting task for governments to undertake alone. Even with a high level of cooperation among all ASEAN Governments, additional contributions from other experts in the field, such as Track Two practitioners, academics, NGOs, think tanks and other relevant civil society actors consequently remain invaluable.

However, the difficulty to measure and quantify the value of Track Two processes is another major challenge in the field of Track Two Diplomacy. While the hope is that second track processes foster a greater sense of cooperation and mutual understanding among regional actors who strive for building a community of caring societies in Southeast Asia, namely

¹⁰⁸ Kraft, H. J., "The Autonomy Dilemma of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia," *Security Dialogue*, 31, 3 (September, 2000), p. 353.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

ASEAN Governments, but also Track Two institutions and Track Three actors, it is difficult to evaluate the success of Track Two initiatives. Moreover, the Government of Canada's prominent culture of accountability has recently made it particularly challenging to show how the impact of Canada's engagement in Track Two processes can be measured by standard bureaucratic criteria.

This paper argues that although it may be difficult to attribute dollar for dollar monetary value to Canada's contribution to the creation of new policy and security ideas when participating in Track Two processes in Southeast Asia, Canada's engagement in second track processes serves a much bigger political, trade and economic purpose, which is to demonstrate Canada's genuine interest and long-term commitment to re-engaging in Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific. There are significant advantages for Canada to fulfill this larger objective, such as boosting its image and credibility in Asia, repairing its reputation for being unreliable and supporting Canada's interests in becoming more engaged with ASEAN Governments at the Track One level, which includes joining the TPP, "Canada's best hope for short-term access to vital emerging markets in Southeast Asia."¹¹¹ Indeed, engaging in Track Two forums in Southeast Asia could help Canada diversify future trade opportunities in the region.

Ultimately, determining whether engaging in Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy is a worthwhile investment for Canada or not is decision that the Federal Government will have to make, but this paper argues that Canadian participation in second track processes is money well-spent because it allows Canada to strengthen its ties with Asia by developing long-term partnerships through networking and high-level relationship building, which Dobson argues is key to a long-term Canadian strategy in Asia. Indeed, Dobson suggests that the two pillars of any

¹¹¹ Dawson, L., "No Guarantees on Pacific Trade, Despite Harper's 180", *The Globe and Mail*, November 14, 2011. Available at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/no-guarantees-on-pacific-trade-despite-harpers-180/article2235760/>

Canadian Asia strategy should be “a serious commitment to political security issues in the region and engagement through state-to-state relationships, which provide the foundation for commercial, political, and other relationships.”¹¹² Canadian re-engagement in Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy would make significant contributions in supporting and strengthening both aforementioned pillars.

As Jim Boutilier suggests, Ottawa’s response to Canada’s engagement in Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy is often critical, suggesting that resources would be spent on something that is immeasurable. In response to this common criticism, Boutilier argues that Canadian presence in the region is better than none at all, and that involvement in unofficial dialogue processes is an important way for Canada to demonstrate a serious commitment to re-establishing a more consistent presence in Asia by engaging in regional issues for the long-haul.

In the context of regional Track Two processes serving official purposes for Canada, in terms of helping it re-engage with ASEAN Governments, it is in the interest of all actors, official and non-official, to develop strategies which allow them to act as partners and work together more cooperatively for the benefit and in the interest of the Asian peoples. A persistent effort must be made to bridge the gaps between tracks one, two and three in the region by encouraging actors from all three tracks to: (1) Act in a more concerted effort in dealing with regional security matters and; (2) Align priorities and develop more linkages between them.

At the Track One level, critical and innovative thinking should be encouraged and promoted, even if the ideas may appear to be less politically feasible at first glance. There is a need for ASEAN Governments, as well as other governments world-wide to adopt a more flexible and inclusive approach to policy development. “Outside the box thinking” shouldn’t

¹¹² Dobson, W., “Canada, China, and Rising Asia : A Strategic Proposal”, *A study report sponsored by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Canada China Business Council*, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, October 19, 2011, p.5-6

have to literally mean thinking outside governmental structures. Developing strong and well thought-out policies involves reaching out to different nongovernmental groups in society and gaining from their expertise, knowledge and experience. As Seng Tan suggests, there is an “increased pressure on regional governments to allow for a more participatory approach to regional diplomacy.”¹¹³ Engagement with a wide range of relevant stakeholder groups in the region is beneficial for government official to develop a better understanding of the issues at hand and come up with official processes that best reflect the realities of the region. This way, issues can be addressed and responded to in the most tailored and sustainable manner.

At the Track Two level, there is a need to regain creativity and independence from ASEAN Governments by pursuing new ways of thinking about policy solutions through research and innovation. Due to Southeast Asia’s tremendous diversity, there is a need to lay out the ground work for a deeper sense of community. Second track processes remain “effective and constructive vehicles for dialogue and cooperation that [aim] to reduce tension and distrust [...] and that are slowly but surely weaving the fabric of a security community among the peoples and nations”¹¹⁴ of ASEAN and the broader Asia-Pacific region. It is therefore important for regional Track Two institutions to stay abreast of regional security matters and to be at the leading edge of developing new policy concepts and ideas, which they can then push forward more assertively to ASEAN Governments.

At the Track Three level, emerging civil society organisations need to become more engaged in second track processes by developing working relations with Track Two institutions. By gaining a sense of participation in regional dialogues on emerging security frameworks and

¹¹³ Tan, Seng See., “Non-official Diplomacy in Southeast Asia: ‘Civil Society’ or ‘Civil Service’”? *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 27, 3, Dec. 2005, p.378

¹¹⁴ Soesastro, H., Joewono, C., and Hernandez, C. “Twenty Two Years of ASEAN ISIS : Origin, Evolution and Challenges of Track Two Diplomacy,” Published for ASEAN ISIS by CSIS, [Jakarta] : 2006, p.48.

the development of a sense of community among ASEAN countries, they may adopt a less adversarial approach to actors from both tracks one and two.

Embracing this inclusive and comprehensive approach to addressing political and security matters in the region is the best way, and one might even say the only way, of achieving long lasting peace and stability in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

Section III: ASEAN Track Two and Canada over the years: Characterizing Canada's Role and Level of Involvement in Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy

Shortly after the end of the Cold War, at the direction of then Foreign Minister Joe Clark, Canada sought to deepen its relations with ASEAN Governments as a way of establishing a place for itself in the emerging world order and exploring its future relationship with Asia. He aimed to facilitate government to government relations by promoting multilateralism as a working instrument for addressing regional security issues. The following is an overview of Canada's involvement in Southeast Asia through active engagement in second track processes on a broad range of regional security issues. It will become evident that Canada worked very closely with ASEAN ISIS for over a decade and gained significant credibility in Southeast Asia through this long term and inclusive working relationship.

(a) Final years of the Cold War and transition into Post Cold War era (1989-1991)

On July 10, 1989, Clark officially opened the Canada-ASEAN Center in Singapore, which was established to facilitate the creation of linkages and institutional relationships between ASEAN countries and Canada.¹¹⁵ Shortly after the establishment of this center, Clark found it particularly challenging to work with ASEAN because it had a relatively weak Secretariat, lacked structure and was consequently not very organised. Clark therefore sought to strengthen ASEAN as an official (Track One) mechanism by emphasizing the need to develop "a formula

¹¹⁵ Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)., "ASEAN-Canada", *The ASEAN Secretariat*, 2009, Available at: <http://www.aseansec.org/9572.htm>

that would allow countries to find a means that would encourage informal, and yet informed, discussion on a wide spectrum of issues.”¹¹⁶ As it will be demonstrated below, this formula would later be termed “Track Two dialogue and research on regional security issues”, in which Canada played a substantial position, largely through the financial support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

In the immediate post-Cold War years, there was an increasing concern that Canada needed to have a voice in what was seen as the rising Asia-Pacific. As Foreign Minister, Clark felt that Canada had very little going for it in terms of official engagements abroad, and thought that one way of becoming more engaged was for Canada to work with ASEAN ISIS to promote informal dialogues on cooperative security in Southeast Asia. Between 1989 and 1990, Canada’s focus was therefore on ASEAN ISIS, a newly formalized network of institutions which Clark felt would help devise an approach to international problems that would allow for dialogue rather than conflict resolution.¹¹⁷ With the help of ASEAN ISIS and Canadian academics such as David Dewitt and Paul Evans, Clark therefore sought to come up with a simple and non-technical turn of phrase that would characterize this informal approach to addressing security issues through dialogue and cooperation, and that would captivate the attention of ASEAN Governments.

The phrase that finally emerged from brainstorming sessions involving ASEAN ISIS and academics such as Evans and Dewitt was expressed in the idea that Canada would promote “habits of dialogue” in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. The notion of developing habits of dialogue among states had initially been brought up at a Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and was among the few phrases that could be taken

¹¹⁶ Clark, J., “Notes for a Speech by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Colloquium on North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue in Victoria, British Columbia, April 6, 1991”, *CANCAPS Papiers: Canada on Asia Pacific Security in the 1990s*, Papier No. 1, March 1994, p. 26.

¹¹⁷ Evans, P., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 17, 2011.

out of the European context and put into the Asian one, without disagreement from any ASEAN Governments.¹¹⁸ This is a notable success because Asian leaders are usually particularly reluctant to the establishment of institutions or processes that advocate for, or transplant mechanisms that have been successful elsewhere, notably in Europe, into the unique historical, political and cultural context of the Asia-Pacific region.¹¹⁹

The fact that ASEAN ISIS significantly contributed to the notable success of developing a vocabulary that emphasized dialogue rather than conflict resolution also demonstrated the value that it could provide in helping to expand the idea of cooperative security, which was a concept that Clark aimed to push forward onto Asian officials' diplomatic agenda.

In the spring of 1990, Clark was also interested in seeing what Canada could do to alleviate tensions in Northeast Asia and the broader North-Pacific region. Encouraged by the positive outcomes of working with ASEAN ISIS and developing a softer, more inclusive process to addressing security matters in Southeast Asia through increased dialogue and cooperation, Clark took on the daunting task of developing new kinds of multilateral mechanisms in Northern Asia as well.

In the fall of 1990, Clark offered to sponsor a three year project entitled the North Pacific Cooperation and Security Dialogue (NPCSD), which would bring together regional experts on security matters from the following seven countries of the North Pacific: (1) The United States; (2) Japan; (3) China; (4) North Korea; (5) The Soviet Union; (6) South Korea; (7) Canada. Other interested countries were also welcome to attend NPCSD meetings, such as Australia, Malaysia,

¹¹⁸ Evans, P., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 17, 2011.

¹¹⁹ Clark, J., "Notes for a Speech by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Colloquium on North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue in Victoria, British Columbia, April 6, 1991", *CANCAPS Papiers: Canada on Asia Pacific Security in the 1990s*, Papier No. 1, March 1994, p. 26.

Mongolia and the United Kingdom. From 1990 to 1993, Canada became the pioneer in successfully achieving a fruitful and productive dialogue among Northeast Asian countries.

During a NPCSD Colloquium in Victoria, British Columbia on April 6 1991, Clark gave a speech on the importance of creating working relationships and functional links among NPCSD member countries on a broad range of security issues through regular and systematic dialogue, which he argued would eventually lead to the development of “a multilateral habit of dialogue” involving discussion, cooperation and compromise among member countries.¹²⁰ As evidenced by this speech, Clark clearly attempted to use the same approach he had used in Southeast Asia to promote the NPCSD as an informal “process of research and discussion”, which was later termed Track Two processes and mechanisms that could be used to foster habits of dialogue in Northern parts of Asia. Funding for this project was cut after three years because Barbara McDougall, who replaced Clark as Foreign Affairs Minister later in 1991, found it too expensive and decided not to renew it. The NPCSD later morphed into CSCAP, which was mentioned earlier in this paper as being an offspring of ASEAN ISIS, and which consequently reflected Southeast Asian style of Track Two Diplomacy.

(b) Post Cold War era (1992-1996)

According to Paul Evans, Canada’s success story in Southeast Asia in terms of building longstanding credibility and a reputable image for being a legitimate and good willed country that is genuinely committed to multilateralism, is written in the early to mid-1990s.

With the termination of the NPCSD in 1993, and the way in which Canada shared a greater affinity with the Southeast Asians than with the Northeast Asians in terms of devising a more common approach to re-conceptualizing security, there was a logical and strategic pull

¹²⁰ Clark, J., “Notes for a Speech by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Colloquium on North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue in Victoria, British Columbia, April 6, 1991”, *CANCAPS Papers: Canada on Asia Pacific Security in the 1990s*, Papier No. 1, March 1994, p. 26.

towards deepening Canada's working relationship with ASEAN ISIS. The latter was already becoming an effective partner in developing ideas and circulating them through government officials in national capitals in the form of Memorandums, some of which were previously mentioned in this paper and which offered various policy recommendations to ASEAN Governments.

Yet, some would argue that more often than not, ASEAN ISIS's policy recommendations did not get transferred into the official process because they did not get accepted by ASEAN Government officials. Referring back to David Capie's critical analysis of the influence of Track Two dialogue processes on regional governance for instance, one could argue that there is a legitimate degree of uncertainty about the way in which government officials accept the products from the Track Two community.

Although it is difficult to measure the success of Track Two processes, this paper argues that over time, through consistent efforts and long term commitment, significant contributions have been made to enhance regional security using second track processes. It further argues that by engaging in these processes, Canada increased its presence and visibility in Southeast Asia, and by extension the broader Asia-Pacific. According to Brian Job, Canada's engagement in Southeast Asian Track Two served official purposes in the sense that it kept Canada on the radar screen and that it brought intelligent Canadian voice and attention to the region, which serves Ottawa's interest. By funding regional second track processes, Canada also gained a better understanding of the relevant players in Southeast Asia, both in the evolving context of regional Track Two and in the expanding world of Track Three networks.

Despite its critics, Track Two is a relatively inexpensive instrument of diplomacy¹²¹ and therefore provided the Government of Canada with the most leverage for the amount of money invested.¹²² As Paul Evans suggests, engaging in Southeast Asian Track Two activities was one of the only things the Government of Canada could do at relatively low cost.

As previously mentioned in section two, Canada became the main financial supporter of ASEAN ISIS's annual APR Conferences in 1993, through CIDA funding. For over a decade, Canada developed an enviable reputation in the region by collaborating with ASEAN ISIS on the APR. As the main donor for this annual Track Two process, Canada was well recognized for actively contributing to the successes of APR and was able to establish linkages with many government affiliated bodies, research institutes and NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region and other parts of the world. A Canadian head of mission in a Southeast Asian country even applauded CIDA in 2001 for providing continuous support for the APR and stated that "through CIDA funding, Canada has achieved a remarkable feat in being involved in ASEAN ISIS."¹²³

When reflecting back on whether it was legitimate for CIDA money to be funding ASEAN ISIS-led initiatives, Jim Boutilier argued that having Canada up on the screen as one of the donors of APR, which was a community of influential individuals and opinion-makers, was certainly money well-spent.¹²⁴

In addition to funding ASEAN ISIS's annual APR Conferences in Kuala Lumpur as of 1993, CIDA also began to fund an ASEAN ISIS Cooperation Program (AICP) in 1995. The purpose of this project was to strengthen the capacity and dialogue activities of ASEAN ISIS,

¹²¹ Evans, P., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 17, 2011.

¹²² Boutilier, J., Informal interview in Victoria, British Columbia, October 24, 2011.

¹²³ Institute of Asian Research, archived files of correspondence and documents generated by the ASEAN ISIS Cooperation Program and Southeast Asia Cooperation Program, 1991-2002. Consulted on 21 October 2001 at the University of British Columbia.

¹²⁴ Boutilier, J., Informal interview in Victoria, British Columbia, October 24, 2011.

such as the APR and the AICOHR, and to enhance Canadian involvement in security issues in the Asia-Pacific. According to Paul Evans, CIDA provided ASEAN ISIS with approximately 1 to 2 million dollars each year to support its Track Two activities, dialogue and research on cooperative security. Some meetings were held in Canada and others in Southeast Asia, as part of the liberal institutionalist mindset and approach at the time.

(c) Axworthy years (1996-2000)

In 1996, Lloyd Axworthy became Foreign Minister and advanced a new concept of security which recognized the complexity of the *human* environment.¹²⁵ He argued that lasting global peace and security still had not been fostered after the end of the Cold War and that the traditional concept of security needed to be reassessed “beyond arms control and disarmament.”¹²⁶ At the 51st United Nations General Assembly in the fall of 1996, Axworthy defined the concept of human security as being much more than the absence of military threat. He argued that human security “also acknowledges that sustained economic development, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and social equity are as important to global peace as arms control and disarmament.”¹²⁷

Although the APR was founded on the notion of comprehensive security, it evolved into a forum where new concepts and ideas could emerge. Among these new concepts was the notion of human security. According to Paul Evans, the ASEAN ISIS community understood the notion of non-traditional security concerns and agreed that security was not fundamentally about military issues, but that it also involved transnational problems and threats to internal stability within the region. Evans pointed out that Southeast Asia had a softer conception of security,

¹²⁵ Axworthy, L., “Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership,” *International Journal*, Volume 52, Issue 2, Spring 1997, p.184.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

which coincided with CIDA's understanding that threats to human well-being in a Post-Cold War setting were increasingly more complex and deserved a more comprehensive approach in dealing with them than to simply address concerns of nuclear proliferation. As Evans suggests, "nuclear weapons still mattered, navies still mattered but so did a lot of other things,"¹²⁸ and this was becoming increasingly evident as the phenomenon of globalization began to shape the future of current and international affairs more prominently.

The Government of Canada therefore continued to fund the CIDA-led AICP on the basis of the following three points of justification: (1) Most importantly, "it was a Canadian contribution to peace and security in Asia and our Asia-Pacific world"¹²⁹; (2) Southeast Asia was extremely valuable to Canada as a way of promoting multilateral activities, and ASEAN ISIS was very useful in helping Canada develop an image for itself as a strong middle power that helped other countries work across divides on regional issues on their own terms. Canadian policy-makers therefore made the calculation that engaging Asian countries like China, not just bilaterally as it already had, but also multilaterally, was good for its existing bilateral relationship with China, and was good for the world¹³⁰; (3) Engaging in Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy was among the few things that the Government of Canada could do at relatively low cost to maintain a long term presence in Asia.¹³¹

As mentioned in the introduction and section 2 e) of this paper, engaging in Track Two processes implies a higher level of engagement in Track One processes, which may lead to increased costs for Canada at the official level. Due to the added difficulties of measuring the outcomes of Track Two processes, one could argue that by engaging in regional Track Two

¹²⁸ Evans, P., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 17, 2011.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

initiatives, Canada is thereby committing itself to long-term investments in both official and unofficial forums, and that it cannot even accurately measure the impact or outcomes of these investments.

Conversely, if Canada does not invest in Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy, it passes up an opportunity to reconnect with old friends in the region, gain access to influential opinion-makers and develop long-lasting ties with its Asian partners, which are all important in order for Canada to fulfil broader commercial, trade and political interests and objectives at the official level.

Although CIDA's AICP had been scheduled to end in 1999, it was soon replaced by the Southeast Asia Cooperation Project (SEACP) as of November 2000, in order to ensure that Canada would remain actively engaged in Southeast Asia. The SEACP aimed to build on relations that had been established through the AICP but also sought to expand the range of individuals and groups in both Southeast Asia and Canada, in order to include a wider group of civil society (Track Three) such as NGOs, journalists and representatives of political parties in policy debates and Track Two processes related to a broad range of regional security issues, including trans-border issues.

The SEACP's specific purpose was therefore to assist selected research institutes and civil society-based groups in defining, analysing and influencing regional security issues in order to enhance the role of tracks two and three in policy and decision-making.

Among its broader objectives, SEACP sought to "encourage more positive attitudes of national governments in the region to both cooperative and human security by: (a) encouraging transparency and openness in regional multilateral processes; (b) broadening the range of issues considered to be 'security' matters; (c) widening the referent of security to include individuals

and sub-national groups; and (d) working with governments, research institutes and civil society actors in the region to find new approaches to dealing with this broadened cooperative and human security agenda.”¹³²

It is also crucial for the purposes of this paper to mention that SEACP sought to deepen partnerships between individuals and institutes in Canada and Southeast Asia. As it will be argued in section four of this paper, this is something that Canada should aim to pursue in the future. Through SEACP, Canada was able to create new forms of academic, governmental, and NGO collaboration between actors in Canada and Southeast Asia. As Paul Evans suggests, this three-way collaboration took several forms, including: (1) The creation of a national advisory committee composed of about 25 Canadians including academics across the country and officials in Ottawa and Canadian missions in the region; (2) The creation of an executive group that involved professors at UBC, Brock University, St. Mary’s University; (3) The sending and receiving of interns for policy-related research and writing; (4) Sponsorship and technical assistance for a variety of workshops, conferences and seminars.¹³³ Evans suggests that on average, 45 different Canadian professors and graduate students were involved in SEACP activities as conference participants or interns, and that an additional 25 different officials from CIDA and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) also participated at Track Two events.¹³⁴

The SEACP ran from November 2000 to October 2003 and contributed to the funding of two APRs, three annual APAs and two AICOHRs among other Track Two seminars,

¹³² Institute of Asian Research, archived files of correspondence and documents generated by the ASEAN ISIS Cooperation Program and Southeast Asia Cooperation Program, 1991-2002. Consulted on 21 October 2001 at the University of British Columbia.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

conferences and processes.¹³⁵ According to Paul Evans, the following three indicators of success of SEACP are worth noting: (1) Multilateral dialogues in Southeast Asia and other Asia-Pacific contexts increased from 40% in 1998 to about 60% in 2002; (2) The need for Track Two and new security concepts has increased in direct proportion to the elaboration of multilateral activities at the formal government level; (3) The terms human security and non-traditional security are now widely used in regional discussions and there is an increased capacity among newer ASEAN members, such as Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in addressing cooperative and human security issues.¹³⁶

(d) Post-September 11th 2001 to present (2001-2011)

Canada's engagement in both official and unofficial processes in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region has been steadily declining since the early to mid 2000s. The following is a brief summary of some of the key factors that may have contributed to Canada's steady withdrawal from the region. The goal of surveying these factors is to show how they shifted Canada's focus and involvement in regional Track Two processes away from Southeast Asia, which resulted in a shift in funding.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001, Canada progressively became deeply involved in the War in Afghanistan. According to Jim Boutilier, Canada's engagement in Afghanistan absorbed a lot of time and energy from several Federal Departments such as National Defence (DND), DFAIT and CIDA.¹³⁷ According to the Government's website on Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan, Canada's civilian presence in Afghanistan grew three-fold between 2001 and 2008 [...] and Canada announced that it would increase its 10 year allocation

¹³⁵ Institute of Asian Research, archived files of correspondence and documents generated by the ASEAN ISIS Cooperation Program and Southeast Asia Cooperation Program, 1991-2002. Consulted on 21 October 2001 at the University of British Columbia.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Boutilier, J., Informal interview in Victoria, British Columbia, October 24, 2011.

to development and reconstruction in Afghanistan from \$1.3 billion to \$1.9 billion (2001-2011)¹³⁸ To put these figures in perspective, the Government of Canada's website also indicates that "prior to 2001, CIDA's assistance in Afghanistan consisted largely of humanitarian aid, ranging between \$10 and \$20 million per year for basic human needs."¹³⁹ Needless to say, Canada's presence in Asia became much more focussed on Afghanistan, which became CIDA's biggest project in the region. Despite the fact that the events of 9/11 provided some opportunities for Track Two networks to seize the attention of some regional policy makers¹⁴⁰ and to gain momentum by becoming increasingly oriented towards a whole set of non-traditional security issues, the Canadian government's resources were already tied up in Afghanistan.

Another factor that took Canada's focus away from Southeast Asia and regional Track Two processes was the current government's foreign policy shift from Asia to the Americas. Shortly after taking office, Prime Minister Harper announced that re-engagement in the Americas was a critical international priority for Canada, and that the Canadian Government was committed to playing a bigger role in the Americas in the long term.¹⁴¹

The series of minority governments that were in power between 2006 and May 2011, as well as the economic downturn that began in 2008 have also contributed to Canada's inability to engage in any long-term commitments in Asia, and have led to unexpected changes in governmental priorities due to budget reductions, strategic operational reviews and significant cuts across Federal Government Departments.

¹³⁸ Government of Canada., "History of Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan 2001–2011", *Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan*, Available at: <http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/progress-progres/timeline-chrono.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Capie, D., "When Does Track Two Matter? Structure, Agency and Asian Regionalism," *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 17, o. 2, May 2010. p.310

¹⁴¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT)., "Canada and the Americas: Priorities & Progress", Prime Minister Stephen Harper's inaugural speech on July 17, 2007, Available at: http://www.international.gc.ca/americas-ameriques/priorities_progress-priorites_progres.aspx?view=d

Now that Canada has gained a stronger footing and is governed by a majority government, it is time to come to grips with Asia's rise and to re-engage politically in this increasingly important part of the world by developing a long-term political strategy for Asia. This paper has argued that an important place for Canada to start this re-engagement process is in Southeast Asia, where it has the most connections and credibility, and through second track processes.

Section IV: The Future of ASEAN Track Two and Canada: Options moving forward

Although this paper has largely focussed on ASEAN ISIS, for reasons of credibility and past connection to Asia, it will not propose ways in which Canada could help this particular Track Two institution address some of its main challenges. Instead, this paper argues that Canada's role in the future of Southeast Asian Track Two goes beyond ASEAN ISIS. Although this was a strong Track Two institution in the 1990s, it has significantly lost momentum and has become much less functional than before. Rather than attempting to breathe life back into ASEAN ISIS, Paul Evans suggests that Canada should develop partnerships with a new set of regional institutions that have recently emerged in Southeast Asia. In accordance with Evans, this paper argues that Canada should reconnect with Southeast Asia by broadening the scope of its regional engagement.

As institutions like ASEAN ISIS and CSCAP lose impetus, a number of new Track Two institutions, think tanks and civil society organizations (Track Three) are gaining visibility in the region. This transitional period presents Canada with a unique opportunity to become an active part of reconstituting a new web of regional Track Two actors and institutions in Southeast Asia and to demonstrate its capabilities in terms of contributing valuable insight on regional security matters through intellectual leadership in the future.

According to Paul Evans, Canadian participation and leadership in Track Two processes at its best, “has been a function of developments and partnerships in the region, in addition to a three-way alignment of the political, bureaucratic, and academic classes here at home.”¹⁴² At the present time however, Evans argues that “the gap between the political, bureaucratic and academic classes is greater than at any time in memory [and that] the constant refrain in virtually every track-two channel is “where is Canada.”¹⁴³

In the context of Asia’s rise, the time has come for Canada to re-invest in building long term relations in the region, not only on commercial and economic fronts, but also at the political level. While enhancing bilateral relations with China and India is important, it is not sufficient for Canadian success in Asia.¹⁴⁴ As this paper has demonstrated, Canada was most successful in the region when it became committed to helping ASEAN Governments address *persisting* regional security issues for the long haul.

According to Paul Evans, Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan and its current priority to restrict the flow of illegal migrants in the region is valuable work, but it does not draw on Canada’s ten years of experience, knowledge and expertise in Southeast Asia, where it had developed longstanding credibility through its consistent involvement on a broad range of regional security issues, such as human trafficking.¹⁴⁵ Throughout the 1990s, Canada had a voice in matters of regional peace and security by establishing the Canada-ASEAN Center, providing core funding for the South China Sea Workshops, and continuously sponsoring annual Asia Pacific Roundtables. Through active and consistent engagement in these second track processes,

¹⁴² Evans, P., “Canada and Asia Pacific’s Track Two Diplomacy,” *International Journal*, Autumn, 2009, p.1036.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.1036.

¹⁴⁴ Evans, P., Hampson, F., Heinbecker, P. “Re-Energizing Canada-Asia Relations Defining an Asian Strategy: Report of a Workshop held at the Asia Pacific Foundation”, Vancouver, British Columbia March 31-April 1, 2011, p.4.

¹⁴⁵ Evans, P., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 17, 2011.

Canada was able to develop its strongest ties with Asian partners. As John Manley suggests, “with Asia, you’ve got to persist.”¹⁴⁶ Determining whether Track Two Diplomacy is a useful and productive way for Canada to re-engage in Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region is not a matter of political feasibility, it’s a matter of political will.

This paper has argued that Canada should play a more prominent role in regional Track Two processes in Southeast Asia in the future. In order to do so, Canada needs to devise an approach that is inclusive of a wide range of actors from different sectors of society, such as academia, think tanks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), relevant stakeholder groups, as well as broader engagement with civil society (Track three). But above all, the Government of Canada needs to demonstrate leadership, vision and come up with a long-term engagement strategy for Asia in order to guide this re-engagement process forward.

The following proposals indicate potential avenues for key actors in Canada to re-energize their relations with Southeast Asia and become more involved in regional Track Two processes:

(a) Government of Canada

On July 23, 2010, the Government of Canada finally signed on to the ASEAN Member States’ TAC, which was mentioned in section two of this paper and which DFAIT described as “a friendship treaty among ASEAN members, ASEAN dialogue partners and friends of ASEAN.”¹⁴⁷ Canadian Foreign Minister at the time, Lawrence Cannon said that “Canada’s

¹⁴⁶ Clark, C., “Ottawa Urged to Create Asian Trade Strategy” *The Globe and Mail: Report on Business*, October 19, 2011, Available at: <http://m.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/ottawa-urged-to-create-asian-trade-strategy/article2205592/?service=mobile>

¹⁴⁷Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT)., “Minister Baird Signs on to the Third Protocol Amending the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia”, Available at: <http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/photos/2011/40.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>

accession to the Treaty is a strong demonstration of Canada's engagement in Southeast Asia and its commitment to peace, security and cooperation in the region.”¹⁴⁸

The Government of Canada's commitment in Southeast Asia not only needs to be reaffirmed with ASEAN Governments at the official level, but also needs to be demonstrated through re-engagement at the unofficial level. It is important for the Canadian government to re-establish a footprint in the region by reconnecting with think tanks, opinion-makers and regional experts on a wide range of security matters that are of mutual interest to both Canada and Southeast Asia. Canada's current foreign policy is anchored in values of “freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.”¹⁴⁹ It is in Canada's interest to rebuild an image for itself in Southeast Asia by promoting these values abroad, through informal dialogue processes, which will allow Canada to develop more connections and new partnerships.

As John Manley and Peter Harder, president of the Canada China Business Council suggest, “the Asia-Pacific region as a whole are critically important to the future prosperity of Canadians,”¹⁵⁰ and it is therefore in Canada's interest to pursue much deeper engagement in the region.¹⁵¹ Dobson also points out that Canada currently has “no major comprehensive trade deals or investment agreements in the region”¹⁵² and has developed a reputation for showing up in Asia on an ad-hoc and inconsistent basis but for not being serious about establishing long-term relationships in the region.¹⁵³ She further argues that Canada's “absence from political-security

¹⁴⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT)., “Minister Cannon Concludes Productive ASEAN Meetings in Vietnam”, Available at: <http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communicues/2010/235.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>

¹⁴⁹ Conservative Party of Canada., “History: A New Party. A Proud Tradition.” Available at: <http://www.conservative.ca/party/history/>

¹⁵⁰ Dobson, W., “Canada, China, and Rising Asia : A Strategic Proposal”, *A study report sponsored by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Canada China Business Council*, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, October 19, 2011, p.2

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., p.5

¹⁵³ Ibid.

forums matters deeply to traditional trading partners such as Japan and South Korea.”¹⁵⁴ Re-engaging in Track Two processes would therefore help Canada re-connect with Asian trade partners, which would lead to direct economic benefits for Canadians as it aims to expand its trading relations beyond the Americas, create more opportunities for itself in the global economy, and “achieve its full potential as a Pacific nation.”¹⁵⁵

As Evans suggests, Australia fought deeply with Canada over the leadership of Track Two processes in the past.¹⁵⁶ And during the 1990s, ASEAN ISIS consistently found that Canada would come out stronger because it was seen as a committed, inclusive and capable country that was extremely successful at encouraging Asians to drive the agenda.¹⁵⁷

According to Job, the Australian government has always sustained the notion that it should be present and actively participating in all dimensions of Asia’s political and security matters, particularly in second track processes and to a lesser extent, Track Three.¹⁵⁸ He noted that academics and Track Two practitioners such as Desmond Ball and Anthony Milner have sustained a cohort across their domestic think tanks and universities that have made second track processes, such as the Australian Member Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (Aus-CSCAP) a continuously viable force.¹⁵⁹ As it stands, Aus-CSCAP is composed of approximately one hundred and twenty members, “including officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Department of Defence, individuals from a dozen University and other research centres throughout Australia, Members of Parliament,

¹⁵⁴ Dobson, W., “Canada, China, and Rising Asia : A Strategic Proposal”, *A study report sponsored by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Canada China Business Council*, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, October 19, 2011, p.5

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.2

¹⁵⁶ Evans, P., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 17, 2011.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Job B., Informal interview at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, October 11, 2011.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

journalists, and senior executives from Australian industry.”¹⁶⁰ Aus-CSCAP meets on a bi-yearly basis to discuss major regional security concerns and all members remain active in various CSCAP Study Groups throughout the year to conduct policy research on Asia-Pacific security issues.

There is a strong conviction among Aus-CSCAP members that “this network of officials, media, military and academic representatives [...] provides Australia with an opportunity to influence attitudes and debate in the region on a range of foreign policy issues, [and that] it also assists more broadly to build Australia into Asian regional processes.”¹⁶¹

Although Canada is geographically situated much farther from the Asia-Pacific region than Australia, considering that this region is essentially Australia’s backyard, the Government of Canada could draw some lessons from the Australian Government’s commitment to consistently supporting Track Two initiatives as a way of contributing to regional engagement. As previously mentioned, Canada used to be much more involved in leading and participating in regional Track Two processes but has recently significantly withdrawn itself from these activities. This withdrawal has led Asians to believe that Canada is not committed to long-term engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, which has had important economic, trade and political repercussions for Canadians. Like Australia, Canada should therefore recognize the value and benefits of, as well as the opportunities resulting from re-engagement in regional Track Two processes, because they do indeed contribute more broadly to building Canada into Asian regional processes on a number of fronts, including commerce, trade and political-security matters.

¹⁶⁰ Australian Member Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (Aus-CSCAP), “About Aus-CSCAP”, *Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC) at the Australian National University*, Canberra, Australia. Available at: <http://aus-cscap.anu.edu.au/>

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

(b) Academia, Think tanks and NGOs

From March 31 to April 1, 2011, a small group of Canadian Universities and think tanks, including the “Institute of Asian Research and Security and Defence Forum at The University of British Columbia, the Asia Pacific Foundation, the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, the Centre for International Governance and Innovation, and the Munk School for Global Affairs organized a joint ‘think-in’ on defining a national strategy to re-energize Canada-Asia relations.”¹⁶² During this two day session, a number of key questions were posed: (1) Why did Canada lose interest in the region?; (2) What is Canada’s policy and strategy for dealing with the key issues given rise to by Asia?; (3) Where do Canadian interests and Asian concerns coincide in Track Two processes in areas including anti-terrorism, South China Sea, human security, and disaster relief?; (4) Who are our best partners in getting back into the game?¹⁶³

Given the current state of affairs, it is extremely valuable for Canadian think tanks and Universities to engage in these types of sessions to discuss pertinent questions on ways in which Canada can re-engage on political and security matters in Asia, both at the official and unofficial levels. More frequent dialogues and linkages between these actors must be made, as they are vital to stimulating an intelligent and creative dialogue on Canada’s response to Asia’s rise, not only in economic terms, but also on the political front and for the long-run.

More research on Asian regionalism should be strongly encouraged within Canadian think tanks, and research partnerships among Canadian Universities should be increased. The expert community on Asian regionalism in Canada needs to be strengthened and expanded by promoting study programs on Asia-Pacific Affairs in Canada and Asia, by creating more

¹⁶² Evans, P., Hampson, F., Heinbecker, P. “Re-Energizing Canada-Asia Relations Defining an Asian Strategy: Report of a Workshop held at the Asia Pacific Foundation”, Vancouver, British Columbia March 31-April 1, 2011, p.1.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

opportunities for student exchanges and internships in Asia and by holding more regular meetings among non-governmental institutions to discuss new policy ideas on Asian security matters. It should be recognized that increasing Canada's expertise on Asian regionalism and broadening its connections with the Asia-Pacific is a very long-term process that will require persistent efforts.

As Dobson suggests, Canada needs to develop a long-term strategy in Asia that is inter-generational and non-partisan, in the sense that it would be sufficiently supported by the main federal political parties and that its broad agenda would continue to be pursued, regardless of political stripe.¹⁶⁴ According to Dobson, Canada's Asia strategy should also include a new commitment to Asia's evolving and increasingly significant institutional architecture, which has been a recurring argument throughout this paper.

But as Dobson points out, such a strategy cannot be built overnight and Canada should start investing resources into developing it as of now. As Dobson argues, "the potential returns to Canada are high, and so are the costs of an inadequate Canadian response to the evolving multi-polar world."¹⁶⁵

(c) Relevant stakeholder groups and broader civil society

An effort should also be made to engage a broader number of civil society organisations and relevant stakeholder groups in Canada who are interested in Canada's role in Asia-Pacific issues. More broadly, it would be valuable to raise awareness among the Canadian public of the importance of Canada's re-engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. Public conferences and seminars on Canada's past involvement in Southeast Asia and regional Track Two processes

¹⁶⁴ Dobson, W., "Canada, China, and Rising Asia : A Strategic Proposal", *A study report sponsored by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Canada China Business Council*, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, October 19, 2011, p.9

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.32

could be held by institutions such as the Canadian International Council (CIC) or the Center for International Governance and Innovation at relatively low cost.

Ultimately, the Government of Canada should play a bigger role in leading the aforementioned initiatives by financially supporting programs and activities that promote Canada's re-engagement in regional Track Two processes in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

Conclusion

As Lloyd Axworthy once said, "a country's image as a trustworthy partner with an attractive set of values encourages other countries to consider and weigh its views."¹⁶⁶ Canada's image as an ingenuous and credible country with an internationalist vocation has faded significantly. On October 12, 2010, Canada lost its bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council for the first time in its history. As a country that was once known for its valuable contributions to human rights and to peace and security matters, Canada has been struggling to make its voice heard on the international stage. According to Axworthy, Canada's internationalist vocation "provided Canadians with something enormously valuable in return: it contributed to a uniquely Canadian identity and a sense of Canada's place in the world."¹⁶⁷

The place that Canada earned for itself through persistent efforts and long-term dedication to helping Southeast Asians address important regional security concerns has been void for almost a decade. As Jim Boutilier once wrote to Paul Evans, in reference to Canada's relations with Asia: "Canada is on the station platform and the train is pulling out."¹⁶⁸ In

¹⁶⁶ Axworthy, L., "Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership," *International Journal*, Volume 52, Issue 2, Spring 1997, p.193.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185 and 196

¹⁶⁸ Boutilier, J., Informal interview in Victoria, British Columbia, October 24, 2011.

response to this statement, Paul Evans wrote: “Canada is on the station platform but the train is gone.”¹⁶⁹

As Asian countries become increasingly active and powerful within the global multilateral system, and as the probability of managing competitive and conflictual relations through diplomatic means increases,¹⁷⁰ it is assertively in Canada’s interest to play a more active and determining role in Southeast Asian Track Two Diplomacy.

¹⁶⁹ Boutilier, J., Informal interview in Victoria, British Columbia, October 24, 2011.

¹⁷⁰ Dewitt, D., “Perspectives on Asian Peace and Security in the 21st Century,” CANCAPS Papier Number 28, March 2002, p. 11.

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