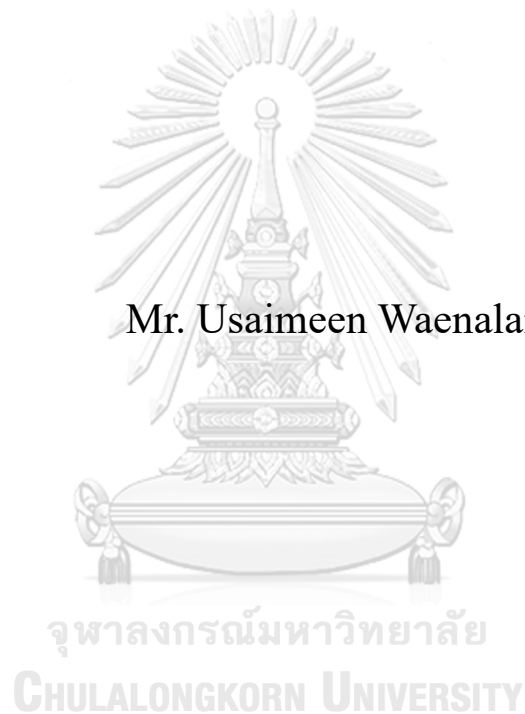


Thailand's Role in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy



An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Southeast Asian Studies
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บทบาทของไทยในการทูตเชิงป้องกันของอาเซียน



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อุษัยมิน แวนะไล : บทบาทของไทยในการทูตเชิงป้องกันของอาเซียน. (Thailand's Role in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : รศ. ดร.ธีระ นุชเปี่ยม

สารนิพนธ์นี้เจาะลึกถึงบทบาทสำคัญของประเทศไทยในบริบทของความพยายามทางการทูตเชิงป้องกันของอาเซียน โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสร้างความเข้าใจอย่างละเอียดเกี่ยวกับการมีส่วนร่วมและความท้าทายของประเทศในการรักษาเสถียรภาพในระดับภูมิภาคและการป้องกันความขัดแย้ง ในฐานะสมาชิกคนสำคัญของสมาคมประชาชาติแห่งเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ หรืออาเซียน การกึ่งทางการทูตของไทยมีผลกระทบอย่างมีนัยสำคัญต่อความมั่นคงโดยรวมของภูมิภาค การสำรวจสารนิพนธ์นี้ได้ใช้วิธีการหลายมิติ โดยผสมผสานการวิเคราะห์ทางประวัติศาสตร์ การประเมินนโยบาย และกรณีศึกษา เพื่อชี้แจงวิวัฒนาการของยุทธศาสตร์การทูตเชิงป้องกันของไทยภายในกรอบอาเซียน สารนิพนธ์นี้เริ่มต้นด้วยการพิจารณาหลักการพื้นฐานและประวัติความเป็นมาของการทูตเชิงป้องกัน ทั้งในระดับโลกและภายในภูมิภาคอาเซียน โดยเจาะลึกวิวัฒนาการแนวความคิดของการทูตเชิงป้องกัน ระบุเหตุการณ์สำคัญและการเปลี่ยนแปลงกระบวนทัศน์ในแนวทางปฏิบัติทางการทูตที่มุ่งเป้าไปที่การขัดขวางความขัดแย้ง บริบททางประวัติศาสตร์นี้ทำหน้าที่เป็นฉากหลังสำหรับการทำความเข้าใจแนวทางการปรับตัวของไทยต่อการทูตเชิงป้องกันภายในกรอบอาเซียน ตรวจสอบการมีส่วนร่วมทางประวัติศาสตร์ของประเทศไทยในความขัดแย้งและวิกฤตการณ์ในภูมิภาค โดยเน้นย้ำถึงความคืบหน้าการทูตและความพยายามสร้างสันติภาพของประเทศ โดยศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการตัดสินใจนโยบายต่างประเทศของประเทศไทย และบทบาทที่เปลี่ยนแปลงไปในฐานะผู้ไกล่เกลี่ยและผู้อำนวยความสะดวกในข้อพิพาทระดับภูมิภาค นอกจากนี้ สารนิพนธ์นี้ยังได้สำรวจประสิทธิผลของการแทรกแซงทางการทูตของไทยในการป้องกันและบรรเทาความขัดแย้งที่อาจเกิดขึ้นภายในประชาคมอาเซียน ประเด็นสำคัญของการวิจัยคือการประเมินความท้าทายและข้อจำกัดที่ประเทศไทยเผชิญในการแสวงหาการทูตเชิงป้องกัน ซึ่งรวมถึงการตรวจสอบข้อพิจารณาภายในประเทศ ความซับซ้อนทางภูมิรัฐศาสตร์ และลักษณะการพัฒนาของภัยคุกคามความมั่นคงในภูมิภาค สารนิพนธ์นี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อระบุรูปแบบความสำเร็จ และขอบเขตในการปรับปรุงบทบาทของประเทศไทยในการเป็นกำลังเชิงรุกในการป้องกันความขัดแย้งภายในอาเซียน โดยการวิเคราะห์กรณีศึกษาของการทูตที่เฉพาะเจาะจง สารนิพนธ์นี้ยังศึกษาพลวัตความร่วมมือระหว่างประเทศไทยและประเทศสมาชิกอาเซียนอื่นๆ โดยสำรวจกลไกต่างๆ ที่ใช้กำหนดและดำเนินการการทูตเชิงป้องกันร่วมกัน ประเมินประสิทธิผลของความร่วมมือระดับภูมิภาคและขอบเขตที่ประเทศสมาชิกอาเซียนใช้ประโยชน์จากอิทธิพลร่วมกันเพื่อจัดการกับความท้าทายและความตึงเครียดที่เกิดขึ้น โดยสรุป สารนิพนธ์เล่มนี้มีส่วนสนับสนุนวาทกรรมทางวิชาการเกี่ยวกับการทูตเชิงป้องกันภายในกรอบอาเซียน โดยให้ข้อมูลเชิงลึกเกี่ยวกับจุดยืนอันเป็นเอกลักษณ์ของประเทศไทยและผลกระทบต่อสันติภาพและเสถียรภาพในภูมิภาค ข้อค้นพบจากสารนิพนธ์ครั้งนี้อาจแจ้งแก่ผู้กำหนดนโยบาย นักวิชาการ และผู้ปฏิบัติงานที่สนใจในการทำความเข้าใจความซับซ้อนของการทูตเชิงป้องกันในบริบทของอาเซียน ซึ่งท้ายที่สุดแล้วจะเป็นการส่งเสริมภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ที่มีความมั่นคงและความสามัคคีมากขึ้น

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Usaimeen Waenalai : Thailand's Role in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy. Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. THEERA NUCHPIAM

This research delves into Thailand's pivotal role in the context of ASEAN's preventive diplomacy efforts, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of the nation's contributions and challenges in maintaining regional stability and conflict prevention. As a key member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand's diplomatic engagements have significant implications for the collective security of the region. The study employs a multidimensional approach, combining historical analysis, policy evaluation, and case studies to elucidate the evolution of Thailand's preventive diplomacy strategies within the ASEAN framework. The research begins by examining the foundational principles and historical antecedents of preventive diplomacy, both globally and within the ASEAN region. It delves into the conceptual evolution of preventive diplomacy, identifying key milestones and paradigm shifts in diplomatic practices aimed at forestalling conflicts. This historical context serves as a backdrop for understanding Thailand's adaptive approach to preventive diplomacy within the ASEAN framework, examining Thailand's historical involvement in regional conflicts and crises, highlighting the nation's diplomatic initiatives and peacebuilding endeavors. It investigates the factors that shape Thailand's foreign policy decisions and its evolving role as a mediator and facilitator in regional disputes. Furthermore, the study explores the effectiveness of Thailand's diplomatic interventions in preventing and mitigating potential conflicts within the ASEAN community. A crucial aspect of the research involves an assessment of the challenges and limitations faced by Thailand in its pursuit of preventive diplomacy. This includes an examination of domestic considerations, geopolitical complexities, and the evolving nature of regional security threats. By analyzing case studies of specific diplomatic engagements, the research aims to identify patterns, successes, and areas for improvement in Thailand's role as a proactive force in preventing conflicts within ASEAN. The study also investigates the collaborative dynamics between Thailand and other ASEAN member states, exploring the mechanisms through which collective preventive diplomacy is formulated and implemented. It assesses the effectiveness of regional cooperation and the extent to which ASEAN member states leverage their collective influence to address emerging challenges and tensions. In conclusion, this research contributes to the academic discourse on preventive diplomacy within the ASEAN framework, offering insights into Thailand's unique position and its impact on regional peace and stability. The findings of this study may inform policymakers, scholars, and practitioners interested in understanding the complexities of preventive diplomacy in the ASEAN context, ultimately fostering a more secure and harmonious Southeast Asian region.

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Student's Signature
Advisor's Signature

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Usaimeen Waenalai

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1. Introduction

1.1 Significance of Research

The significance of exploring preventive diplomacy within ASEAN, with a specific focus on Thailand's role, stems from its status as one of the most pivotal concepts within the ASEAN communities. Preventive diplomacy encapsulates pragmatic measures and key principles that have the potential to elevate ASEAN as a peace-seeking regional organization. It aligns seamlessly with the fundamental ASEAN principle of promoting regional cooperation, emphasizing the critical importance of member states working collaboratively to address shared challenges. This emphasis fosters a sense of unity and solidarity among ASEAN nations, reinforcing the organization's commitment to collective security and stability.

The research's primary focus on Thailand's role in ASEAN's preventive diplomacy does not diminish the recognition that the concept extends beyond bilateral ties. Instead, it underscores the intricate web of cooperation between Thailand and other member states, constituting an integral aspect that the researcher intends to comprehensively explore. This holistic approach acknowledges the multifaceted nature of preventive diplomacy, highlighting the interconnectedness and interdependence of ASEAN member states in addressing potential sources of conflict.

The renowned ASEAN Way, characterized by consensus-building and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, is mirrored in the preventive

diplomacy efforts made by member states like Thailand. This approach underscores the significance of dialogue and cooperation over direct confrontation or imposition of solutions to prevent conflict. The research recognizes the essential role of preventive diplomacy in maintaining regional stability by proactively addressing potential sources of conflict before they escalate.

Crucially, the advocacy for preventive diplomacy serves both national and regional interests by fostering dialogue and cooperation within ASEAN. By preventing conflicts from emerging or escalating, preventive diplomacy contributes substantially to overall peace and security in the ASEAN region. This research seeks to unravel the intricate dynamics and contextual nuances involved in these preventive diplomatic efforts, with a keen eye on Thailand's unique contributions and collaborations within the ASEAN framework.

Lastly, the researcher recognizes that there are cultural and regional factors unique to Thailand that significantly influence preventive diplomacy within ASEAN. Acknowledging and understanding these unique elements adds a layer of depth to the analysis, allowing for a more nuanced interpretation of Thailand's role in the larger ASEAN context. This research thus endeavors to provide comprehensive insights into the multifaceted dimensions of preventive diplomacy within ASEAN, with due consideration for both shared principles and distinctive regional characteristics.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the evolutionary stages of ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy

2. To investigate Thailand's contributions in building measures for preventive diplomacy in ASEAN given the current regional integration
3. Contextualize the effectiveness as well as the limits of Asean's Preventive Diplomacy within the context of Thailand's bilateral and multilateral ties within ASEAN
4. Instill a deeper understanding of bilateral and multilateral efforts in preventive diplomacy exerted by Thailand

1.3 Hypothesis

In a geopolitical environment where ASEAN is engaged in consensus building and non interference culture of diplomacy, Thailand's role within ASEAN has significantly influenced the development and implementation of preventive diplomacy and its strategies within ASEAN.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is Preventive Diplomacy and what are its evolutionary stages in ASEAN
2. How has Thailand engaged in preventive diplomacy within the ASEAN context, and what are the key milestones in its involvement?
3. What challenges and obstacles has Thailand encountered in its role as a preventive diplomacy agent in ASEAN, and how has it addressed or overcome them?
4. How can Thailand help take Preventive Diplomacy as a concept to the next stage within the ASEAN framework?

2. ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy

It is no surprise that ASEAN is challenged by its own consensus building approach when it comes to preventing conflict in the region. In exercising centrality, ASEAN needs to find more effective ways in fostering dialogue and preventing the erosion of internal cohesion from conflicts arising between or within member states.

The ASEAN Way, which is widely recognized for its emphasis on non-interference in the internal affairs of member states and consensus-building, can benefit greatly from its concept of preventive diplomacy, a concept launched through the ASEAN Regional Forum or the ARF, as stated in the ASEAN main portal and the ARF report. The realization of preventive diplomacy as a mechanism that can help prevent conflicts from arising between states as defined in the report can further strengthen ASEAN's efforts in consensus building and peace building. Preventive diplomacy therefore plays a pivotal role in ASEAN's efforts to preserve regional stability through the proactive resolution of potential conflict hotspots prior to their escalation. Preventive diplomacy must also advance not only national interests, but also regional interest through the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among ASEAN member states. Consequently, the promotion of preventive diplomacy can avert the emergence or escalation of conflicts, thereby enhancing the peace and security situation in the ASEAN region as a whole.

Owing to the present mechanism, Chapter 8 of the ASEAN Charter, which addresses the settlement of disputes, has been a very specific method for ASEAN to resolve conflicts and should be regarded as the first option for states seeking to

prevent violence and conflict. In this regard, the "ASEAN Way" is predicated on the pragmatic approach to decision-making that culminates in "Consensus" through consultation which has been the spirit representing ASEAN as a regional intergovernmental organization. According to R.J. Quilop, in his journal titled "Moving toward Preventive Diplomacy: Challenges and Prospects for the ARF", consultations and dialogues in preventive diplomacy are compromise oriented processes that encourage parties to accept an equilibrium point and demonstrate a willingness to comprehend the situation. They also serve to curtail the superpowers' influence over smaller states and provide an opportunity for smaller states to express their position (Quilop 2002).

As part of the ASEAN institutional building process in ASEAN community, the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) is another pillar, striving to promote regional peace and stability. While ASEAN upholds the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of its member states, it does not mean that ASEAN does not provide platforms for diplomatic dialogue, conflict prevention and resolution of disputes among member states. In that sense, the APSC functions as a community of shared responsibility and collaboration in addressing security challenges, and is a testament of another affirmative point of ASEAN rightfully calling itself a community.

In one recent development of community building efforts within the APSC, leaders exchanged views and updated each other's work on implementing the APSC Blueprint which had been adopted by ASEAN leaders at the 14th ASEAN summit in 2009. In this videoconference, the increasing number of member states agreeing to

treaties like Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). Moreover, in this videoconference leaders were updated on Timor Leste's Observer status on ASEAN meetings which proves ASEAN is living up to its goal of being a community (Secretariat 2023). At the same time this aligns with ASEAN's vision of preventive diplomacy through dialogue by pushing for more state actors to be involved in multilateral processes.

In terms of how ASEAN may fall short on building the envisioned APSC, ASEAN has perhaps faced the most criticism for community building in the Political-Security Community Pillar, perhaps due to ongoing events of Rakhine state issues and reports of undemocratic practices of ASEAN member states. And for its limited enforcement mechanisms as well as its reluctance in promptly addressing internal human rights abuses within member states, and ultimately for not having a unified stance on these issues. As a result, the efficiency and depth of its community building in the political-security realm is questioned and shows the limits of the organization's ability to enforce community standards that have been envisioned, providing a premise and context for the application of preventive diplomacy in the region. The lack of binding mechanisms expected from a community in resolving disputes such as in Myanmar, weakens the idea of community and response of preventive diplomacy and leaves member states with significant autonomy. Nonetheless, in the APSC blueprint, it is stipulated that the ASEAN human rights body was to be established and rightfully so, this body does encourage cooperation with human rights mechanisms and relevant organizations, as stated in the Blueprint at section A. 1.5 of the APSC (Secretariat 2009).

2.1 Research Methods

The research methodology will primarily rely on comprehensive documentary research, encompassing various textual sources to shine light on the efficacy of Preventive Diplomacy within ASEAN and Thailand's integral role in it. Central to this inquiry will be the analysis of official documents that serve as tangible indicators of the effectiveness of preventive diplomacy, with a particular focus on Thailand's contributions. Vision Statements, Joint Statements and Memoranda of Understanding will play a crucial role in gauging the extent of impact and cooperation in preventive diplomacy efforts.

In addition to official documents, an exploration of Vision Statements and speeches delivered by senior officials will provide valuable insights into the proactive measures taken to promote preventive diplomacy. These sources will serve as windows into the motivations driving Thailand's engagement in preventive diplomacy and the strategic steps undertaken to advance regional stability. By delving into the rhetoric and official pronouncements, the research aims to uncover the underlying principles and intentions guiding Thailand's diplomatic initiatives.

Furthermore, the research draws upon academic literature in international relations, conflict studies, and ASEAN history. This extensive literature review will include assessments from experts and commentators, as well as insights gleaned from

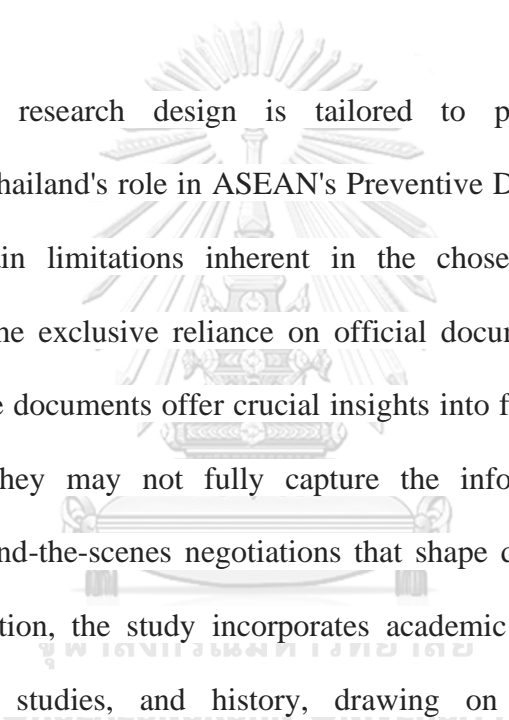
interviews with prominent figures such as Dr. Theera Nuchpiem (Research Advisor), Dr. Piti Srisangnam, and other excerpts from figures like former Minister Don Pramudwinai, and Sihasak Phuangketkeow. These scholarly perspectives and expert opinions will contribute nuanced perspectives on the motivations, potentials, and limitations of Thailand's role in Preventive Diplomacy within the broader ASEAN context.

Employing these diverse textual sources, the research seeks to establish a factual foundation and extract potential interpretations regarding the motivations behind Thailand's involvement in preventive diplomacy. By considering official documents, speeches, and academic insights as essential building blocks, the mini-thesis will construct a robust argument delineating the motivations, potentials, and limitations of Thailand's evolving role in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy. Through this multifaceted approach, the research aims to contribute a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics shaping preventive diplomacy within ASEAN, with specific attention to Thailand's pivotal contributions.

2.2 Scope and Limitations of the Special Research

This research delves into the nuanced exploration of Thailand's role in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy, offering insights into the multifaceted dynamics that contribute to regional conflict prevention. The scope extends across the evolutionary stages of ASEAN's adoption of Preventive Diplomacy, providing a historical context

to Thailand's contributions. The comprehensive investigation encompasses various types of textual sources, including official documents such as Vision Statements, Memoranda of Understanding, Joint Statements, and speeches by senior officials. By employing a meticulous research design grounded in documentary research, the study aims to unravel the motivations, potentials, and limitations of Thailand's engagement in Preventive Diplomacy within the ASEAN framework.



While the research design is tailored to provide a comprehensive understanding of Thailand's role in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations inherent in the chosen methods. The primary limitation lies in the exclusive reliance on official documents as the primary data source. While these documents offer crucial insights into formal diplomatic positions and agreements, they may not fully capture the informal nuances, contextual intricacies, or behind-the-scenes negotiations that shape diplomatic interactions. To address this limitation, the study incorporates academic literature in international relations, conflict studies, and history, drawing on expert assessments and commentaries.

Furthermore, the research's exclusive focus on Thailand's role within the broader ASEAN context may lead to a potential limitation in terms of generalizability. The findings may offer rich insights into Thailand's specific contributions, but caution is necessary when extrapolating these findings to represent the entire ASEAN region. The unique cultural and geopolitical factors influencing Thailand's approach to

Preventive Diplomacy may differ from those of other member states, necessitating a cautious interpretation of the broader implications.

Despite these limitations, the research design provides investigation into Thailand's role in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy. By navigating the scope and acknowledging the constraints, the study aims to contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge while fostering a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in regional conflict prevention efforts.

2.3 Literature Review

Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results

In this report published by the UN by various authors, an analysis of the opportunities and challenges that the United Nations and its partners are made. Mainly, it looks at present encounters when attempting to engage in preventive diplomacy amidst a dynamic political and security environment. With an emphasis on diplomatic measures implemented to avert or alleviate the proliferation of armed strife, the report elucidates the significance of preventive diplomacy throughout the spectrum of conflicts and in conjunction with more comprehensive, domestically-owned approaches to advance peace. It emphasizes the increasing demands placed on the United Nations system and other organizations with regard to conflict prevention, while also highlighting the criticality of partnerships in achieving this objective.

Recent preventive diplomacy engagements have had an impact in a variety of contexts on the ground, as demonstrated in the report. The document examines the persistent challenges and barriers that impede preventive initiatives and identifies critical components that, according to the United Nations and its partners, are indispensable for maximizing the effectiveness of such endeavors: early warning, flexibility, partnerships, sustainability, evaluation, and resources. In its conclusion, the report provides suggestions for enhancing the global capability to engage in preventive diplomacy in the forthcoming five years. (General)

The Role Of Preventive Diplomacy

In this article, (Murati 2018), the inception of Preventive diplomacy is explored. Shortened as PD, some of the main points of this article is that PD is vital for the maintenance of international peace and security. However, the questions are raised regarding prevention of conflicts, which includes the prevention of disputes within and between states. Such as to what extent has preventive diplomacy been successful in averting conflicts in the past, and to what extent is it still effective in the twenty-first century? The writer investigates that numerous nations and populations continue to be beset by wars and conflicts that result in human casualties and devastation. Following the League of Nations' demise and the human suffering that accompanied World Wars I and II, there was widespread belief that the United Nations Organization would experience a similar outcome. However, it has endured and continues to endure over time; however, there are pro and con perspectives

regarding the extent to which it is fulfilling its duty of maintaining world peace and security. Hence, the term "preventive diplomacy" specifically pertains to the United Nations Organization's obligation to prevent conflicts and promote global peace. The primary emphasis of this scholarly article is the discussion of the concept of Preventive Diplomacy, including its origins and terminology support. Is there a legal foundation in international law that considers the preservation and protection of human rights and the prevention of conflicts? Here the author states it is imperative for functionality to recognize that the majority of potentially violent conflicts originate from political issues that necessitate political resolutions. While preventive diplomacy interventions may offer a brief respite from the violence, they seldom resolve the fundamental conflicts-instigating issues, including but not limited to religious and ethnic tensions, economic and political imbalances, and power disparities. Is there any uncertainty, for instance, that achieving security gains in isolation will not guarantee long-term stability for Sudan and Somalia? Could it be argued that the predominant obstacles to achieving peace in Somalia are of a political nature? National actors embroiled in conflict frequently harbor such profound mistrust in one another that they are incapable of reaching essential compromises without the assistance of diplomatic encouragement, facilitation, or international mediation. As the universal organization, the United Nations brings unique legitimacy, objectivity, and genuine competence to bear on these issues. However, more significantly, political action has a proper position both prior to, during, and subsequent to a conflict. Ideally, the United Nations should be responsible for averting violent outbreaks entirely. In the event that this approach proves ineffective, however, strong diplomacy and mediation remain necessary to facilitate negotiations that end the conflict and

then assist nations in navigating the complex politics of reconstruction and reconciliation. Hence, notwithstanding the obstacles encountered in Africa, preventive diplomacy continues to be regarded as the most optimal course of action that the international community can propose to mitigate the instability that ensues from disputes and conflicts in the continent.

What explains the success of preventive diplomacy in Southeast Asia?

In summary, the author of this article has a positive view of implementations of some PD efforts within the context of ASEAN. She sees interstate preventive diplomacy (PD) as successful, as indicated by the absence of interstate armed conflict. It has been generally accepted that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is to blame for this achievement. However, the paper posits that three elements are crucial for the effectiveness of inter-state PD in Southeast Asia when it comes to addressing specific crises: the perceived legitimacy of the PD actor, the degree of great power interest in particular disputes, and the nature of the agreement being pursued. The presence of great power interference introduces complexity into strategic calculations, thereby potentially impeding the success of PD endeavors. Conversely, the United Nations' pivotal role as a peacekeeper and negotiator aids in the reduction of hostilities during interstate conflicts in Southeast Asia. By analyzing these factors, the paper attempts to comprehend why the East Timor and the Preah Vihear Temple cases served as fruitful applications of PD, whereas the South China Sea dialogue has thus

far yielded only modest outcomes. Thus, this is another literature that sees the effectiveness of PD in ASEAN (Huan and Emmers 2017).

3. Evolution of Preventive Diplomacy in Stages

The concept of preventive diplomacy (PD) has gained significant attention among scholars and policymakers in numerous Asia-Pacific nations as a means of addressing pressing security issues in the region. This focus is particularly evident within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which stands as the sole region-wide security forum in the Asia-Pacific, now comprising 25 states. The ARF, in its inaugural meeting in 1994, expressed its intent to play a role in PD, and this commitment was further emphasized in its second meeting in Brunei Darussalam in 1995 when it issued a Concept Paper outlining its plan to establish mechanisms for conducting PD as a follow-up to the promotion of confidence-building measures (CBMs).

In an article by Takeshi Yuzawa (Yuzawa 2006) discussing the evolution of Preventive Diplomacy at the ASEAN Regional Forum, it is highlighted that since 1997, when the ARF agreed to initiate work on PD, participating countries, with varying degrees of willingness and preparedness, have engaged in robust debates on how to best develop PD mechanisms suited to regional security conditions. The critical question of whether the ARF is making tangible progress in PD is of

paramount importance. Despite the Asia-Pacific region witnessing increased economic interdependence and some advancements in institution-building, the threat of armed conflict remains significant in many areas. The region not only harbors numerous potential military flashpoints, including religious, ethnic, and unresolved territorial disputes, but there is also a discernible trend among several regional states toward military buildup and modernization.

Given these security risks and uncertainties, there exists a genuine need to establish institutional mechanisms for conflict prevention. In this context, the success or failure of the ARF in its endeavor to develop PD becomes a pivotal factor in shaping the future prospects for regional peace and stability. The continuous deliberations within the ARF and the commitment to evolving preventive diplomacy mechanisms underscore the ongoing importance of this forum in addressing and mitigating security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.

Notably, China and many ASEAN states exhibited a general reluctance, albeit with varying degrees, to propel the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) toward the Preventive Diplomacy (PD) stage, at a pace less accelerated than some more proactive states desired. Notably, China, Vietnam, and Myanmar were inclined to maintain the ARF primarily as a platform for security dialogue, showing a preference against expeditious movement towards PD. In contrast, certain ASEAN countries, such as Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines, were more supportive of the forum's engagement in PD initiatives. However, the latter group remained cautious due to

their adherence to the principle of non-interference, finding the activist states' perspective on PD less palatable.

An area of significant contention arose regarding the application of PD to intrastate conflicts. China and ASEAN states, including concerns related to the South China Sea disputes and, for China, the Taiwan Strait issue, were collectively opposed. They feared that endorsing PD for intrastate conflicts might open avenues for external interference in matters concerning their sovereignty and internal affairs.

While there was a consensus on the coordinating role of the ARF chair, including convening special sessions and issuing statements after consultation, the development of registers of Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) was agreed upon by the Sixth ARF. These individuals were designated to provide non-binding professional advice, recommendations, and conduct research on PD matters. Although there was a general agreement among ARF ministers on modest PD-related measures, a deadlock persisted on a crucial issue—the concept of a good office role for the ARF chair. The disagreement centered on whether the chair should be empowered to play a role in good offices or mediation in regional conflicts. Activist countries supported this idea, while Chinese and ASEAN representatives opposed it, citing concerns about potential interference in their internal affairs. This discord further impeded the ARF's progress in discussing Preventive Diplomacy.

3.1 Adoption of Three Papers on Preventive Diplomacy:

According to the timeline of the stages, the Eighth ARF Ministerial Meeting held in Hanoi in July 2001 marked a formal adoption of three key papers addressing the concept and principles of Preventive Diplomacy, the augmented role of the ARF chair, and the terms of reference for the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs). This development seemingly signaled a significant breakthrough for the forum, particularly given its previous struggles in making notable progress on PD issues. However, the question of whether the adoption of these three PD papers truly represented substantial progress remained a subject of scrutiny.

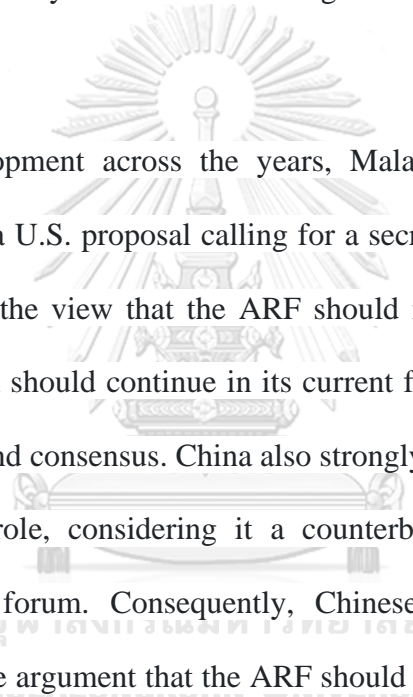
Despite the formal adoption, significant dissent among ARF countries persisted regarding the definitions and measures of PD. The chairman's statement from the Eighth ARF acknowledged this discord by stating that the paper on the concept and principles of PD was adopted as a snapshot of the ongoing discussion on PD within the ARF. The statement further indicated that the Inter-Sessional Support Group (ISG) on Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) would continue discussions on PD in the upcoming intersessional year, focusing on issues where divergence of views persisted. Notably, the concept and principles of PD adopted at the Eighth ARF were characterized as a working definition, reflecting the inability of ARF countries to reach a consensus without incorporating the "snapshot" clause. This inclusion was necessitated due to opposition from the U.S. and Australia, which advocated broadening the scope of PD to include intrastate conflicts.

While some ARF countries expressed continued reluctance to fully embrace the PD stage, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Dy Nien, who chaired the Eighth ARF, emphasized that the meeting had only agreed on the concept of PD, maintaining the primary emphasis on confidence-building as the main thrust of the ARF. In essence, the adoption of the PD papers did not signify the emergence of a common understanding or a compromise between activist and reluctant countries. Reports from the ASEAN secretariat suggested that the adoption of PD papers was deemed necessary to deflect criticism that the ARF had made no concrete progress in this regard.

Additionally, recent meetings of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) have displayed a lack of progress for the foreseeable future, partly attributed to a shift in the forum's focus following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. The strong American interest in utilizing the ARF to support its "global war on terrorism" has elevated counterterrorism issues to the forefront of the group's agenda. While the ARF has made commendable strides in this area by adopting cooperative measures such as blocking terrorism financing and enhancing border controls, the overwhelming emphasis on terrorism has had adverse effects, hindering substantive discussions on other crucial subjects, including Preventive Diplomacy (PD).

In response to this concern, activist countries have made efforts to rejuvenate the momentum of PD discussions, although these initiatives have waned in

enthusiasm. During the Tenth ARF Ministerial Meeting in Phnom Penh in June 2003, Japan urged other ARF countries to deepen their discussions and proposed organizing a workshop on PD. However, the subsequent workshop held in Tokyo in March 2004 did not yield significant results. Activist countries also resurrected an earlier proposal to establish an intersessional working group on PD during the Ninth ARF meeting. However, this proposal encountered challenges due to persistent reluctance from some ARF countries to fully embrace the PD stage.



Another development across the years, Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar rejected a U.S. proposal calling for a secretariat to institutionalize a PD division, emphasizing the view that the ARF should not be institutionalized. Albar asserted that the forum should continue in its current form, where issues are decided based on discussions and consensus. China also strongly supported the continuation of ASEAN's leadership role, considering it a counterbalance to U.S. and Japanese influence within the forum. Consequently, Chinese officials opposed the U.S. proposal, reiterating the argument that the ARF should progress at a pace comfortable to all participants. This divergence of views and priorities further contributes to the challenges faced by the ARF in advancing discussions on Preventive Diplomacy.

Activist countries have persistently sought opportunities to bring about structural reforms within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). However, encountering opposition from both ASEAN and China has proven to be a formidable challenge. A notable example occurred at the Eleventh ARF Ministerial Meeting in July 2004 when

Japan proposed the establishment of a permanent secretariat comprising staff from both ASEAN and non-ASEAN states. This proposal received lukewarm responses from the ASEAN states, and ultimately, the meeting reached an agreement to create an ARF unit composed solely of ASEAN officials within the ASEAN Secretariat.

The discussion on Preventive Diplomacy (PD) within the ARF also delved into contentious issues surrounding ASEAN's diplomatic centrality in the forum and the institutionalization of this reality. These issues had been prominent in the early years of the ARF, where some non-ASEAN participants expressed concerns that ASEAN's central role not only restricted the focus of ARF agendas to Southeast Asian issues but also integrated the "ASEAN Way" of institution-building into the operational rules of the ARF. The "ASEAN Way" emphasizes consensus decision-making, informality, and avoidance of legalism, which activist countries believed was inadequate for promoting practical security cooperation in the ARF.

Despite these concerns, activist countries tolerated ASEAN's managerial role and the "ASEAN Way" because they recognized it as the only viable approach to ensure China's consistent participation in the ARF. The diplomatic centrality of ASEAN within the ARF, although a source of contention, remained a key element in maintaining the forum's inclusivity and regional cooperation, reflecting the complex dynamics of balancing diverse interests within the Asia-Pacific region.

In the last section of the evolution timeline, among the latest developments include China and ASEAN expressing concerns about the potential implications of the ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) Preventive Diplomacy (PD) roles on their sovereignty and the prospect of intervention in their internal affairs. This apprehension is rooted in the fact that both China and ASEAN member states have grappled with internal political challenges, including ethnic, religious, and separatist violence, as well as contentious territorial disputes. While these issues may be considered domestic matters, their potential to escalate into armed conflict poses a threat not only to the countries directly involved but also to the security of other regional nations and the overall stability of the Asia-Pacific region.

The argument is made that confining the ARF's PD roles solely to interstate conflicts is inadequate, as many of the security challenges in the region are inherently linked to intrastate conflicts. To effectively address potential threats, PD mechanisms should be capable of responding to both intrastate and interstate crises. The absence of institutional mechanisms for conflict prevention is seen as a significant destabilizing factor for regional security, casting doubt on the future prospects for stability. The failure of the ARF in the realm of PD is also perceived as a potential hindrance to the momentum of security institution building.

It is echoed in the article by Yuzuwa (Yuzawa 2006) that for the PD agenda in the ARF to succeed, reluctant countries must make tangible concessions on three major issues. Specifically, these countries are urged to reconsider the non-interference principle and allow the ARF to develop more practical PD measures. Moreover, they

are encouraged to support the forum's structural reform rather than insisting on maintaining ASEAN's privileged position.

A proposed strategy to initiate progress involves convincing reluctant countries to endorse the idea that the ARF can play PD roles in intrastate conflicts only with the request or consent of the involved states. This approach aims to address concerns about unwarranted intervention in domestic affairs, potentially paving the way for PD roles in both intrastate and interstate conflicts. The author emphasizes the importance of finding compromises between activist and reluctant countries, suggesting that such compromises would lead to a more fruitful debate on PD within the ARF and contribute to the increased momentum of security institution building in the region. Ultimately, this could enhance the prospects for regional stability

3.2 Challenges and Opportunities

In the Secretary General Report on Preventive Diplomacy, Delivering Results (General), in the context of the UN version which led to ASEAN's adoption of the same concept, one of the key challenges maintains that despite the significant growth and evolution of preventive diplomacy, the concept is rather devoid of simplicity or guaranteed success. The process encounters substantial obstacles and often contends with unfavorable odds, with success contingent on various factors, among which the parties' willingness plays a pivotal role. If the involved parties, state or non state actors lack the desire for peace or are unwilling to compromise, persuading them

otherwise, especially from an external standpoint, becomes an extraordinarily arduous task. In such instances, the effectiveness of preventive diplomacy is intricately linked to the ability to provide incentives and disincentives. This involves convincing key actors, while respecting their sovereignty, that opting for dialogue over violence is advantageous, and if necessary, welcoming external assistance is a viable option. Secondly, for internal crises, in particular, pose unique challenges where concerns about undue interference or the unwarranted "internationalization" of a country's internal affairs may arise. The international community may find its hands tied when engagement opportunities are limited, allowing the human cost to escalate in a visibly deteriorating situation. Paradoxically, in such circumstances, the space for political action sometimes emerges. In instances of particularly severe or imminent threats to international peace and security, diplomacy alone may prove insufficient and require supplementation with other forms of leverage. This includes, if necessary, the implementation of coercive measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. To give examples of clauses in this chapter of the UN Charter: Article 41 grants the Security Council the authority to determine and implement non-military measures to enforce its decisions. In doing so, the Council has the prerogative to call upon UN Member States to execute these measures. Such non-military measures encompass a spectrum, ranging from a complete or partial interruption of economic relations to the suspension of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other communication means. Additionally, the Council may opt to sever diplomatic relations as part of these measures.

Moreover, article 42 serves as a pivotal provision, enabling the Security Council of the UN to take more forceful action if measures outlined in Article 41 are

deemed insufficient or have proven to be so. In such instances, the Council is empowered to employ air, sea, or land forces as deemed necessary to either maintain or restore international peace and security. This includes a range of actions such as demonstrations, blockades, and other operations executed by the air, sea, or land forces of UN Member States. This underscores the Council's ability to escalate its response and utilize military forces when non-military measures fall short, emphasizing the commitment to maintaining global peace and security outlined in the UN Charter.

In retrospect, the absence of clauses similar to Article 41 and Article 42 in the ASEAN Charter poses a considerable challenge to the effective promotion of Preventive Diplomacy within the ASEAN framework. Unlike the United Nations Charter, which explicitly delineates the Security Council's authority to implement non-military measures and, if necessary, resort to the use of armed forces for peace and security maintenance, the ASEAN Charter lacks such specific provisions. (Nations)

The omission of these clauses in the ASEAN Charter limits the regional organization's capacity to enforce preventive measures in a manner analogous to the UN Security Council. In situations where non-military approaches may prove insufficient or inadequate, ASEAN faces a structural gap in its ability to escalate measures to ensure peace and security effectively. The absence of explicit provisions for economic interruptions, communication severance, or military interventions hampers the organization's agility in responding to evolving threats and conflicts.

This shortfall in the ASEAN Charter underscores the complexity of preventive diplomacy in the region. While ASEAN emphasizes non-interference and consensus-building, the absence of clear mechanisms for enforcing preventive measures can impede the organization's ability to address emerging crises promptly. In hindsight, the inclusion of clauses akin to those found in the UN Charter could provide ASEAN with a more robust framework for preventive diplomacy, ensuring a more comprehensive and flexible response to potential sources of conflict within the region.

Perhaps as a way forward, striking a delicate balance between intervention and respect for national sovereignty could be worth the discussion and be crucial in such scenarios to effectively address imminent threats and ensure international peace and security and realize the applications of preventive diplomacy in ASEAN.

4. Thailand's Role in Preventive Diplomacy

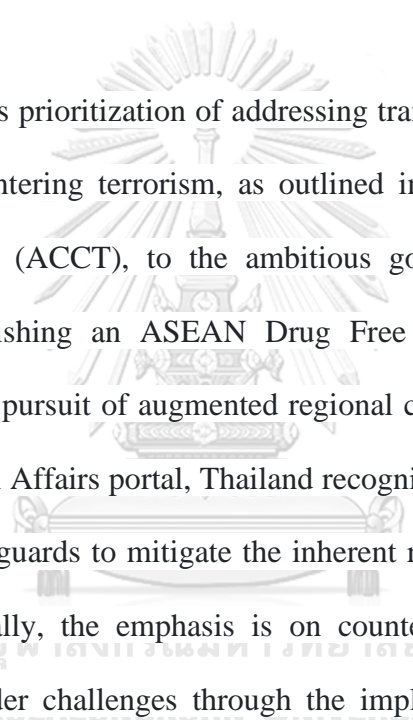
The vision articulated by Thailand, as outlined in the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Thailand), concerning preventive diplomacy and the Political Security Pillar of ASEAN, is deeply rooted in the commitment to promote peace and stability in Southeast Asia and the surrounding region. This commitment is founded on the cultivation of peaceful relations and mutually beneficial cooperation between Thailand and its neighboring countries, underscoring Thailand's enduring foreign policy priority. The rationale behind this emphasis lies in Thailand's firm belief that an environment characterized by peace and stability is indispensable for the pursuit of sustained economic growth, sustainable development, and the advancement of human

security. These outcomes, in turn, are perceived as pivotal for the well-being of both the Thai people and the broader communities in the region.

Thailand recognizes that fostering an atmosphere of peace and stability is instrumental not only for its national interests but also for the establishment of an ASEAN-centered regional architecture. This regional framework is envisioned to facilitate peaceful and mutually beneficial engagements among countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Given these considerations, Thailand places significant importance on strengthening cooperation within the political-security pillar of ASEAN, with the ultimate goal of realizing an ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) by 2015. The APSC is regarded by Thailand as a primary framework and driving force for promoting regional peace and stability within the context of an ASEAN-centered regional architecture.

Moreover, Thailand's approach to the promotion of peace, stability, and security in the region is underpinned by adherence to internationally accepted norms. Key among these norms are the renunciation of the use of force and the commitment to resolving disputes through peaceful negotiations. Building trust, fostering confidence, and engaging in preventive diplomacy are considered additional imperative actions by both Thailand and ASEAN for the advancement of regional peace and stability. These guiding principles are reflected in foundational documents such as the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). The growing number of countries acceding to the TAC underscores the

widespread acceptance of the norms and principles encapsulated therein as a general code of conduct for states in Southeast Asia. In this context, Thailand has played a pivotal role in encouraging key countries outside the region, including the United States in 2009 and the European Union in 2012, to accede to the TAC. This proactive stance demonstrates Thailand's commitment to promoting a shared understanding of international norms and fostering cooperation on a global scale.



Given ASEAN's prioritization of addressing transnational crimes, the regional focus spans from countering terrorism, as outlined in the ASEAN Convention on Combatting Terrorism (ACCT), to the ambitious goal of eradicating illicit drug trafficking and establishing an ASEAN Drug Free Zone by 2015. Against the backdrop of ASEAN's pursuit of augmented regional connectivity, as underscored in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs portal, Thailand recognizes the growing importance of developing robust safeguards to mitigate the inherent risks associated with increased connectivity. Specifically, the emphasis is on countering transnational crime and overcoming cross-border challenges through the implementation of more effective border management strategies.

In alignment with these objectives, Thailand underscores its commitment to making the fight against human trafficking a continued priority within the ASEAN framework. As ASEAN member states strive for greater cooperation, Thailand seeks to contribute actively to regional efforts aimed at combatting this grave transnational issue. This commitment reflects Thailand's recognition of the imperative to address


not only traditional security concerns but also the complex, interconnected challenges posed by transnational crimes in the context of evolving regional dynamics.

4.1 South China Sea Dispute

In a news report (Sokla 2019) detailing the progress made on the South China Sea dispute during an ASEAN meeting in 2019, Thailand's active involvement in diplomatic efforts becomes apparent through the conducted dialogues. The former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Don Pramudwinai, reaffirmed Thailand's stance as one of the non-claimant states in the contentious region. He emphasized Thailand's commitment to advocating for the transformation of the South China Sea into a zone of peace, stability, and sustainable development. He noted that this advocacy has been ongoing for three years, expressing a shared desire among nations for positive developments in the area, steering clear of deterioration.

Sahasak Phuangketkeow, the former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, lent his support to Thailand, the chair of ASEAN, in building confidence and trust as a foundation for regional cooperation. He highlighted the importance of not allowing the South China Sea dispute to overshadow the overall outlook of the region. According to Phuangketkeow, ASEAN has the capacity to collaborate with China even as maritime dispute resolutions are in progress.

Phuangketkeow further proposed the consideration of joint development in the South China Sea. Drawing upon the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area (MTJDA) as a case study, he pointed out that historical overlapping claims were successfully addressed through a 1979 agreement, establishing a joint authority for exploiting maritime resources. While acknowledging the complexities of the South China Sea situation involving multiple claimant states, he suggested that a similar collaborative approach could set a positive precedent, fostering cooperative solutions amid multifaceted challenges.



Thailand's involvement in the South China Sea dispute, as reflected in the news report, underscores its active engagement in preventive diplomacy within the ASEAN context. We can see here that Thailand, as a non-claimant state, has consistently advocated for the peaceful transformation of the South China Sea. By emphasizing the idea of turning the region into a zone of peace, stability, and sustainable development. The statement from Don Pramudwinai, the former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, reveals that Thailand has been actively proposing and advocating for a peaceful South China Sea for three years. This underscores a sustained commitment to preventive diplomacy, neutrality which has been well known to be adopted by former minister Don, indicating that Thailand recognizes the importance of consistent, long-term efforts in defusing potential conflicts before they escalate.

In the previous news piece, Sihasak Phuangkitkeow, the former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, highlights the importance of enhancing confidence and trust. This aligns with preventive diplomacy principles, as building trust among parties involved in a dispute can contribute to de-escalation and pave the way for cooperative solutions.

The suggestion by Phuangkitkeow to consider joint development in the South China Sea demonstrates a proactive approach to preventive diplomacy. Proposing collaborative initiatives, such as joint development zones, can help address the underlying causes of disputes and prevent tensions from escalating into open conflicts. The reference to the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area serves as a precedent where overlapping claims were successfully managed through cooperation.

Last but not least, as the chair of ASEAN such as in 2019, Thailand assumes a leadership role in facilitating discussions and cooperation. Thailand can exemplify preventive diplomacy by leveraging its position to encourage dialogue, build consensus, and promote peaceful resolutions to disputes in future chairmanships. By actively setting the tone of ministerial meetings and participating in and contributing to the ASEAN meeting on the South China Sea

In essence, Thailand's engagement in the South China Sea issue showcases a commitment to preventive diplomacy through sustained advocacy, support for confidence-building measures, and proactive proposals for collaborative solutions. This approach aligns with the broader goals of ASEAN to maintain regional peace and stability through diplomatic means.

4.2 Thailand's Role in Thai-Cambodia Dispute

One noteworthy illustration of contemporary preventive diplomacy and its intricate regional dynamics unfolds in the Thai-Cambodian border conflict. The genesis of this conflict dates back several decades, leading to the creation of a volatile concoction that remained in a simmering state since 2008. It was only in early 2011, when the tensions reached a boiling point, that it exerted enough pressure to necessitate a renewed response from the ASEAN (Giacoma 2011).

The roots of the discord can be traced to a 1962 ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which determined that the Preah Vihear temple, situated atop a cliff, belonged to Cambodian territory. However, the ICJ decision did not conclusively address the border delineation surrounding this culturally significant site. Despite a 2000 memorandum of understanding aimed at demarcating the border, the task remained unresolved by 2011. Adding complexity to the situation, UNESCO designated the temple as a World Heritage Site in 2008. Although Thailand initially supported this designation, disagreements persisted over the management specifics of the site.

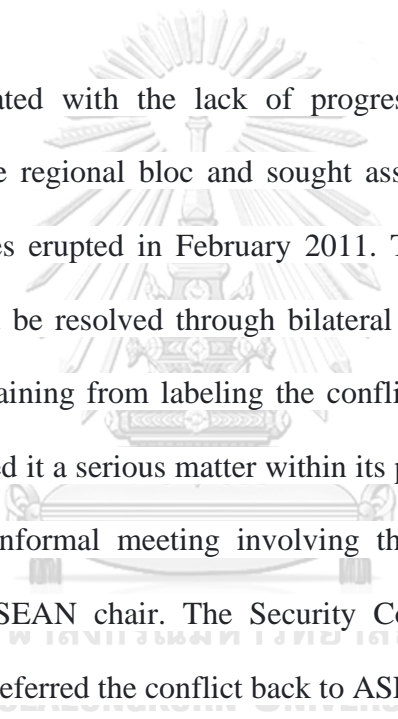
The temple metamorphosed into a domestic political battleground, fueled by Thai nationalist sentiments and wielded as a political weapon against governments aligned with the deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Following years of latent tension subsequent to the UNESCO listing, the conflict escalated in February

2011, leading to serious confrontations between Cambodian and Thai soldiers in proximity to the temple. Subsequently, in April of the same year, fresh clashes erupted at other disputed temples located 150 kilometers to the west.

Collectively, these skirmishes resulted in a grim toll, with twenty-four fatalities, dozens wounded, and tens of thousands temporarily displaced on both sides of the border. The multifaceted interplay of historical disputes, cultural heritage, geopolitical considerations, and domestic politics underscores the intricate nature of the Thai-Cambodian border conflict as a paradigmatic case for the study of preventive diplomacy in which Thailand plays a direct role.

Despite sporadic skirmishes since 2008, the magnitude of the conflict in 2011 garnered increased attention due to its larger scale. In the interim period, there were some tepid attempts at preventive diplomacy by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 2008, Singapore, then holding the ASEAN chair, advocated for addressing the matter internally after Cambodia sought intervention from the UN Security Council. The Security Council, in response to Cambodia's request, refrained from formally taking up the issue, allowing regional discussions to persist. Subsequently, the ASEAN chairmanship shifted to Thailand for eighteen months, during which the organization remained conspicuously silent on the conflict, given Thailand's direct involvement as a party to the dispute.

Throughout this period, tensions and impassioned rhetoric between the neighboring countries continued to escalate. As a foreshadowing of future developments, Indonesia quietly assumed a role on the sidelines of a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in November 2009. Cambodia once again implored ASEAN for intervention in 2010 when Vietnam held the regional chairmanship, but these pleas went unanswered.



Growing frustrated with the lack of progress through ASEAN channels, Cambodia bypassed the regional bloc and sought assistance from the UN Security Council when hostilities erupted in February 2011. Thailand, in response, asserted that the conflict should be resolved through bilateral means, but this stance proved insufficient. While refraining from labeling the conflict as an act of aggression, the Security Council deemed it a serious matter within its purview. On February 14th, the council convened an informal meeting involving the two conflicting parties and Indonesia, then the ASEAN chair. The Security Council called for an enduring ceasefire and, notably, referred the conflict back to ASEAN.

In a noteworthy turn of events, the foreign ministers of ASEAN convened informally in Jakarta on February 22nd, calling for an immediate ceasefire and urging negotiations. Additionally, they proposed the acceptance of Indonesian monitors by both parties involved. The ASEAN Secretary-General characterized these unprecedented Jakarta meetings as historic milestones in the diplomatic resolution of conflicts.

Some analysts contend that ASEAN's handling of the recent clashes along the Thai-Cambodian border represents a "victory" for the regional grouping, marking a "historic" milestone in diplomacy. They view it as an "unprecedented case" where ASEAN members successfully utilized their internal mechanisms to address a conflict among themselves. However, by November 2011, the optimism surrounding these assertions appeared premature. The conflict persisted, observer deployment remained pending, and bilateral border negotiations had yet to resume.

While there may be a more clearly defined "ASEAN option" for regional peacemaking, exercising caution is still warranted. ASEAN's key security structures, namely the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and its charter, had to experience shortcomings before an unconventional, ad hoc intervention could mend them. This intervention, spearheaded by diplomatically proactive Indonesia and backed by the current ASEAN Secretary-General, was essential to navigate the complexities of the situation. The outcome might have been different if another country had held the chairmanship at that crucial time. Fortunately, Indonesia, with its assertive diplomatic approach, took the lead.

A scenario with a less confident or weaker chairmanship might have placed a higher value on non-interference, potentially neglecting the emphasis on the necessity for good offices or the pursuit of effective preventive diplomacy. In such a scenario, the result could have resembled the inaction witnessed during the chairmanships

between 2008 and 2010. The episode underscores the significance of leadership dynamics within ASEAN and the pivotal role played by individual member states in steering the organization through delicate diplomatic challenges.

While there may not have been fighting on the border since May 2011, the frontier is still militarized, there has been no verified withdrawal, and there is no signed ceasefire. Given the stopstart nature of the border conflict since 2008, observers need to be deployed to prove that the sides have complied with their obligations to withdraw under the ASEAN agreement from February as well as the ICJ ruling from July Second, even before the floods in Thailand stopped bilateral negotiations (possibly for months), there was only incremental progress in restarting negotiations. The new government elected in Thailand in July had not made this issue a priority, and the military still resists outside intervention. Beyond fresh talks or diplomatic meetings, the real measure of the resumption of border negotiations will be active cooperation, such as in the deployment of survey teams to the field. Such a development would turn back the clock on this conflict to July 2008, a time before the UNESCO listing when both sides were working together to demarcate their border. Such surveys cannot be done on a militarized frontier, and this would further demonstrate that hostilities had ended.

In the context of ASEAN, Indonesia is set to continue with its facilitation role and may well still succeed in its efforts to have an observer-verified end to hostilities as well as a concrete resumption of bilateral negotiations. But even if this does not happen, ASEAN will take away from 2011 an Indonesian drawn roadmap about how to conduct preventive diplomacy next time there are tensions between neighbors. They must recognize the problem sooner, put less emphasis on non-interference, and

act politically with much greater haste. To wage peace successfully, ASEAN must have less of a fear of failure and more of a hope that they might succeed.

Although hostilities on the Thai-Cambodian border have ceased since May 2011, the region remains heavily militarized, with no verified withdrawal and no formalized ceasefire in place. Despite the intermittent nature of the border conflict since 2008, it is imperative to deploy observers to substantiate compliance with the ASEAN agreement from February and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling from July. Even before bilateral negotiations were disrupted by the flooding in Thailand, progress in restarting talks had been sluggish. The newly elected Thai government in July unfortunately at that time, according to (Giacoma 2011) did not prioritize the border issue, and the military remained resistant to external intervention.

Beyond the prospect of fresh diplomatic meetings, the true gauge of border negotiation resumption lies in active cooperation, particularly in deploying survey teams to the field. Such a development would harken back to July 2008, a time before the UNESCO listing, when both sides collaborated on demarcating their border. The deployment of survey teams is unfeasible in a militarized zone, underscoring the necessity for a genuine cessation of hostilities.

In hindsight, along with Thailand, Indonesia continues to play a pivotal facilitation role and may yet succeed in securing observer-verified cessation of hostilities and a tangible resumption of bilateral negotiations. Even if these efforts fall short, ASEAN stands to gain valuable lessons from 2011, as Indonesia charts a roadmap for conducting preventive diplomacy in future instances of regional tension. A crucial takeaway is the need for early problem recognition, a reduced emphasis on

non-interference, and swifter political action. To effectively promote peace, ASEAN must overcome the fear of failure and cultivate a stronger optimism for success.

Last but not least, the escalation of the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand into armed conflict highlights the pressing necessity for improved preventive diplomacy in the region. Additionally, it underscores the limitations of ASEAN as a robust safeguard against future conflicts. The imperative now lies in ASEAN translating the preventive diplomacy provisions outlined in its charter into practical actions. The organization needs to actualize the mechanisms and permanent bodies envisioned by the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint, which are designed to play a pivotal role in conflict resolution.

Rather than waiting for border disputes to escalate into militarized conflicts, ASEAN should take proactive political measures at the first signs of tensions among member states. This requires a shift in approach, moving from a reactive stance to an anticipatory one. By doing so, ASEAN can address issues at their inception and work towards preventing the outbreak of hostilities.



The call for ASEAN to breathe life into its preventive diplomacy provisions and establish effective conflict-resolution mechanisms reflects the need for a more proactive and robust regional approach to maintaining peace and stability. Timely and politically astute smart interventions propagated through preventive diplomacy can mitigate potential conflicts and contribute to the long-term security and well-being of the ASEAN community.

4.3 Opportunities for Thailand

Dr. Piti Srisangnam, in his interview with The Standard (Srisangnam 2023), highlights the strategic imperative for Thailand to align itself with prevailing trends in the region, particularly concerning Myanmar and Taiwan, as these developments carry significant implications for the nation's diplomatic landscape.

The evolving situation in Myanmar, with the active engagement of the National Unity Government (NUG) on the international stage, presents a noteworthy trend for Thailand to closely monitor. As one of Myanmar's neighboring countries, Thailand's proactive involvement and diplomatic astuteness can be pivotal in addressing regional dynamics. The engagement with the NUG offers Thailand an opportunity to contribute to the resolution of complex issues in Myanmar while reinforcing its diplomatic standing within ASEAN.

Moreover, the forthcoming elections in Taiwan represent another critical dimension that demands Thailand's attention. Given the intricacies of international relations, particularly within the ASEAN framework, the outcomes of the Taiwanese elections are poised to have implications for the entire region. Thailand, by staying abreast of these electoral developments, can position itself strategically to navigate the potential geopolitical shifts and contribute constructively to the evolving dynamics within ASEAN.

In essence, for Dr. Piti these trends underscore the opportunities for Thailand to elevate its role in promoting preventive diplomacy. By actively engaging with the developments in Myanmar and staying informed about the implications of the upcoming Taiwanese elections, Thailand can position itself as a diplomatic anchor within the region. This proactive stance not only aligns with the evolving diplomatic landscape but also underscores Thailand's potential to play a constructive and influential role in fostering regional stability and cooperation.

To add more points, Thailand can also actively participate in the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint, further increasing its role in advocating Preventive Diplomacy and taking the concept to the next stage. This involves contributing to the establishment of mechanisms and permanent bodies envisioned by the Blueprint to play a role in conflict resolution. Thailand's involvement in shaping these institutions can influence their effectiveness in preventing and resolving conflicts. Meanwhile fostering strategic partnerships with other ASEAN member states to collectively champion preventive diplomacy. Collaborative efforts in early warning systems, joint diplomatic initiatives, and information sharing can fortify the region's ability to address emerging challenges and conflicts effectively.

4.4 Areas for Future Research

While this research provides a comprehensive examination of Thailand's role in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy, there are critical areas within the broader diplomatic landscape that warrant further exploration. Future research endeavors

should extend beyond the confines of preventive diplomacy to encompass various types of diplomatic approaches.

Some of the different types of diplomacies that may be de include:

a) Traditional diplomacy: This type of diplomacy constitutes the conventional form wherein international actors engage with one another to influence the global landscape. This involves diplomatic efforts such as negotiations, treaties, and alliances to pursue mutual interests and establish cooperative relations. Traditional diplomats work within established frameworks to address international issues, relying on established protocols and formal diplomatic channels (Cull 2019).

b) Public Diplomacy: Public diplomacy diverges from traditional approaches by focusing on influencing not just foreign governments but also the public opinion of other nations. This involves cultural exchange programs, informational campaigns, and initiatives that enhance a country's image and promote a positive perception among the global populace. Public diplomacy recognizes the role of public opinion in shaping international relations and emphasizes people-to-people connections (Swistek 2012).

c) Economic Diplomacy: Economic diplomacy leverages the international environment to advance an international actor's foreign policy objectives. It involves using economic tools such as trade agreements, investment policies, and fiscal agreements to strengthen a country's economic position and promote its interests globally. Economic diplomacy recognizes the interconnectedness of economic and

diplomatic activities, aiming to use economic leverage to achieve strategic goals (Kron 2015).

d) Defense Diplomacy: Defence diplomacy represents a nonviolent application of military forces to further a country's international agenda. It involves activities such as joint military exercises, capacity-building programs, and collaborations with other nations' defense establishments. Defense diplomacy aims to establish strategic partnerships, enhance regional security, and contribute to stability without resorting to armed conflict (Winger 2014).

e) Security Diplomacy: Security diplomacy integrates various facets, including defense, rule-of-law, human rights, and humanitarian crisis response initiatives, tailored to meet the specific needs of partner nations. It extends beyond defense diplomacy by synchronizing a country's security institutions into a unified effort to support diplomatic enterprises. Security diplomacy aims to address multifaceted challenges and contribute to overall regional stability (Kron 2015).

f) Preventive Diplomacy: Preventive diplomacy, as discussed in this research and defined by the United Nations, involves diplomatic actions taken to prevent disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of conflicts through non-military methods. This includes negotiations, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement of disputes, and other non-coercive approaches. The goal is to address

potential sources of conflict proactively and maintain peace within the international community.

Each type of diplomacy serves a unique purpose within the realm of international relations, and their effectiveness often depends on the specific context and objectives of a nation. Studying these approaches as compiled by the researcher, may comprehensively provide insights into the diverse strategies nations employ to navigate the complexities of the global stage and achieve their diplomatic goals. While this study conducts an overview of Thailand's involvement in ASEAN's Preventive Diplomacy, there are crucial dimensions within the broader diplomatic arena that necessitate further investigation. Prospective research initiatives should transcend the boundaries of preventive diplomacy to encompass a diverse array of diplomatic strategies.



5. Conclusion

ASEAN's commitment to preventive diplomacy emerges as a critical element in maintaining regional stability and averting conflicts. The organization has made strides in conceptualizing preventive diplomacy within its charter and envisioning mechanisms through initiatives like the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint. However, recent events, such as the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand, underscore the imperative for ASEAN to elevate its preventive diplomacy efforts from conceptualization to effective implementation.

Thailand, despite its limited role, holds significant potential to play a vital role in advancing preventive diplomacy within ASEAN. The challenges posed by regional disputes offer opportunities for Thailand to leverage its diplomatic influence and take the lead in proactive conflict resolution. The country can contribute by encouraging early political interventions and promoting dialogue at the first signs of tensions among member states. Thailand's involvement in preventive diplomacy can not only enhance its regional standing but also strengthen ASEAN's overall capacity to address conflicts before they escalate.

As ASEAN continues to evolve, Thailand's engagement in preventive diplomacy can be a catalyst for taking this crucial aspect of regional security to the next stage. By embracing a more proactive and anticipatory approach, Thailand can contribute to the effectiveness of preventive diplomacy within ASEAN, promoting a culture of conflict prevention and cooperation that aligns with the organization's broader goals of peace and stability in the region. The opportunities are abundant, and Thailand's strategic involvement can make significant strides in shaping the future trajectory of preventive diplomacy within ASEAN.

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