

revolutionary approach taken by ASEAN in the leadup to the 1991 PMC obliged Japan to reconsider its attitude towards discussion of regional security arrangements.

By the time news of ASEAN's intentions had reached Tokyo, much rethinking had already been done, and a decision was taken to support calls for a multilateral forum to discuss security. To ensure that the Soviet Union would continue to be isolated from the region, it was decided to support ASEAN's proposals but with the proviso that the existing PMC be the preferred forum. This would allow discussions on "regional reassurance" to take place among like-minded countries while deferring participation by the Soviet Union.

Having launched the "Nakayama initiative" at the 1991 ASEAN-PMC, Japan appears to have committed itself to participation in a multilateral dialogue on regional security issues. It remains to be seen, however, whether Foreign Minister Watanabe will continue to support this approach.