

bilateral agreements for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of the Baltic states. In the past it has been the ASEAN states which have relied on bilateral approaches to confidence-building.

Perhaps one lesson to be learned from this is that the grand, multilateral, regional approach to confidence-building is only possible in such unique circumstances as those which characterised Europe during the Cold War years. In the absence of such conditions of common interest, bilateral approaches to arms control and confidence building will be far more appropriate.

It appears, however, that the Post-Cold-War environment has created a number of opportunities for confidence-building measures to be enhanced within the ASEAN community. The members of ASEAN are now in a position to take advantage of the easing of their internal tensions and to coordinate their responses to external threats in an attempt to avoid any misconceived intensions between them. The recent (May 1993) Senior Officials Meeting, convened to discuss regional security issues prior to the upcoming Post Ministerial Conference has made a solid start. If this practice can be sustained it may evolve into a regular forum for the discussion of ASEAN and South-East Asian security issues.

Another priority for ASEAN should be to address the growing fears that an arms race may be developing in the region. In response to perceptions about changes in their security environment, many ASEAN members have been enhancing their military capabilities. Lingering suspicions from the past and a lack of communication of intentions has led to a number of misperceptions which could lead to a destabilizing arms race in the region. This is one area in which the CSCE's experiences may hold lessons for the members of ASEAN. It has been shown that an unchecked arms race can lead to serious destabilization in a region. It has also been shown that the communication of intentions and an agreement to give notice of changing force postures can help to dissipate the mistrust and misperceptions which fuel an arms race.

However, initial confidence-building measures in this area may need to be far more modest than those attempted in the CSCE. Given that the ASEAN members do not have the military strength to defend themselves, individually or collectively, against many of their external threats (China, Japan, or India), the suggestion of arms control negotiations between them may not be appropriate at this time. There is room, however, for confidence-building measures. The members of ASEAN could start by convening a Senior Officials Meeting to discuss the possibilities of promoting more open communication on the issues of force postures, arms acquisitions, military doctrine and defence strategy.

During the initial stages, ASEAN members could agree to exchange information on their military doctrines defence strategies and military postures. In subsequent stages, members could agree