

This broader interpretation of ZOPFAN was not only a more accurate representation of the concept but was also in keeping with the ASEAN approach to peace and security.

By 1978 stalemate over the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia had brought the implementation of ZOPFAN to a halt. But by 1984 fear of ZOPFAN's indefinite postponement led ASEAN foreign ministers to revive the Working Group on ZOPFAN. The following year they directed it to elaborate the principles, objectives and elements of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia (SEANWFZ), to be a component of ZOPFAN.

It must be understood however that ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ never came into being. This is because no consensus within ASEAN could be reached on the issue of great power presence in the region. During the cold war Thailand and Singapore were committed to a balance of power approach to security in the region, while others felt that security was better protected by the United States than by ZOPFAN. As well, application of these proposals were dependent on great power acceptance and the US was quite clear in its rejection to the concept of a SEANWFZ.

Although ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ are no closer to reality than when they were first proposed, they still represent an attempt on behalf of ASEAN to limit the presence of foreign troops and weapons within its territory. This perhaps represents one of the major differences between the ASEAN and CSCE processes. All of the major players in the European security equation were members of the CSCE and thus, it was capable of serving as a forum in which negotiations could include all necessary players. ASEAN on the other hand, is only a sub-regional organization and thus, many of the key players in its regional security equation are not only external to the Association, but also external to the region. Much of its own security, therefore, was truly beyond its control.

Another example of confidence-building can be found within the context of ASEAN intelligence-sharing. ASEAN-wide collaboration among intelligence organizations has taken place for some years now. Intelligence-sharing has been essentially rooted in the fact that all ASEAN members fear internal subversion. In particular, intelligence organizations have been keen to guard against the spread of communism and to pool information on communist guerilla activity as well as other forms of insurgency in the region.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Richard Stubbs, "Subregional security cooperation in ASEAN: Military and Economic Imperatives and Political Obstacles", in Asian Survey, Vol. XXXII, No. 5, May 1992, pg. 404.