

significant factor in preventing the type of hostility and fratricidal wars that have characterized Indo-China.⁴⁹

It is undeniable that ASEAN has contributed to the goodwill, trust and confidence among its member states, thus facilitating the transformation of a subregion of turmoil into a more stable and predictable one in which the role of force has been minimized. "All of this adds up to confidence-building in a comprehensive sense, apart from the politico-military sense."⁵⁰

An example of attempted arms control can be found in ASEAN's efforts towards the establishment of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in South-East Asia and a South-East Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ). The concept of ZOPFAN was initiated by concern over the possible withdrawal of the US security umbrella from the region. It was therefore meant to replace the US as South-East Asia's protection from external threats.⁵¹

ZOPFAN had its origins in the Malaysian proposal for the neutralization of South-East Asia, which was formally articulated by the Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak at the non-aligned summit in Lusaka in September 1970 which received only a mixed reception from its ASEAN partners. Acceptance of the concept by ASEAN members came only after significant modification. Gradually the idea of neutralization was replaced with that of neutrality.

While neutralization by definition would have made peace and security in the region dependent on major power guarantees, neutrality would confer the responsibility and initiative to the regional states, although recognition and respect by external powers would continue to be important.⁵²

At their November 1971 meeting, the ASEAN foreign ministers created a committee of senior officials to draw up the blue print

⁴⁹ Muthiah Alagappa, "Security in South-East Asia: Beyond a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality(ZOPFAN)", in Disarmament Topical Papers 6 Confidence-building Measures in the Asia-Pacific Region, in New York, United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, 1991, pg. 122.

⁵⁰ Op Cit., Snitwongse, "South-East Asian security Issues and Confidence-building", pg 145.

⁵¹ Ibid., pg 143.

⁵² Op Cit., Alagappa, "Security in South-East Asia: Beyond a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality(ZOPFAN)", pg. 103.