

Asia remains a region of autonomous, often fragile, highly unequal states, for which military power will remain an essential instrument of foreign, defence, and security policies. Yet the last decade has witnessed some remarkable movement by many Asian governments to become fully engaged partners in the international community. The creation of the ARF and APEC, although both facing substantial difficulties, are important indicators of the potential utility of introducing "habits of dialogue" and multilateral processes into the larger Asia and Asia Pacific arenas. Also not to be discounted are the emerging track two dialogue channels as well as the increasingly vibrant sectors of civil society. Moreover, as Asian countries become increasingly active and powerful within the global multilateral system, and as more of them accede to the broad range of treaties and regulatory regimes, the probability of managing competitive and conflictual relations through diplomatic means increases. It is in all of our interests to facilitate this process of enhanced engagement and security cooperation.