



GRAHA ILMU

Aryanta Nugraha, S.I.P., M.Si., M.A.

Regional Security Arrangements in East Asia

Bilateral, Multilateral and Functional

book sample



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**Regional Security Arrangements in East Asia; Bilateral, Multilateral,
and Functional**

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GRAHA ILMU

Ruko Jambusari 7A Yogyakarta 55283

Telp: 0274-889398; Fax: 0274-889057

E-mail: info@grahailmu.co.id

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to examine how regional security is arranged in East Asia and how dynamic changes of regional security arrangements contribute to relative peace and stability. Regional security in East Asia has been characterized by two parallel developments of stability and relative peace amid serious security challenges. The puzzle of these developments is the focus of this book. It argues that in the absence of a formal regional security architecture and institutional governance the explanation of the puzzle rest on bilateral, multilateral and functional security arrangements. The three layers of security arrangements play complementary roles shaping stability and relative peace.

Although initially set up as strategy to contain communism, the US led 'hub-and-spokes' system remains the most important arrangements to manage threats to regional stability. In the Post-Cold War era, the hub-and-spokes system is employed as hedge strategy to bad impact of China's rise and facilitates the power transition in East Asia. The hub-and-spoke system also underwent adaptation and transformation along with broadening of the US alliance network. It serves as a bridge to multilateral security cooperation.

Multilateral security arrangements in East Asia form a complex of informal multilayered and overlapping cooperation. The ARF plays important role in building a habit of dialogue, promoting confidence-building measures (CBMs) and building trust among participant states. The APT, the EAS and APEC represent effort to address challenges in economic and security and projected to become the umbrella institutions. Another multilateral security arrangement is the so-called needs-based security arrangements. This type of multilateral arrangements supplementing the bilateral security arrangements and the existing regional institutions by putting aside sovereignty sensitivity and seek for problem solving in certain issue areas and enhance the preventive diplomacy culture.

As happened in regional cooperation on trade and investment, regional security cooperation is also marked by 'the noodle bowl syndrome'. It is imperative for East Asia region to manage the noodle bowl of regional security arrangements. Strong link between bilateral, multilateral and functional security arrangements should be develop to build sound regional security architecture.

This book started from master thesis, when the writer studied at Discipline of International Relations, School of International Studies, Flinders University of South Australia. This book had been the result of supports from many people which I cannot mention one by one. Yet, some people deserve to be recognised more.

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Above all, my greatest thank is to Allah SWT, who made this happen.

Aryanta Nugraha

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: IS THERE REGIONAL SECURITY ORDER IN EAST ASIA?

A. BACKGROUND

There was a big expectation that the end of the Cold War would lead to a stable and peaceful East Asia along with vanishing geopolitical and security tensions between the Western and the Eastern blocs. Nonetheless, East Asia still had to deal with severe security challenges. Its security agenda was still characterised by a combination of traditional and newly emerged, non-traditional challenges,¹ the former including the rise of China, the ongoing nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula, unresolved territorial disputes, Japan's 'normalisation discourse' and nuclear proliferation threats.² The region was also faced with emerging or non-traditional security threats such as climate change, environmental and energy security, transnational crime, infectious diseases, natural disasters and other forms of non-military and trans-boundary threats that put the survival and well-being of people and states in danger.³ As these insecurities and uncertainties escalated in East Asia, scholars and policy makers started to debate the evolving regional security order and architecture and their effectiveness in managing challenges.

Pessimistic assessments emerged inevitably along with the changing international system after the Cold War, based on the existence of abundant security challenges in which intraregional rivalries could trigger conflict, particularly because there was no external US and the Soviet Union acting as a power balancer. Aaron L. Friedberg depicted Asia as 'rife for intraregional rivalry'. According to Friedberg, East Asia is a very diverse region in terms of the level of economic development and political regime type, with nationalism rooted in ethnic and racial differences among states. Differences in domestic conditions and national chauvinism tended to provoke disputes and political tensions between states, yet there was no clear stability mechanism to manage existing disputes and tensions such as regional institutions or conflict management mechanisms.⁴ Barry Buzan and Gerard Segal predicted that post-Cold War security was doomed to a murky 'back to the future' (instability with power balancing features) scenario because of a weak sense of international society combined with the end of superpower overlay, except for US primacy.⁵

Before the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) in 1997 Michael Yahuda warned that the complexity of the traditional security environment in East Asia was shaped by competition among states to increase defense budgets and build competitive alliance ties that are directed against one another.⁶ This was because intraregional tensions were induced by no definite or common external (extra-regional) enemy. In the aftermath of the AFC, many analysts depicted a bleaker East Asian security environment than before. Robert A. Manning and James J. Przystup argued that a long term economic recession increased the risks of insecurity. Although East Asia was integrating economically via strong intra-regional trade and investment, Manning and Przystup remained cautious about the dangers of new strategic competition and rivalry in times of crisis.⁷ The specific case of Southeast Asia corroborated this indication. Derek da Cunha argued that the build-up of military capabilities

was the most visible aspect of how Southeast Asian states strove to enhance security. Moreover, according to Chunha, the military build-up continued to produce certain bilateral balances with neighbouring states.⁸

Much of the initial post-Cold War and post-AFC literature did not factor in the rise of China as aspect that would influence the dynamic of East Asia security. During the Cold War, China was not only outside the US centred security alliances in East Asia, but also was not their primary subject. When the Cold War ended, China's rise was in its early stages and considered not really important to East Asia security. In the early 2000s, however, its rise began to shape the overall regional security order. With its growing economic, political, military and diplomatic power across the region, China began to influence the interests of its neighbours and the form of regional cooperation in both economic and security domains. John Ikenberry argued that a powerful China transforms the region security in two ways: First, by changing the regional system into bipolar one around China *vis a vis* the US and second, by incrementally replacing the US as regional hegemon in East Asia.⁹

Although security challenges in East Asia were severe, from an optimistic point of view, regional security was growing more stable and predictable. Inter-state relations were not disrupted by direct military confrontation and large scale of war, though crises occurred, such as the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1995-1996, South China Sea tension between China and the Philippines, the North and South Korea crisis in 2010, when North Korea torpedoed a South Korean naval vessel, and Thailand-Cambodia tension over Preah Vihear temple. Muthiah Alagappa pointed out that the region experienced relative peace for more than two decades, enjoying stability and economic prosperity. Moreover, according to Alagappa, serious internal and international problems decreased.¹⁰ Though historical animosities and distrust among neighbouring states remained, especially regarding the expansion of military capabilities, East Asia

was far more stable and predictable.¹¹ Alagappa concluded that a security order existed in East Asia, although with less developed and more contested features.¹²

David Martin Jones and Michael L.R Smith contended that the evolving regional order in East Asia was rhetorical.¹³ Although East Asia witnessed a growing number of regional institutions, they argued that they were only 'making process not progress' is because they were based on ASEAN norms such as non-interference and consensus decision making which prevented deeper cooperation and integration either within ASEAN or the wider East Asia region.¹⁴ Following the proliferation of multilateral security diplomacy, debate over East Asia's security architecture intensified.¹⁵ Critics argued that despite the presence of a growing number of regional institutions in East Asia, it continued to be weak in structural capacities for responding to security challenges.¹⁶ These institutions were unsuccessful in laying the foundations for an overarching security structure that will facilitate a more sustainable and enduring regional security order.¹⁷

The concept of regional governance was applied increasingly to explain East Asian regional processes.¹⁸ Nevertheless, as Anja Jetschke argued, security was not understood as a regional public good created by cooperative mechanisms between states, non-state actors and regional institutions.¹⁹ The basic characteristics of regional security governance compel states in collaboration with non-state actors to delegate more power to regional institutions to set standards and compliance mechanisms. For that reason, the concept regional security governance was applied unconvincingly to the East Asia security case.²⁰

From the accounts above, it can be summarised that regional security in East Asia had several features. First, East Asia encountered serious challenges, both traditional and non-traditional. Secondly, although the challenges were serious, regional security was more stable, relatively peaceful and more predictable compared with

previous eras. Thirdly, despite a number of regional security mechanisms there was no regional institutional architecture and regulatory governance. Finally, existing arrangements may underpin the emergence of an incipient regional security order. This book seeks to grasp the dynamics of regional security in East Asia in the post-Cold War era by asking how regional security is arranged in East Asia and how dynamic changes contribute to relative peace and stability.

B. THEORETICAL DISCOURSES: THREE WAYS OF THINKING ON REGIONAL SECURITY IN EAST ASIA

Three main theoretical approaches can be distinguished in explaining security issues in East Asia: realist/neo-realist accounts of the balance of power, institutionalism and 'security regimes', and constructivist theories which stress the importance of 'security communities'. These approaches, with varying degrees of success, have been employed to explain the relative peace and stability, in terms of absence of open confrontation or large scale war, and the transformation of the East Asia security order in the post-Cold War era.

The key to stability and security in East Asia, according to the realist perspective, is rendered by US primacy, or the so-called 'San Francisco system', which underpins a balance of power.²¹ It is an integrated system of political and economic relations based on the September 1951 Peace Treaty with Japan²² that created a distinctive combination of US-centric bilateralism and informal economic networks. During the Cold War, US bases in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Guam represented a 'hub and spokes' strategy that linked the US with various states through a series of bilateral arrangements to contain communism. The US also established the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) as a US-led defence organisation.²³ The presence of the US security umbrella was

considered to be the most important provider of security enabling East Asian states to concentrate on economic growth.²⁴ According to realists, the 'hub and spoke' system continued to structure traditional security relations across the region after the Cold war, reaffirming US primacy, even though the initial target, the Soviet Union, collapsed and the other target of containment, China, was being transformed.²⁵ The US was deemed to be the only extra-regional power with economic strength, strategic ability and political influence to exercise leadership and guarantee the balance of power in the region.

Alternatively, the existence of regional institutions and norms, or a 'security regime', were identified as keys to regional security in East Asia.²⁶ Security regimes promoted peace and stability because states engaged in cooperation to reduce the cost of seeking peace unilaterally. Even in a changing international system, security regimes were long lasting because of reciprocity norms and institutionalisation processes. Moreover, regimes were supported usually by influential states or the groups of states that helped craft them.²⁷

The development of security cooperation in East Asia in the post-Cold War era appeared to support the security regime approach, in particular the role of ASEAN and the emergence of multilateral security cooperation. ASEAN, though considered to be a 'soft' form of multilateralism, played an important role in managing security in the region. The creation of ASEAN in 1967²⁸ marked the beginning of the transformation of Southeast Asia from conflict prone region to one marked by growing cooperation.²⁹ Southeast Asia, then, evolved from being 'the Balkans of the East' into a cooperative region through armed conflict avoidance.³⁰

After the Cold War, ASEAN started actively to shape regional institutions in Asia, motivated by concerns about the continuation of the US presence after its withdrawal from the Clark Air and Subic Naval Bases in the Philippines, and the fear of competition between Japan and China for influence in the region.³¹ Though limited in

institutional capacity, ASEAN occupied the drivers seat of Asian regionalism because of its ability to moderate great power relations.³² ASEAN seized the opportunity to initiate a multilateral setting for dealing with the East Asia's security problems in the wake of the Cold War with the ASEAN–Post Ministerial Meeting (PMC) among 'dialogue partners'. In 1994 this gathering was institutionalised to become the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with eighteen participants when established, expanding to twenty seven participants. With the establishment of ARF, the heterogeneous security dynamics of Southeast and Northeast Asia blended to form a single East Asia security complex that cannot be separated from one another.³³

East Asia also witnessed the rise of numerous functional security arrangements in the form of networks that involved both state and non-state actors and ad hoc mechanisms addressing specific issue areas. These security mechanisms were designed mainly to address non-traditional security threats such as climate change, pandemics, weapon of mass destruction, disaster relief, maritime security/piracy and counter terrorism.³⁴ Moreover, they were designed to build regional capacity for problem solving mechanisms. Functional, ad hoc groupings also enhanced traditional security cooperation. The Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG), which involved the US, Japan and South Korea, for example was the first multilateralism that sought to build policy coordination in responding the North Korea nuclear threat. It then evolved into the Six Party Talks.³⁵

The constructivist approach emphasised ideational factors, such as norms and identity, which led to regional peace and stability, as well as a transformative tendency within regional groupings towards a regional identity through interaction among members. In the East Asia context, although the concept of East Asia remains debatable, there was increasing acceptance of the formation of a collective identity as a distinctive region.³⁶ Scholars such as Richard Higgot, Amitav Acharya, and Timo Kivimäki underlined the

importance of ASEAN norms, such as informal and non-legalistic procedures, renunciation of the use of military forces and non-interference. Together these formed the 'ASEAN Way' which transformed the region into a pacific community governed by shared understanding and behaviour.³⁷ Acharya argued that despite tension and conflict between members, Southeast Asia was transformed into a pluralistic security community, restraining the use of force and managing conflict via an elite socialisation process based on accepted norms.³⁸

Interactions were the focal point for a regional identity project in Southeast Asia, where ASEAN gained 'competence power' to act in a concerted way that shaped the security environment for its benefit.³⁹ This kind of power allows ASEAN to build broader regional institutions involving external powers such as China, Japan, India, Australia and the US. The creation of ARF, ASEAN Plus Three (APT; ASEAN plus China, Korea and Japan) and the East Asian Summit (EAS; members of APT plus Australia, New Zealand, India and, since 2011, the US and Russia) confirm that ASEAN emerged as the 'regional hub' of multilateral diplomacy.⁴⁰ The emergences of numerous multilateral institutions spearheaded by ASEAN were exclusive and effectively drew the boundaries of East Asia. Richard Stubbs argued that the APT process was the latest expression of the evolutionary development of East Asian regional cooperation, following Mahathir Mohammad's East Asia Economic Grouping (EAEG)/East Asia Economic Cooperation Caucus (EAEC).⁴¹ Richard Higgot and Stubbs also underlined the potential of the APT process to become the dominant identity-based regional institution in East Asia.⁴² In a similar vein, Takashi Terada asserted that APT is a unique East Asian regional framework and 'the main vehicle' for achieving an East Asia Community, while the EAS played a complementary role.⁴³

Each of the three approaches above arguably captured a different aspect of the regional security order in East Asia. Each

theory led analysts to ignore or downplay other factors that might be important. East Asian regional security arrangements do not follow the logic of the three approaches in a clear cut way. Instead, the important features of each approach in parallel can be shown in the regional security dynamics.

Taking the three approaches as complementary, has advantages in making a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter. This book, therefore, argues that states in East Asia relied on a variety of overlapping regional security arrangements, both bilateral and multilateral, to guarantee their security. Bilateral security arrangements linked states with the external great powers as balancing and hedging mechanisms in the changing distribution of power in post-Cold War era. These arrangements were complemented by numerous multilateral security arrangements operating as cooperative mechanisms. Functional / ad hoc security arrangements emerged as pathways to problem solving. These complementary regional security arrangements contributed significantly to a more stable and relative peaceful condition in East Asia.

C. BOOK STRUCTURE

Following this Introduction, Chapter Two explores the dynamic changes in the security environment in East Asia since the end of the Cold War. It describes the puzzling condition of regional security in East Asia which is, pessimistically, characterised by tension and potential conflict, but also among optimists by stability and relative peace.

Chapter Three analyses the bilateral mechanisms for coping with regional security disputes. It highlights the transformation of traditional bilateral security arrangements, such as the 'hub-and-spokes' system, in the face of new security challenges in the post-Cold War period.

Chapter Four analyses East Asia's multilateral security arrangements. It emphasizes the important role of regional institutions such as ARF, APT and EAS in responding to security challenges. It also discusses the emergence of new functional/needs-based cooperation in East Asia.

The final chapter summarises the overall thesis by assessing critically the regional security agenda for East Asia as it moves towards a 'security community' by 2015. Bilateral and multilateral security arrangements remain the important pillars of stability and regional security in the region. However, there are two important agendas to manage the plethora security arrangements; how to define the division of labour amongst these arrangements and how to incorporate them into an integrated security architecture.

-
1. East Asia is defined as comprising Southeast Asia states (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and Northeast Asia (Japan, China, the two Koreas, and Taiwan), and the United States as the most important extraterritorial actor.
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 12. Security order is defined as rule governed interaction makes for predictability, stability and non-violent change in their pursuit of private and public security goals. See Muthiah Alagappa, 'Introduction: Predictability and Stability Despite Challenges', p. 24
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Regional Security Arrangements in East Asia

Bilateral, Multilateral and Functional

East Asian security remains overshadowed by serious security challenges. It pessimistically projected to become a dangerous region characterised by state rivalry and conflict. The 'ripe for rivalry' and 'back to future' scenarios dominated East Asia security analysis. The absence of regional security architecture could plunge East Asia into the fore front of great power rivalry. The withdrawal of the U.S. from the region could also recreate Europe's past experiences of instability and competitive balance of power. Developments in East Asia security however, have moved to different direction. Optimistic point of view argues that regional order in terms of stability, predictability of relationships between states and relatively peaceful conditions exist in East Asia.

The puzzle of the two parallel developments of stability and relative peace amid serious security challenges was the central focus of this book. It argues that in the absence of a formal regional security architecture and institutional governance the explanation of the puzzle rest on bilateral, multilateral and functional regional security arrangements. The three layers of security arrangements play complementary roles shaping stability and relative peace in East Asia.



Aryanta Nugraha, S.I.P., M.Si., M.A. holds bachelor degree majoring in International Relations from Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, and Master Degree in Political Science from the same university. He also holds Master Degree in International Relations from Flinders University of South Australia. His book, co-editor *Mengelola Perbatasan Indonesia di Dunia Tanpa Batas: Isu-Permasalahan dan Pilihan Kebijakan* (Graha Ilmu, 2010), contributed in *Isu-Bencana dalam Hubungan Internasional* (Graha Ilmu, 2013). His articles mainly in English, have been published in several national

journals such as *Jurnal Global & Strategis* (Airlangga University), *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional* (Parahyangan University), *Jurnal Diplomasi dan Keamanan* and *Jurnal of Islamic Civilization in Southeast Asia*. His Academic Interest are democracy and security in East Asia, security studies, and Russian politics.

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