
Contextualizing Global Governance of Counterterrorism: ASEAN-Japan Cooperation in Southeast Asia

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ONE OF THE most serious security challenges in the post–Cold War world order is undoubtedly terrorism, which represents a transnational form of violent extremism led by nonstate actors. We have witnessed how the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001 became a watershed event in shaping the global security agenda, as the United States–orchestrated “global war on terror” actively sought counterterrorism cooperation in different parts of the world. In tandem with this, the United Nations has endeavored to establish a global norm that sees counterterrorism as an initiative for peace in the 21st century. In 2001, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1373, which aims to hinder terrorism in various ways. It also established the UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee to monitor state compliance with provisions in the resolution. Since then, counterterrorism has become a major component of global governance, and regional responses have been sought throughout the world.¹

Southeast Asia is no exception. Soon after the Bali bombing in 2002, the region was alarmed by the terrorist threat posed by Jemaah Islamiyah, which had developed an underground network of violent extremism throughout the region.² Against this backdrop, Southeast Asia was identified as the “second front” in the global war on terror, following Afghanistan as the “first front.” Since government efforts to combat terrorism require both national and regional countermeasures, reflecting the transnational nature of terrorist networks, ASEAN has addressed the issue in the context of building the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) and has endeavored to develop regional mechanisms to deal with the problem of terrorism in the region.

Japan has also shown its commitment to strengthening international cooperation on counterterrorism since 9/11 and has identified an active role for itself in this new global security agenda as a reflection of the post–Cold War environment. This has opened the way for Japan to contribute more substantially to peace-making and peacebuilding missions around the globe.³ Moreover, as a dialogue partner of ASEAN, Japan has promoted regional cooperation in various fields, including nontraditional security issues. Against this background, ASEAN-Japan joint counterterrorism efforts should be seen as an extension of the existing framework for regional cooperation aimed at consolidating peace and stability in Southeast Asia rather than as a new attempt at bolstering Japan's presence in Asia's defense-security landscape.

ASEAN-Japan counterterrorism cooperation has been discussed, agreed upon, and implemented based on this understanding over the past decade. Cooperation is aimed at building regional institutions in response to the rise of terrorism in Southeast Asia, and such an effort resonates with the agenda of global governance to fight against transnational violent extremism. Global governance cannot be promoted effectively without being synchronized with regional governance, and it is this mechanism of regional governance that helps to operationalize the global agenda. Thus, ASEAN-Japan cooperation, which aims to strengthen regional governance, contributes to the operationalization of global governance, and it is in this context that our discussion on counterterrorism cooperation should be understood.

ASEAN'S SECURITIZATION OF TERRORISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION

How has ASEAN, as a regional organization, dealt with the challenge of terrorism? History shows that ASEAN has successfully addressed terrorism as a common regional security threat, nurtured high-level political commitments to promote intra-ASEAN cooperation to deal with terrorism, and moved to implement shared counterterrorism measures, aiming both to improve various types of government capacities and to standardize their regional responses.

The earliest initiative can be found in 1997, when ASEAN promulgated its Declaration on Transnational Crime at the first ASEAN Conference on Transnational Crime in Manila, held amid the Asian financial crisis.⁴ Together with other cross-border crimes such as illicit drug trafficking, sea piracy, and human trafficking, terrorism was addressed as a major

transnational crime threat in this declaration. It was also at this conference that member states decided to establish the biennial ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, and its second meeting in 1999 produced a Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime.⁵

Thus, the ASEAN initiative started with the growing concern over transnational crime in general, but 9/11 provided further impetus for highlighting the problem of terrorism, as seen in November 2001 when the ASEAN Summit adopted the Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism.⁶ The following year, the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism was held, resulting in the launch of the ASEAN Work Programme on Terrorism to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime.⁷ Then in 2003, the Bali Concord II was declared with the vision of establishing the APSC. Regional counterterrorism cooperation was included in the APSC Blueprint (cf. section B.4.2) as one of the priority areas for community building.

Following the Bali Concord II, Malaysia established the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) to provide training programs for participants from ASEAN countries.⁸ Various training programs have been offered since then, some of which are sponsored by ASEAN's dialogue partners.⁹ Also, importantly, the APSC Blueprint insisted on the adoption of a legally binding ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) by 2009. To this end, ASEAN leaders signed the ACCT in 2007.¹⁰ The ACCT would enter into force after six ASEAN countries ratified it, and it was in 2011 that Brunei became the sixth country. With its ratification by Malaysia in 2013, the ACCT has now become an instrument shared by all 10 countries in ASEAN.

The ACCT is a significant achievement in regional counterterrorism efforts as it serves as ASEAN's united framework for multilateral cooperation to counter, prevent, and suppress violent extremism. Reflecting the consensus surrounding the ACCT, the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting-Plus, which was established in 2010, also took the initiative to launch a joint military exercise for counterterrorism in Jakarta in 2013, bringing together more than 500 soldiers from the 10 ASEAN countries as well as the 8 dialogue partners, including Japan. The five-day exercise was based on a scenario of multiple bomb attacks by terrorists on an oil tanker and at a crowded event. The exercise focused on technical and tactical capabilities and the management of information and technology in counterterrorism. Commander-in-Chief of Indonesia's Armed Forces General Moeldoko, who hosted the five-day exercise, commented that "this exercise is a good way to gain common understanding, share experiences, and improve capabilities and cooperation among militaries in the region to combat terrorism."¹¹

In this way, the past decade has shown ASEAN's deepening securitization of terrorism and its efforts to develop a regional mechanism to promote counterterrorism cooperation. Clearly, ASEAN has attempted to synchronize its regional initiative with the global governance goal of countering violent extremism, as seen in its cooperation with its dialogue partners. Moreover, ASEAN's commitment to "open regionalism" has contributed to the harmonization of its counterterrorism framework with those of wider groupings such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Asia-Europe Meeting. It is in this global context that ASEAN-Japan cooperation should be understood.

ASEAN-JAPAN COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION

It was immediately after the 2002 Bali bombing that Japan started to promote cooperation with ASEAN on counterterrorism. In December 2003, the Tokyo Declaration for the Dynamic and Enduring ASEAN-Japan Partnership in the New Millennium was signed, specifically calling for future cooperation in the fight against terrorism.¹² Following this, the ASEAN-Japan Joint Declaration for Cooperation in the Fight against International Terrorism was announced in 2004, which identified areas of cooperation, including the exchange of information, law enforcement cooperation, prevention of terrorist financing, immigration controls, national transport security, capacity building through training and education, cooperative projects with the SEARCCT, and development projects aimed at reducing poverty and socioeconomic disparities and injustices.¹³

This early initiative was followed by a series of annual dialogues, starting with the ASEAN-Japan Counter-Terrorism Dialogue (AJCTD) in 2006. The AJCTD's first phase (2006–2011) was successful in developing an ASEAN-Japan forum to exchange views on current affairs related to terrorism as well as to identify areas for further counterterrorism cooperation. Importantly, various regional projects were formulated and implemented through the funding provided by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

Also, with the start of the AJCTD, the Japanese government established a new grant aid scheme, the Grant Aid for Cooperation on Counter-Terrorism and Security Enhancement, in 2006 with an annual budget of ¥7.2 billion. In this way, both the JAIF and the new grant aid scheme became Japan's instruments for promoting capacity-building cooperation in the field of counterterrorism. The JAIF has been used for regional projects while the counterterrorism grant aid has been used for bilateral cooperation, including the provision of patrol vessels to Indonesia, the

enhancement of communications systems for maritime security in the Philippines, the improvement of security facilities at the Phnom Penh Autonomous Port in Cambodia, and the improvement of maritime security equipment in Malaysia.

The AJCTD entered its second phase in 2012. Based on the assessment that the first phase was successful in building the basis for cooperative projects in various fields of counterterrorism policies, the new phase (2012–2015) was designed to highlight the priority areas on which ASEAN and Japan have agreed to focus. These areas are chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE), and cyberterrorism. The intent is not to exclude other areas that were already discussed in the first phase, including transport security, border control and immigration, law enforcement, and maritime security. But the priority for the second phase is to address those areas that are expected to advance through cooperation with Japan and to avoid possible overlap with initiatives of other dialogue partners.

In this way, Japan has actively promoted counterterrorism cooperation with ASEAN for more than a decade, especially since 2003. It is, on the one hand, a reflection of Japan's strong commitment to international peace cooperation since the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, it is a strategic projection of Japan's political will to play a more active role in the maintenance of regional security in Asia through cooperation on nontraditional security issues, which are politically less sensitive than defense-related issues.¹⁴

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Deepening ASEAN counterterrorism cooperation has contributed to the building of the APSC and its capacity to deal with terrorism. No doubt, the role of dialogue partners, including Japan, has been important to the improvement of regional capacity. It was Japan that took the initiative to mobilize schemes such as the JAIF and the counterterrorism grant aid scheme and to utilize them to respond actively and flexibly to various needs for capacity building in the region. As a result, we have seen a decline in the number of high-profile terrorist attacks led by groups linked to transnational violent extremism, namely al-Qaeda, as reported by a series of analyses prepared by the International Crisis Group.¹⁵ This is, however, not to say that the threat of terrorism is fading away. In Southeast Asia, we still see a significant number of terrorist attacks conducted by local militant groups with local motives. The widely cited *Global Terrorism Index* in its 2012 edition shows that countries in Southeast Asia are still very vulnerable to the

threat of violent extremism. Thailand, for example, is ranked 8th in its list of the most terrorism-prone countries in the world, while the Philippines is ranked 10th, Indonesia 29th, and Myanmar 33rd, with a total of 321 terrorist incidents recorded in these four countries during 2011. In comparison with other regions, these rankings show that Southeast Asia is still viewed by the international community as a major site of terrorist threats.

If that is the case, what are the challenges and how can ASEAN-Japan cooperation deal with them? At least three challenges, among others, should be identified here. First, it should be noted that the militant groups have been using ASEAN countries' "backyards" to instill radical ideologies and produce local jihadists. The deep south in Thailand, Mindanao in the Philippines, and Poso in Indonesia are all conflict-prone areas and targets of recruitment and training for local terrorists.¹⁶ In these areas, the agenda of peacebuilding has not been fully accomplished and the vicious cycle of violence persists. Thus, the obvious challenge is harmonizing and synchronizing peacebuilding efforts and counterterrorism activities in an effective way. The policy "best mix" should be explored carefully in order to avoid possible mutually undermining effects. International peacebuilding cooperation has been one of Japan's major diplomatic pillars for decades, and lessons from that experience should be mobilized to address the best mix and share its policy vision with ASEAN countries through the framework of the AJCTD.

Second, the enduring threat of terrorism partly comes from the reality of weak border control in many parts of the region, especially in maritime Southeast Asia. There are huge unpatrolled border areas in Southeast Asian waters, which has enabled many types of cross-border illegal movements to operate freely.¹⁷ Clearly, this gap has helped undocumented migrants and illegal arms to travel across borders and has sustained the capacity of violent extremism in Southeast Asia. Thus, an obvious challenge is strengthening control over border areas, and this relies heavily on each individual country's efforts to build up border patrol capacity. Weak border control is definitely not a new problem; rather, it is embedded in the region's history of nation building.¹⁸ But it is now being revisited in the age of transnational security threats, and the region is expected to deal with the agenda more progressively in cooperation with the international community, especially with extra-regional stakeholders in the maritime security-safety of Southeast Asia.

Japan is one of these stakeholders, and it has launched various initiatives to promote maritime cooperation with ASEAN countries. As listed in the AJCTD's areas of cooperation, border control and maritime security have been shared concerns. To strengthen ASEAN-Japan cooperation in these

two areas, Japan can more actively initiate a vision for establishing a regional academy for maritime law enforcement agencies (such as coast guards and water police). Such an academy would train and educate young prospective civilian officers with the support of the Japan Coast Guard, the oldest and largest coast guard in Asia. The idea of maritime security cooperation as a “public good” in the region can be shared more easily among civilian law enforcers at sea, rather than among navy officers whose professionalism lies in the doctrine of defending sovereignty.¹⁹

Finally, the problem of terrorist financing has also sustained the threat of violent extremism in Southeast Asia and should be firmly addressed in the AJCTD framework, perhaps coupled with cyberterrorism, which is a priority in the second phase. It has long been suggested that Southeast Asia’s weak capacity to counter money laundering is a key factor in the flourishing of criminal enterprises, including the drug trade and terrorism. Essentially, any campaign for fighting against terrorism is accepted in different ways by different countries, as they have different levels of threat perception domestically, and this logic has created a gap in commitment among ASEAN countries in their counterterrorism cooperation. But the problem of money laundering is a more common threat for all ASEAN countries, as it causes huge losses to their national economies.²⁰ Although it is not directly related to counterterrorism cooperation, building a regional countermeasure against money laundering would also represent a significant effort toward weakening the financial basis of terrorist activities in the region. Since it is arguably not extremely difficult to link cyberterrorism and cybercrime, the very understanding that money laundering is at the core of cybercrime and that cyberterrorism is part of cybercrime can be shared without difficulty. It is in this context that the counter-money laundering agenda should be underlined in the AJCTD as a necessary measure to combat terrorist financing. It is essentially financial sector capacity building—an area of cooperation where Japan has long been regarded as highly skilled.

In this way, there are still many frontiers for ASEAN-Japan cooperation on counterterrorism even after a decade of the global war on terror. What we are seeing today is the twin process of contextualizing global governance of counterterrorism in Southeast Asia and of regionalizing security cooperation within ASEAN and between ASEAN and Japan. This process may take time, but it is a necessary process in building a viable regional institution that could work in unison with agendas of global governance.

NOTES

1. On the role of the UN in promoting counterterrorism cooperation, see, for example, Victor Ramraj, Michael Hor, Kent Roach, George Williams, ed., *Global Anti-Terrorism Law and Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Peter Romaniuk, *Multilateral Counter-Terrorism: The Global Politics of Cooperation and Contestation* (London: Routledge, 2010).
2. On Jemaah Islamiyah, see various reports published by the International Crisis Group. For example, “Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates,” Asia Report no. 43 (December 11, 2002); “Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous,” Asia Report no. 63 (August 26, 2003); and “Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah’s Current Status,” Asia Briefing no. 63 (May 3, 2007).
3. On Japan’s post–Cold War international peace cooperation, see Peng Er Lam, *Japan’s Peace-Building Diplomacy in Asia: Seeking a More Active Political Role* (Oxford: Routledge, 2009).
4. The Declaration can be found in “ASEAN Documents on Combating Transnational Crime and Terrorism: A Compilation of ASEAN Declarations, Joint Declarations, and Statements on Combating Transnational Crime and Terrorism,” Security Cooperation Division, ASEAN Political-Security Department (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 2012), 9–11.
5. The Plan of Action can be found in “ASEAN Documents on Combating Transnational Crime and Terrorism,” 18–23.
6. For the declaration, see “ASEAN Documents on Combating Transnational Crime and Terrorism,” 25–26.
7. Regarding counterterrorism, the work program targets information exchange, legal harmonization, intelligence sharing, law enforcement coordination, and training programs.
8. The Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
9. SEARCCT’s programs in 2013 included, for example, enhancing port security, rehabilitation of terrorism offenders, a cyber terrorism workshop, CBRNE [chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives] first responder training, an aviation security seminar, dynamics of youth and terrorism, terrorist financing, and countering violent extremism. From its inception in 2003 until December 2012, SEARCCT conducted 112 capacity building programs for participations from ASEAN countries. For details, see SEARCCT, “Prospectus 2013,” (Kuala Lumpur: SEARCCT, 2013).
10. The convention can be found in “ASEAN Documents on Combating Transnational Crime and Terrorism,” 61–68.
11. See “Joint counterterrorism exercise kicks off in Sentul,” *Jakarta Post*, September 10, 2013.
12. Cf. Section 2(3), “2003 Tokyo Declaration for the Dynamic and Enduring ASEAN-Japan Partnership in the New Millennium,” Tokyo, December 11–12, 2003.
13. The declaration can be found in “ASEAN Documents on Combating Transnational Crime and Terrorism,” 46–48.
14. In fact, an ASEAN+3 forum on nontraditional security threat has been held since 2009. The forum is for military officers from the 13 countries, and they discuss issues such as disaster relief.

15. See International Crisis Group, "How Indonesian Extremists Regroup," Asia Report no. 228 (July 16, 2012). See also Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, "Weak, Therefore Violent: The Mujahidin of Western Indonesia," IPAC Report no. 5 (December 2, 2013).
16. On the deep south in Thailand, see International Crisis Group, "Thailand: The Evolving Conflict in the South," Asia Report no. 241 (December 11, 2012); and Dancan McCargo, *Mapping National Anxieties: Thailand's Southern Conflict* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2013). On Mindanao's conflicts, see International Crisis Group, "The Philippines: The Collapse of Peace in Mindanao," Asia Briefing no. 83 (October 23, 2008); International Crisis Group, "The Philippines: Breakthrough in Mindanao," Asia Report no. 240 (December 5, 2012). On Poso, see International Crisis Group, "Jihadism in Indonesia: Poso on the Edge," Asia Report no. 127 (January 24, 2007); International Crisis Group, "Weakening Indonesia's Mujahidin Networks: Lessons from Maluku and Poso," Asia Report no. 103 (October 13, 2005).
17. On this problem, see, for example, Carolin Liss, *Oceans of Crime: Maritime Piracy and Transnational Security in Southeast Asia and Bangladesh* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010); Robert C. Beckman and J. Ashley Roach, eds., *Piracy and International Maritime Crimes in ASEAN: Prospects for Cooperation* (Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publisher, 2012); and Jun Honna, "Transnational Crime and Human Insecurity in Southeast Asia," in *Protecting Human Security in a Post 9/11 World: Critical and Global Insights*, ed. Giogio Shani, Makoto Sato and Mustapha Kamal Pasha (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 97–114.
18. For an insightful account on this, see Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Traders, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States Along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865–1915* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009).
19. For a more detailed discussion on this issue, see Jun Honna, "ASEAN-Japan Cooperation on Maritime Non-Traditional Security Issues: Towards a New Paradigm," in *ASEAN-Japan Relations*, ed. Takashi Shiraishi and Takaaki Kojima (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014), 96–113.
20. See Chat Le Nguyen, "Towards the Effective ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance in Combating Money Laundering," *Journal of Money Laundering Control* 15, no. 4 (2012): 38395; Loong Wong, "Money-laundering in Southeast Asia: Liberalism and Governmentality at Work," *Contemporary Politics* 19, no. 2 (2013): 221–33; Asian Development Bank, "Enhancing the Asian Development Bank's Role in Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism," March 2003.