Institutional transformation of ASEAN: ZOPFAN, TAC, and the Bali Concord I in 1968-1976

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Abstract Many international relations (IR) scholars discuss whether the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) possesses institutional utility in maintaining security in Southeast Asia or East Asia. While this has important implications for both academics and policy-makers, ASEAN’s role has been too often evaluated in terms of what has persisted within the association rather than what changed. Yet, exploring the causes and processes of institutional transformation are particularly important because they have made ASEAN expand its security utility by creating security dialogues and fostering security cooperation in the region. In this context, the crucial question is: when and how has ASEAN changed?

Focusing on the causes and processes of institutional transformation which have occurred within ASEAN, this article explores ASEAN’s transformation from 1968 to 1976, by using a theoretical model, developed from historical institutionalism and the punctuated equilibrium model. Applying this approach to institutional transformation of ASEAN in the political-security field, three transformation processes are constructed. First, ASEAN member states’ expected changes in the external security environment triggered internal discussions regarding ASEAN’s political-security function; second, these internal political discussions fostered institutional consolidation of ASEAN during this period; and third, such direction of institutional transformation was fundamentally guided by ideas provided by institutional norm entrepreneurs (INEs), especially Malaysia’s neutrality proposal.

In particular, this article examines the process of ASEAN’s creation of the Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in 1971, and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and the Bali Concord in 1976, and argues that this model shed light on the significance of ZOPFAN that created a foundation of TAC and the...
Bali Concord, for which conventional wisdom has dismissed as an insignificant institutional concept by academics and practitioners.

**Keywords** ASEAN; institutional change; great power politics; East Asia; multilateralism; security

1. Introduction

Many scholars continue to discuss whether the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) possesses institutional utility in maintaining security in Southeast Asia or East Asia. While this has important implications for both academics and policy-makers, ASEAN’s role has been too often evaluated in terms of what has persisted within the association rather than what changed. Indeed, the mainstream IR literature on East Asia tends to focus only on the historical continuity of ASEAN’s utility, not the causes and processes of institutional transformation that have occurred within it. However, these are important because they have made ASEAN expand its security utility by creating security dialogues and fostering security cooperation in the region. In this context, the crucial question is: when and how has ASEAN changed?

Generally, there is little consensus over questions of institutional change in the IR field. Structural/neo-realists consider that common threats are the ties that bind member states and form institutions (Mearsheimer 1990; Waltz 2000), and thus, institutions transform only when common threats change. Institutionalists argue that the reduction of transaction costs can make institutions durable (Haftendorn, Keohane, Wallander 1999; Ikenberry 2001). On the other hand, social constructivists emphasize the role of ideational factors and argue that institutions can become identities or constitutive norms for member states that attempt to sustain them (Ruggie 1998; Wendt 1999). The focus of these arguments is mainly on the durability of institutions; they do not explore the mechanisms of change in international institutions, especially regional organizations led by developing states.

In this context, this article explores why and how ASEAN undertook functional evolution in the security field from 1968 to 1976. ASEAN is today recognized as an important regional institution in East Asia, and it has undertaken several institutional transformations since its inception. One of the most significant changes can be found in its early stages, when ASEAN switched its institutional stance from a non-political organization to a political organization during the 1968–1976 period, through the Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, the so-called ‘Bali Concord I’ (hereafter, the Bali Concord). Unpacking this process sheds light on what ASEAN was, its raison d’être, what changed, within a broader picture, the mechanisms of institutional transformation.

The theoretical model of institutional transformation derives from historical institutionalism and a punctuated equilibrium model. Both have similar
approaches to the subject matter. They posit that historical processes, which historical institutionalism calls ‘path-dependence,’ narrows the policy choices of actors, and gradually ossifies institutional norms, so that changes become difficult (Streeck and Thelen 2005; Fioretos 2011). However, this does not mean that changes become impossible. Exogenous shocks, or environmental change, can open a window of opportunity to change those norms (Streeck and Thelen 2005; Fioretos 2011; Krasner 1984). A window of opportunity can also be created by an accumulation of small endogenous changes (Streeck and Thelen 2005; Fioretos 2011). However, this conceptual framework was created on the basis of domestic politics. Since the frequency of interaction among agents in the international arena is thinner, endogenously propelled transformation is a relatively rare phenomenon at that level. Thus, this article takes the stance that institutional transformation in the international sphere is likely to occur by exogenous shock.

Applying this approach to institutional transformation of regional organizations that concern the political security field, three transformation processes are constructed. First, the expected change in the regional balance of power (‘exogenous shock’) triggers internal discussions (a ‘window of opportunity’) for institutional transformation. Second, these discussions, through which member states evaluate institutional utility on the basis of previously created security arrangements as a reference point, define the direction of the transformation. Third, such direction is greatly influenced by ideas provided by institutional norm entrepreneurs (INEs), which can include individuals, committees, and member states.

Correspondingly, I argue that ASEAN undertook two of these processes from 1968 to 1976. First, ASEAN member states’ expectations of shifts in the regional balance of power in the periods of 1968–1971 and 1972–1976 became a trigger for institutional transformation. More specifically, such expectations promoted internal discussions within ASEAN about whether the institution could serve members’ security in changing regional environment. Second, ASEAN’s assessment affected the direction of institutional transformation. ASEAN assessed its security utility, using its previous institutional declaration as a basic reference point, namely the 1967 ASEAN Concord and ZOPFAN. Third, INEs, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, provided new ideas for a specific direction of ASEAN’s institutional transformation during the internal discussion period, and these ideas were incorporated into the internal discussions among the ASEAN member states, which in turn shaped those ideas for adoption. Admittedly, the in-depth discussion on theoretical model of institutional transformation is out of scope of this article; however, even this skeletal model provides new insights of ASEAN’s transformation in its early stages. Indeed, this model shed light on the significance of ZOPFAN that created a foundation of TAC and the Bali Concord, which conventional wisdom has dismissed as an insignificant institutional concept by academics and practitioners.

This article proceeds by first analyzing ASEAN’s transformation in 1968–1976; second, it discusses the process of formulating ZOPFAN in
1971 on the one hand and of TAC and the Bali Concord in 1976 on the other. Finally, this article will assess why and how ASEAN transformed during this period and provide implications for the study of institutional transformation, which is necessary to further develop IR theories.

2. ASEAN from 1968 to 1976: ZOPFAN, TAC, and the Bali Concord

ASEAN was created by the ASEAN Declaration on 8 August 1967. This declaration did not stipulate specific security cooperation among the member states. The only method suggested maintaining ‘regional peace and stability’ was for member states to adhere to the principles of the UN Charter, and ASEAN did not provide its own regional code of conduct regarding security in Southeast Asia. Yet, from 1968 to 1976, ASEAN undertook institutional transformation by producing three official documents: ZOPFAN in November 1971, TAC, and the Bali Concord in February 1976. The process of institutional transformation through these three documents shows ASEAN’s functional evolution.

First, the 1971 Declaration of ZOPFAN provided specific institutional objectives on regional cooperation, compared with the 1976 ASEAN Declaration (ASEAN Secretariat 1967; ASEAN Secretariat 1971b). The ZOPFAN document focused more on the normative code of conduct inside and outside Southeast Asia. Particularly, its concept of non-interference was sharpened: ASEAN distinguished non-interference ‘within’ the region from ‘outside’ it by using the term ‘external’ interference, more clearly. In this sense, ASEAN began to forge the concept of what ‘external’ means for ASEAN, creating the capacity for collective action toward outside powers.

Second, TAC provided a code of conduct in Southeast Asia in a legally binding form by stipulating six principles, including freedom from external interference, non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, peaceful settlement of disputes, and renunciation of the threat or use of force (ASEAN Secretariat 1976b). According to Articles 4, 9, and 11, the means to achieve peace and stability is not only regional inter-state and non-military cooperation, but also involves each respective member’s national economic and social development for its domestic stability. This is because ASEAN did not consider that intra-member military cooperation as useful to ensure regional security, only that domestic stability could contribute to regional security.

Third, the Bali Concord stipulated ASEAN’s form, objectives, and prioritization, including ‘the stability of each member state and of the ASEAN region’ (ASEAN Secretariat 1976a). For the first time, ASEAN prioritized fostering national development and strengthening ASEAN solidarity over regional solidarity. Further, ASEAN began to explicitly promote security
cooperation in the so-called non-traditional security fields, such as natural disasters and human security.

Through these documents, ASEAN provided a more specific conceptual framework and the means to ensure its members’ security. As ASEAN member states’ national and institutional capabilities were limited, the association attempted to politically align member states with each other in international economic negotiations to ensure their economic security. Also, TAC and the Bali Concord provided a code of conduct, consultation mechanisms, and regional scope for the member states. TAC provided a more explicit code of conduct in Southeast Asia, and further institutionalization of ASEAN proceeded through the setting up of forums and mechanisms such as the ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Secretariat. The Bali Concord also made its scope of regional cooperation more evident. The concord used the term ‘ASEAN resilience’ in order to justify prioritizing intra-member states’ cooperation over broader regional cooperation. At its inception, ASEAN envisioned inclusion of all the Southeast Asian states, but the concord became the first official document to distinguish between Southeast Asia and ASEAN.

Why and how did ASEAN’s transformation occur? In the next section, I will analyze the formation of ZOPFAN, TAC, and the Bali Concord. While ZOPFAN was created in 1971, TAC and the Bali Concord on the other were concluded in 1976. I will divide the period into two phases: 1968–1971 (Phase I) and 1972–1976 (Phase II) to trace the process of creating these documents.

3. Phase I: ASEAN from 1968 to 1971 – ZOPFAN

3.1. Triggers: UK and US military retrenchment and Sino-US rapprochement

The regional strategic environment in Southeast Asia began to shift through three significant events in Southeast Asia from 1968 to 1971: the UK decision to withdraw from Southeast Asia, the US disengagement from Vietnam in 1969, and the Sino-US rapprochement in the early 1970s.

First, Britain’s security role in Southeast Asia gradually diminished in the late 1960s. Previously, the purpose of UK engagement was the defense of its colonies and former colonies, especially Malaysia and Singapore through the Anglo-Malayan/Malaysian Defence Agreement (AMDA), and the maintenance of regional stability by countering communist threats. Having long asserted its regional security role shown by the 1957 White Paper that lays out the British responsibility ‘to defend [its] colonies and protected territories against local attack, and undertake limited operations in overseas emergencies’ (White Paper on Defence 1957: 2), the United Kingdom increasingly faced economic difficulties in the early post-war era, which made its presence in Southeast Asia unsustainable.
In this context, the domestic coup in Indonesia, the so-called 30 September Movement (G30S) in 1965, propelled UK retrenchment. After the G30S, Suharto altered the Konfrontasi policy, Indonesia’s confrontational policy against Malaysia, later formally abandoning it in August 1967. Consequently, the political and military tensions between Malaysia/Singapore and Indonesia were significantly reduced. This allowed the United Kingdom to alter its ‘East of Suez’ policy, particularly in Southeast Asia, and the government started to discuss defense reduction, aiming at complete withdrawal by around 1970 (Chin 1983: 127, 130–131).

A second factor was the US intention of military withdrawal from Vietnam. The signal for US disengagement from Vietnam became clear in 1967, when Richard Nixon, the then-candidate for President, wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs*. Nixon argued that the United States should not lead, but support regional security efforts, including regional defense pacts, should communist threats need to be countered. He even proposed a modified version of a regional collective security system managed by regional states that mainly focused on internal threats, which would not be assisted by outside powers (Nixon 1967: 114–115). This line of argument informed policy, resulting in the Guam Doctrine, the so-called ‘Nixon Doctrine,’ declared on 25 July 1969 (Nixon 1969a).

On 3 November 1969, Nixon, through his ‘silent majority’ speech, asserted that the United States should encourage Asian nations to take more responsibility in dealing with their regional problems. He suggested three principles for US policy toward Asia: keeping all of its treaty commitments, providing a shield against nuclear threats, and providing economic and military assistance in the case of aggression other than a threat of nuclear weapons (Nixon 1969b). The United States thus expressed its intention to provide extended nuclear deterrent to maintain security and stability in Asia, but it would not become involved in regional conflicts at the level of the Vietnam War.

A third event central to change came as the United States began to undertake a rapprochement with China. President Nixon sought rapprochement with both China and the Soviet Union to reduce political and military tensions in the international arena. On China, the United States increased its channels of communication, reduced its economic trade restrictions, and began to negotiate the conditions of US–China normalization. This policy was not motivated by exploiting the Sino-Soviet split, because such a diplomatic maneuver would increase US political tensions with either the Soviet Union or China (Goh 2005: 118–119, 136–142). For its part, China needed to align itself with the United States to deter the Soviet Union, as indicated by deterioration of its relations with the Soviet Union through two border conflicts over Zhenbao Island and Xinjian in 1969, and the Soviet consideration of
military attack against China’s nuclear facilities in Northwest China (Whiting 1980: 336).

From 1970, the United States and China intensified their diplomatic efforts to improve Sino-US relations. This culminated in the Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China, the so-called Shanghai Communiqué, in February 1972. In this communiqué, both states agreed that they would not seek ‘hegemony’ in the ‘Asia–Pacific region’ and would reject third-country or group efforts to establish ‘hegemony,’ and recognized the necessity of the balanced distribution of the power in the region. Since the potential candidate for a ‘third party’ to increase its influence in the region was the Soviet Union (Galubitz 1976: 205–215), the statement sent a diplomatic signal to deter the Soviet expansion of influence in Asia.

Given these strategic fluctuations that would create a security vacuum in East Asia and reformulate the regional balance of power, ASEAN member states were concerned about regional strategic uncertainty. Though each had its own political position toward the development of the regional balance, the member states also perceived a need to foster political cooperation among themselves. This is illustrated by the first informal meeting among ASEAN Foreign Ministers to discuss regional strategic changes on 2 October 1971 (Siagian 1976: 385), just before the UN General Assembly held its vote for the membership entry of the People’s Republic of China. Admittedly, ASEAN member states’ stances were inconsistent. According to The New York Times (1971), Malaysia and Singapore supported membership, the Philippines opposed it, and Indonesia and Thailand abstained. Nonetheless, there arose shared political concerns among member states that if they continued to be divided, Southeast Asia would be once again dominated by foreign powers, i.e. entangled by the Sino-Soviet rivalry. In this sense, the shift in the regional balance of power created a strategic incentive for ASEAN member states to increase institutional utility for their own security.

3.2. Internal discussion: creation of ZOPFAN concept

Changes in the Southeast Asian strategic landscape promoted a general political dilemma for ASEAN member states. From one perspective, it was a positive change since one of ASEAN’s desires was to ‘ensure [members’] stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of their peoples’ (ASEAN Secretariat 1967). The US and UK withdrawals meant the reduction of western influence, which would contribute to regional autonomy in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, it was felt that the western military withdrawal would create a power vacuum, and other outside powers, especially the Soviet Union and China,
might fill that vacuum through political or military intervention. To overcome this dilemma, ASEAN created the ZOPFAN declaration (ASEAN Secretariat 1971b).

Admittedly, there were perception gaps among the member states regarding ASEAN’s utility at this point. Further, lingering intra-ASEAN distrust, especially skepticism regarding Indonesia’s political ambition to pursue a regional hegemon, complicated the process of political cooperation, and thus, the ZOPFAN declaration was neither a simultaneous nor a unanimous institutional product. Indonesia and Malaysia viewed the situation more opportunistically, and they regarded ASEAN as the key institution to achieve regional autonomy. As Indonesia consistently advocated non-intervention from external actors (ASEAN Secretariat 1986: 7), it recommended consolidating ASEAN to discourage the rise of another external power into the region (Malik 1980: 269; Siagian 1976: 121–123). The Indonesian initiative to convene the Jakarta conference for a peaceful resolution of the Cambodian crisis in 1970 is case in point for a regional solution for a regional problem, because the US and UK withdrawals provided Southeast Asia with an opportunity not to rely on great powers for regional problems.

This position was echoed by Malaysia. In 1968, recognizing that the UK and US disengagement would pose security challenges to Southeast Asia, Malaysia’s Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra encouraged further bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the region by stating ‘a time of danger is also a time of opportunity’ (ASEAN Secretariat 1986: 15). Since the 1967 announcement of the UK withdrawal in 1967, Malaysia had shifted its foreign policy from alignment with the western powers to non-alignment, and it actively sought regional autonomy in Southeast Asia. Malaysia saw the positive change, if a transformation of ASEAN would ensure security of member states, filling the vacuum in the regional balance of power. It is in this context that Ismail Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, made a speech in 1971 on a policy of neutralization for Southeast Asia, which aimed at gaining non-intervention guarantees from the United States, the Soviet Union, and China (ASEAN Secretariat 1986: 156–160).

In contrast, the perspectives of Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines were more ambivalent. Singapore feared that the rapid changes in the regional strategic landscape would negatively affect its national security, yet it desired to fill the power vacuum through ASEAN’s economic and social cooperation (Siagian 1976: 85, 113, 138). Singapore considered that this would help member states concentrate on promoting domestic stability, indirectly ensuring their security. Thailand also saw ASEAN as having an indirect security role. Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, argued that economic, social, and political developments were imperative for national stability, which could be achieved only when ASEAN maintained the ‘unifying force of solidarity’ (Siagian 1976: 117). On the other hand, the Philippines considered ASEAN as only one of
some regional institutions able to foster regional cooperation. Indeed, it was more inclined to utilize and strengthen other regional organizations, such as the Asia Pacific Council and Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, which had political linkages with the great powers (Marcos 1969).

Despite these divergences, all the member states sought to prevent other foreign powers, particularly China given its support for domestic communist insurgencies, from expanding their spheres of influence into Southeast Asia. Therefore, they attempted to define ASEAN’s utility for regional security. While they somewhat considered the change in the regional balance of power positively, all perceived that the existing ASEAN’s capability was not enough to meet new security challenges, and to ensure one of the ASEAN’s fundamental objectives, the non-interference principle (Marcos 1969: 385; ASEAN Secretariat 1971a). In this sense, they began to seek ways to strengthen the principle.

3.3. Malaysia as the INE: from neutrality to ZOPFAN

ASEAN’s transformation thus gained some traction as a result of the changes in the regional strategic landscape, but it lacked an institutional consensus on its prioritization and methods of implementation. In this context, two main INEs, Indonesia and Malaysia, emerged.

Indonesia offered potential security cooperation within the ASEAN framework, implicitly proposing ASEAN’s functional expansion into the security field. In 1969, Suharto stated in his letter to the Second ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) that:

[ASEAN member states] must strengthen [their] dedication and increase [their] efforts to implement the aims of ASEAN, not only to achieve economic and technical progress, but also to help safeguard peace, security and stability in our region, as a contribution towards peace, security and stability in the world [emphasis added]. (Siagian 1976: 102–103)

Whether or not the Indonesian concept of ‘security’ meant military cooperation, other member states implicitly and explicitly rejected Suharto’s proposal. For example, Singapore argued that ASEAN should focus solely on economic cooperation and that those who were ‘preoccupied with ideological and security problems could perhaps profitably set up other organizations for this purpose’ (Siagian 1976: 106, 113, 117). There was a clear opposition among ASEAN member states to form military cooperation under ASEAN’s framework.

Malaysia, at the same time, proposed the idea of regional neutralization. The original idea was cast within the Malaysian Parliament in January
1968. In April 1970, in the Preparatory Non-Aligned Conference at Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania, Ghazali bin Shafie, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pushed the idea forward to neutralize Southeast Asia under the Soviet, US, and Chinese guarantee (Ghazali 1970: 37), which would require them to strictly follow the non-interference principle, but to intervene to ensure (?) regional stability in case of conflicts or volatility within the region. Prime Minister Razak also reiterated the idea at the Non-Aligned Summit Conference in Lusaka, Zambia, in September 1970 (Razak 1970: 16), and the proposal became Malaysia’s official position. Finally, at the Third AMM in March 1971, Deputy Prime Minister Ismail Abdul Rahman presented it formally to ASEAN.

As such, the Indonesian proposal challenged an institutional ambiguity regarding security cooperation, since such cooperation was not explicitly prohibited in ASEAN’s formative years through official documents. As bilateral military cooperation already existed, for example, Indonesia—Malaysia, Malaysia—Singapore, and Malaysia—Thailand, (Lee 2000: 6, 45; Darling 1969: 116), the proposal would further push security cooperation on a multilateral basis.

Nevertheless, Indonesia’s proposal was rejected for three main reasons. First, the multilateral defense cooperation would send a wrong signal to major powers. It would likely be seen as another regional security bloc, which would provoke external powers, especially the Communist bloc, since most of ASEAN member states had security linkage with the western states. Second, ASEAN had little defense practicality to prevent external interference due to member states’ limited military capabilities. Most Southeast Asian states struggled to stabilize domestic politics and foster economic development and did not have the capacity to drastically increase their military budgets. Third, it would become more difficult to integrate all Southeast Asian states into ASEAN; at worst, such an action might further divide Southeast Asia, considering on-going political and military conflicts in Indo-China states. Thus, Indonesia’s proposal for multilateral security cooperation under ASEAN was rejected by member states, solidifying ASEAN’s norm against multilateral defense pacts.

The Malaysian proposal of neutrality, on the other hand, fostered ASEAN’s discussion to clarify its concept of ‘security,’ providing the means to meet its security challenges. Indeed, ASEAN’s concept of security entailed three levels of threats: external intervention from regional powers, intra-regional conflicts over issues such as disputed islands, and internal threats from secessionist and communist insurrencies. This is illustrated in the 1967 Bangkok Declaration, which provided vague institutional responses to these threats: collective determination to prevent interference and intervention from outside with their adherence to the UN Charter; economic, social, and cultural cooperation to contain or diffuse regional conflicts in addition to their
adherence to the UN Charter; and national development to thwart internal insurgencies. However, ASEAN did not have any action plan to achieve such security objectives.

Malaysia’s neutralization proposal, therefore, provided a conceptual framework for ASEAN to weave those three levels of threats together, and produced a linkage between regional and internal threats. The original proposal put forward three major requirements for ASEAN member states to achieve regional neutralization. First, it required Southeast Asian states to promote regional cooperation, strictly follow the principle of non-interference, respect other states’ sovereignty, and ‘not participate in activities likely to directly or indirectly threaten the security of another’ (Ghazali 1971: 110–117). Second, the major global powers in Southeast Asia, namely the United States, the Soviet Union, and China, needed to provide their security guarantees by accepting Southeast Asia as a zone of neutrality. Third, each ASEAN member state was responsible for its internal stability (Ismail 1970: 58; Wilson 1975: 13–15; Siagian 1976: 156–157). If this neutralization policy were achieved, it would contain external intervention and intra-regional conflicts, which would benefit security for all Southeast Asian states.

Yet, its feasibility was highly in doubt due to skepticism existing among ASEAN member states and great powers. ASEAN member states were also skeptical about the Malaysian proposal. Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore worried that neutralization would accelerate US disengagement from the region (Wilson 1975: 20–22; Emmers 2003: 68). Indonesia also questioned its practicality, as it required guarantee of major powers for monitoring regional stability, which would easily invite their intervention, given the politically unstable regional conditions of the early 1970s (Malik 1971: 31). With these setbacks, even Malaysia recognized that the feasibility of regional neutralization was considerably low in the short term, as Ismail and Razak admitted in 1970 and 1971 respectively (Ismail 1970: 58; Wilson 1975: 4–5). Moreover, the requirement of great power guarantee seemed to be practically infeasible because it would impose on great powers the requirement to refrain from any internal interference unless neutralized states ask for assistance. Besides, in the case of conflicts within the zone caused by external factors or violations by other powers, those powers had the obligation to quell these conflicts (Wilson 1975: 13–15). In fact, all great powers hesitated to fully endorse the idea (Chang 1979: 239; Sopiee 1975: 132–158).

Nevertheless, all the ASEAN member states did not deny the terms of neutralization as a long-term objective for the region; this became an informal focal agenda for ASEAN. Malaysia was also ready to compromise on its own proposal. After ASEAN member states held an informal ministerial meeting on 25–26 November 1971 (Hanggi 1991: 16), the neutralization proposal was modified in five ways and created ZOPFAN. First, ASEAN explicitly stated that regional neutralization was a
long-term goal, not a short-term one. Second, great power guarantees were not mentioned. Instead, ASEAN would make necessary efforts to ‘secure the recognition of, and respect for,’ Southeast Asia as a zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality (ASEAN Secretariat 1971a). Third, the non-aggression principle among Southeast Asian states was stated for the first time. Fourth, the statement regarding a nuclear-free zone in Southeast Asia was introduced, though it was only recognized and not enforced by the member states. Fifth, the legal terms of neutralization were entirely deleted, and ZOPFAN became a political document rather than a legal one. Accordingly, the original neutralization proposal was significantly altered.

Still, the ZOPFAN Declaration synthesized the concept into non-interference principles inside and outside Southeast Asia, and as reiterated the national development objective stipulated in the Bangkok Declaration. To this end, ASEAN created the Committee of Senior Officials; thus, the ZOPFAN concept provided the general direction of ASEAN’s transformation.

4. Phase II: ASEAN from 1972 to 1976 — TAC and the Bali Concord

4.1. Triggers: US disengagement and the Sino-Soviet rivalry in Southeast Asia

From 1972–1976, the US global strategy shift and decision on relative disengagement from Southeast Asia had a major impact on the regional balance of power in East Asia. While US relations with major powers improved in relative terms through détente, this did not translate into immediate tranquility in the intra-regional balance of power in Southeast Asia. Instead, the intra-regional balance of power remained fluid because of the concurrent evolution of the Sino-Soviet rivalry over the regional power vacuum created by the western disengagement. With civil wars in Indo-Chinese states, namely Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, the reconfiguration of the regional strategic balance was underway.

Several ASEAN member states also faced reduction of US military and economic aid, which had been imperative for their national development. The conclusion of the Paris Peace Accords triggered the substantial reduction of American assistance toward ASEAN member states during the 1973–1974 period. The amount of US economic assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, as well as its military assistance to the Philippines and Thailand which were US military treaty allies in Southeast Asia, more than halved; US total assistance to ASEAN member states dropped from US$551.6 million in 1973 to US$275 million in 1974.¹ The United States argued that the reduction of its political commitment to ASEAN aimed at alleviating suspicions that the United States would create a
puppet organization in Southeast Asia (Rogers 1972: 239–240). In this sense, the United States aimed to encourage not only ‘Vietnamization,’ but also ‘Southeast Asianization’ after 1973.

During that same period, the Sino-Soviet rivalry consolidated the political division in Indo-China, as China and the Soviet Union attempted to influence ASEAN member states. China became more explicit in its attempt to counterbalance the Soviet influence in the international arena, as well as North Vietnam’s intervention in Indo-China. By 1973, China had substantially reduced its aid to North Vietnam and completely withdrawn its troops (Zhai 2000: 135). Also, China began to take a more accommodative approach toward ASEAN. For example, when Chen Ji-Shen, China’s Director of Southeast Asian Affairs, visited Malaysia in July 1974, China officially mentioned for the first time that the ZOPFAN concept was compatible with China’s principles of non-interference; China’s Premier, Zhou Enlai, gave the same statement later (Chang 1979: 250); it acknowledged if not fully endorsed the concept of neutrality.

In contrast, the Soviet Union further strengthened its political, economic, and military ties with North Vietnam, and attempted to expand its political and military influence in Southeast Asia. By 1975, its economic aid accounted for approximately 80% of North Vietnam’s state budget (Pike 1987: 77, 106). The Soviet Union also offered Indonesia project aid, including power projects of the 500 and 180 megawatt range (Coggin 1975: 48). Furthermore, it attempted to strengthen its influence over the ASEAN states by revitalizing Brezhnev’s ‘Asian collective security’ proposal, which aimed at excluding the United States and China (Bundy 1971: 189; Birgerson 1997: 221–222); however, this proposal failed again.

By 1975, when North Vietnam captured Saigon, the Sino-Soviet strategic rivalry over Indo-China had become solidified. After the war, China suggested to North Vietnam to keep its distance from the Soviet Union as the Soviet Union intended to become a regional hegemon; yet, North Vietnam did not take this stance (Simon 1979: 1173). Later, China began to cut its ties with Vietnam, as Mao Zedong implicitly suggested that Vietnam should not look for Chinese aid any longer (Zhai 2000: 213). In contrast, Soviet–Vietnamese relations were further strengthened. In October, the Soviet Union agreed to provide Vietnam more economic and military aid in the next five years to purchase Soviet equipment and technical assistance and to strengthen economic ties. In December, the Soviets promised to reconstruct more than 160 heavy and light industrial enterprises and to provide 40 capital projects, whose total aid amount was estimated at $500 million (Simon 1976: 402–403; Leighton 1978: 3–5).

For its part, there was no consensus in ASEAN regarding the approach of the member states toward regional powers. While granting each member the right to pursue individual policies toward China and the Soviet Union, ASEAN attempted to include all Southeast Asian states by inviting
non-members to the AMMs. This was meant to consolidate the institutional political position for the region against external intervention, a step toward realization of ZOPFAN. Thus, ASEAN invited observers from the Republic of Vietnam and the Khmer Republic in 1972, from the Khmer Republic in 1973, and the Royal Kingdom of Laos in 1974 (ASEAN Secretariat 1972a). Membership expansion was discussed intensively.

However, such efforts were thwarted when the political divide between the Soviet Union and China became clear in 1975, and the security situation in Indo-China increasingly became enmeshed in the Sino-Soviet rivalry. While Cambodia fell to Communist forces, and the Khmer Rouge, backed by China, and Pol Pot seized political power, Saigon was captured and unified by North Vietnam with the support of the Soviet Union. Laos came under the control of the communist forces of the Pathet Lao who forced King Savang Vatthana to abdicate and created the Laos People’s Democratic Republic. Furthermore, Vietnam considered ASEAN as a quasi-military alliance supported by the United States (Simon 1979: 1181), and it did not have any interest in becoming a member.

In this sense, the ZOPFAN concept could not prevent Indo-Chinese states from major power intervention, and it became more difficult for ASEAN to realize the terms of the declaration. It is in this strategic context in 1975 that ASEAN reconsidered the methods in order to achieve the establishment of ZOPFAN.

4.2. Internal discussions: emerging two divisions in Southeast Asia

Western disengagement opened a window of opportunity for ASEAN to pursue regional autonomy through ZOPFAN. Yet, the instability in Indo-China and entanglement with the Sino-Soviet rivalry became the greatest concerns for ASEAN, threatening to destabilize Southeast Asia as a whole. During this period, ASEAN member states’ expectations of the future regional balance of power oscillated between ‘positive’ and ‘uncertain,’ and until the end of 1975, ASEAN faced difficulty in determining how it could achieve ZOPFAN.

In April 1972, ASEAN’s overall evaluation of the regional security situation was cautiously positive. Indonesia, while maintaining a cautious attitude by arguing that recent regional political changes ‘may have adverse effects for [Southeast Asia]’ due to the Indo-Chinese conflicts, asserted that it was ASEAN’s responsibility to take adequate measures for its institutional principles, as illustrated by its creation of the Jakarta Conference for Cambodian Settlement (Siagian 1976: 179). Malaysia considered the security situation as slowly moving toward ‘peace and tranquility,’ and the Sino-US rapprochement could potentially help realize ZOPFAN, as it illustrated that ‘states with different political systems can co-exist peacefully on the basis of mutual respect for each other’s sovereignty and

In April 1973, however, ASEAN faced new security challenges despite the Paris Peace Accords. Since Indo-China remained unstable and the US aid to Southeast Asia was expected to decline, ASEAN member states could no longer maintain the same positive expectations as they had in April 1972. Some ASEAN member states were more affected by these changes, and perspectives of the intra-regional balance of power and expectations for ASEAN soon differed: Thailand held the most negative view; Singapore and the Philippines were more uncertain; and Indonesia and Malaysia maintained a positive view.

Thailand was most concerned about the Indo-Chinese conflict, especially that of its neighbor, Cambodia. Chatichai Choonhavan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, argued that ASEAN needed to assume its responsibilities for security issues, prevent membership expansion, and detach from other Southeast Asian states to consolidate the institution; the process would include the establishment of a central secretariat (Siagian 1976: 233–234).

Singapore, which emphasized ASEAN as an ‘economic organization,’ leaned toward an uncertain view of future regional stability, noting that economic aid from the United States would decrease while tensions in Indo-China would likely increase (Siagian 1976: 213). The Philippines were also uncertain about the future prospect of the regional balance of power because the regional situation faced ‘unpredictable change’ (Siagian 1976: 229).

Indonesian and Malaysian expectations were generally unaffected. Indonesia, acknowledging that rapprochements among major powers were still a positive trend, argued that ‘shifts in the power equilibrium may have adverse effects on Southeast Asia’ unless ASEAN would strengthen national and regional development program, create a central secretariat, and coordinate unified political stances in economic negotiations with major powers (Siagian 1976: 219). Malaysia regarded the power shift as an opportunity for ASEAN to create peace in Indo-China through the ASEAN Coordination Committee in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Indo-China and to ‘consolidate [ASEAN’s] foundations’ (Siagian 1976: 228).

In May 1974, ASEAN’s expectations toward the changes in regional strategic landscape again began to converge into ‘uncertainty.’ The member states were increasingly aware that the major power rapprochement had not had a positive impact on regional stability. For example, Suharto observed that ‘...war and conflicts continue to be the disturbing reality in [Southeast Asia],’ and thus, the détente ‘[does] not automatically provide [Southeast Asia] with the assurance that outside powers will cease interfering in the internal affairs of our region’ (Siagian 1976: 241–242). Other ASEAN member states held similar assessments. Malaysia argued that détente among the super powers was not a ‘panacea’ for world major
political, economic, and social problems (Rithauddeen 1975: 37). The Philippines mentioned that the ceasefire agreement in Indo-China gave the ‘sense of optimism’ but had not brought peace in Cambodia and Vietnam (Siagian 1976: 252). In 1974, Singapore asserted that the Paris Peace Treaty and détente between the great powers had ‘little substance’ (Siagian 1976: 259). Thailand said, ‘[Indochina’s] developments since [the Paris Peace Accords] have given us little reason to rejoice,’ and expressed concerns about the possibility of North Vietnam’s new offensive toward Cambodia (Siagian 1976: 264).

In May 1975, the regional security assessment among ASEAN member states again differed due to the fall of Saigon and Cambodia. Some states, such as Indonesia and Malaysia, attempted to see the security situations in Southeast Asia as relatively positive, albeit with some reservations, while others, namely Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand, were more cautious about the development (Siagian 1976: 305–306). The oscillation of security perspective among ASEAN member states from 1972 to 1975 illustrates that there was little consensus on security outlooks in Southeast Asia.

Despite this, ASEAN during this period began to politically detach themselves from the Indo-Chinese states that were entangled in great power politics. Indeed, unlike the period between 1968 and 1971, ASEAN’s security discussions from 1972 to 1976 focused exclusively on Indo-China and the maneuvering of the major powers’, and not intra-member conflicts within ASEAN. Security concerns were more about each member state’s internal subversion and the spillover effects of the conflicts in Indo-China, even if they disagreed over the implication for the future intra-regional balance of power. In other words, ASEAN member states attempted to consolidate the institution among existing members first, excluding the unstable Indo-Chinese states momentarily, marking an institutional transformation.

### 4.3. Multiple INEs: detaching ASEAN from Southeast Asia

In 1971, the ZOPFAN Declaration created broad behavioral guidelines for the member states. However, ASEAN did not make any official statements regarding ZOPFAN in its AMM joint communiqués from 1972 to 1975. Details of the concept were still under consideration by a Committee of Senior Officials, and representatives of ASEAN member states continued to engage in informal discussion regarding their assessments of progress toward ZOPFAN. Thus, during this period, two levels of processes were concurrently undertaken to set institutional priorities for the realization of ZOPFAN: one at the foreign minister level and the other at the senior official level.

At the foreign minister level, the 1973 Paris Peace Treaty triggered ASEAN’s discussion by creating a window of opportunity to realize
ZOPFAN in Southeast Asia. In this setting, two main INEs emerged: Indonesia and Thailand. First, Indonesia introduced the concept of ‘regional resilience’ on the basis of its own concept of ‘national resilience.’

In 1972, defining national resilience as ‘to enhance the capabilities and abilities of each member country and its people in all fields of national endeavor, in order to withstand and to overcome all kinds of outside interference and adverse influences, harmful to its sound and harmonious development,’ Adam Malik, Indonesian Foreign Minister, connected the concept to the regional context by stating that national resilience would be applied ‘within the regional context and its special bearing on ASEAN’ (Siagian 1976: 181).

Malik further argued that it should be ‘the guiding principle’ for ASEAN toward regional peace and stability (Siagian 1976: 181). The concept of regional resilience, thus, introduced coordination efforts among Southeast Asian states as an alternative policy to neutralization though the two were not mutually exclusive.

Essentially, this concept placed ASEAN’s security priority on intra-regional and internal security. The corollary is that the achievement of national development and regional cooperation would create regional strength in Southeast Asia, which would prevent external powers from intervening in the region in any form. The 1973 Joint Press statement of the ASEAN Ministers’ informal meeting used this term for the first time, stating that ‘the developing national and regional resilience could be the foundation on which Southeast Asian countries could assume responsibility [to achieve the peace and stability of the region and their own well-being]’ (ASEAN Secretariat 1973). This line of logic was echoed by other ASEAN member states, such as Malaysia and Thailand, as ‘the promise of the neutralization proposal’ (Siagian 1976: 228, 266, 291).

At the foreign minister level, Thailand induced a two-step approach for ASEAN’s institutional consolidation. This is illustrated by the development of Thai proposal of an Asian Forum in 1973 after the Paris Peace Agreement. This forum was a modified version of the 1960s Filipino proposal of an Asian political forum. Instead of Asian political forum inviting all Asian states, the proposal — well considered within ASEAN — would invite only Southeast Asian states (Siagian 1976: 152). In April 1973, ASEAN reconfirmed the desirability of convening an Asian forum to ‘discuss problems of vital interest in the region’ and ‘remove misunderstanding and dispel suspicion,’ citing the possibility that it would ‘lead to productive and peaceful co-operation among the Southeast Asian nations,’ and ‘safeguard the interests of the region as a whole’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia 1973: 20). With the peace agreement in Vietnam, there was a general agreement among ASEAN member states to consider potential membership expansion, including all Southeast Asian states. This idea emphasized regional autonomy free from external interference, and reinforced the institutional priority on intra-regional security. However, when
the Sino-Soviet rivalry and Indo-Chinese conflicts intensified, expansion lost traction; instead, the two-step approach, which promoted ASEAN consolidation first, and would then focus on Southeast Asia, took the form of institutional consolidation among the existing ASEAN member states, resulting in TAC and the Bali Concord in February 1976.

Both proposals focused on intra-regional security, resonating with ZOPFAN objectives. Indeed, there was little disagreement among ASEAN member states on the direction of institutional consolidation, especially on the issue of membership expansion; opinions differed only on the timing of implementation.

Meanwhile, at the senior official level, a ZOPFAN blue-print committee served as the other INE, helping to shape the direction of ASEAN’s institutional consolidation. This Committee of Senior Officials was established by the 1971 ZOPFAN Declaration, and aimed at ‘[studying] and [considering] what further necessary steps should be taken to bring about the realization of their objectives’ (ASEAN Secretariat 1971a).

Most significantly, the committee redefined the concept of ‘neutrality,’ marginalizing the ‘neutralization’ process from being the institutional objective to one means of establishing ZOPFAN (ASEAN Secretariat 1972b; Hanggi 1991: 22–24). While traditional neutrality is generally applied to a state during wartime, ASEAN expanded its definition to both peacetime and wartime, including any and all forms of conflict from outside the zonal states. Consequently, ‘neutralization’ to achieve the traditional meaning of neutrality was not enough to achieve ZOPFAN, and thus it became not the only objective to realize ZOPFAN, as Ministers asked the Committee at the 1972 AMM to consider ‘other means’ to achieve it (ASEAN Secretariat, 1972b). Accordingly, the committee did not strictly pursue neutralization policy by attaining major power guarantees, which was not discussed in two documents the committee produced in 1973 and 1974. The 14-point ‘Guidelines that would constitute a code of conduct covering relations among states within the zone and with states outside the zone’ and ‘Measures to be taken in the event of violation.’ Instead, it produced ‘Manifestation of recognition and respect of the zone’ as a means to secure the recognition of major powers. In short, these definitions left ASEAN’s options open to pursue ZOPFAN outside of neutralization.

In addition, the committee constructed specific behavioral constraints of Southeast Asian states by setting the regional code of conduct. The 14-point guideline set specific principles and rules; the manifestation document provided an action plan; and the measures of violation established the procedures in those situations. For example, the guideline’s spelling out of the ‘peaceful settlement of differences or disputes’ and ‘restriction from the use of armed forces for any purpose in the conduct of international relations except for self-defense,’ represented a more specific regional code of conduct than the 1967 ASEAN Declaration.
These diplomatic and institutionalization processes produced ideas for the geographic scope of ASEAN’s institutional consolidation. However, as the security situation in Indo-China showed little improvement in the aftermath of the Paris Accords, ASEAN member states began to consider the exclusion of the Indo-China states from its initial roadmap (Siagian 1976: 266). Even Malaysia focused on ASEAN’s cooperation by arguing that ZOPFAN proposals should ‘first have the support of countries in the proposed zone’ (Jubir 1974: 51). In 1975, Malaysia’s Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shafie, introduced the term ‘Pax-ASEAN,’ emphasizing member states cooperation on the basis of national and regional resilience (Ghazali 1975: 11). Accordingly, by 1975, the original idea of pursuing ZOPFAN had been modified: instead of focusing on membership expansion and securing the guarantees of major powers, ASEAN aimed at undertaking a two-step approach.

ASEAN aimed at further promoting inter-member cooperation and consolidation in concluding TAC and the Bali Concord, while postponing inclusion of all the Southeast Asian states in the short term. The concept of security for ASEAN expanded beyond the political—military realm (Marcos 1974; Siagian 1976: 302), with Malaysian Prime Minister Onn saying that economic development would serve national and regional security (State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia 1976: 16). Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, all valued ASEAN’s cohesive economic diplomacy as a counter to economic pressures from global economic powers and groupings, serving their national security and stability (State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia 1976: 21, 24, 27, 32). This resonated with Indonesia’s concept of ‘national resilience.’ Suharto said:

Our concept of security is inward-looking, namely to establish an orderly, peaceful and stable condition within each individual territory, free from any subversive elements and infiltration, wherever from their origins might be...It is mainly for this purpose that we ought to promote constantly our respective national resilience which in turn will be conducive to the creation of a regional resilience. (State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia 1976: 31)

In sum, INEs’ ideas were taken into account as a means to achieve ZOPFAN. The Committee of Senior Officials changed ‘neutralization’ from ASEAN’s objective to a means by redefining ‘neutrality.’ Further, Indonesia’s ‘national and regional resilience’ became the key conceptual framework in the institutional priority on intra-regional and internal security. Yet, instead of pursuing military cooperation, ASEAN began to find other means to pursue that security. These internal processes and outcomes were embodied by the Bali Concord, a political document that described ‘ASEAN resilience’ for the first time in an official document. At
the same time, ASEAN’s ultimate objectives remained in TAC. TAC focused on ultimate inclusion of all the Southeast Asian states, as its formal name, the ‘Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia,’ indicated (ASEAN Secretariat 1987).

5. Conclusion: implications for institutional changes

The analysis above identified three variables as important in explaining why and how ASEAN transformed its security functions from 1968 to 1976: (1) expected changes in regional balance of power, (2) member states’ perceptions of the institution’s security utility, and (3) internal discussions leading to the creation of institutional norms. With the US and UK withdrawals from Southeast Asia, the intensification of the Sino-Soviet rivalry, and the 1975 falls of Saigon and Cambodia, ASEAN member states perceived changes in the regional strategic landscape, and attempted to utilize ASEAN for their security purposes. The expected changes in the regional balance of power became a trigger for institutional change.

As a regional institution, ASEAN initially perceived the political and military withdrawal of the United Kingdom and the United States as an encouraging sign for regional autonomy. States attempted to utilize the window of opportunity to achieve this objective. In order to sustain this positive political trend of the balance of power, ASEAN created the concept of the ZOPFAN. After 1971, while recognizing that a certain degree of uncertainty in the intra-regional balance of power still existed, ASEAN accelerated the institutional consolidation process by approaching Indo-Chinese states for membership, while cautiously establishing channels of communication with both China and the Soviet Union to avoid politically antagonizing them. Yet, after Indo-China destabilized further in 1975, ASEAN took a two-step approach, deciding to pursue intra-ASEAN consolidation first, as member states prioritized intra-ASEAN stability.

ASEAN’s expectations of its institutional utility in the changing strategic landscape in Southeast Asia were shaped by the formulation and reformulation of its institutional norms. In Phase I, ASEAN focused on its principle of ‘non-interference from external power’ in Southeast Asia. The principle became an important institutional reference point with which members assessed the changing regional balance of power. Although the Bangkok Declaration itself was a vague political document, ZOPFAN conceptually developed an institutional objective by emphasizing non-interference from external actors. In Phase II, internal discussions categorized neutralization as only one of the means to achieve ZOPFAN. With the introduction of the concept of ‘national and regional resilience,’ ASEAN focused on intra-ASEAN cooperation, resulting in the creation of the Bali Concord and the TAC.

Given this, three implications for both ASEAN’s institutional change and the broad study of international institutional change can be drawn.
First, this study sheds light on the importance of institutional concepts in explaining ASEAN’s transformation. Institutional concepts such as ZOPFAN and ‘national and regional resilience,’ not much studied as factors for institutional transformation, played significant roles in determining the direction of ASEAN’s transformation. The concept of ZOPFAN has been debated by scholars for a long time and mostly considered as a largely failed measure. However, ASEAN’s significant achievement involved not only the effectiveness of ZOPFAN or the meaning of the ZOPFAN concept per se, but the establishment of political and diplomatic processes, and the internal creation of a conceptual framework. ASEAN member states built on this concept to define institutional utility for their security. TAC and the Bali Concord are an extension of the ZOPFAN concept. Otherwise, it would have been difficult for ASEAN to improvise such a treaty and declaration.

Second, the study shows that the mainstream IR theories are insufficient to fully capture ASEAN’s transformation from 1968 to 1976. Realists would argue that change in the regional balance of power created common threat perceptions among member states, and thus, they strengthened institutional consolidation. However, the member states’ threat perceptions often differed, and they were sometimes even conflictual. Moreover, the realist perspective does not explain why some member states did not defect and bandwagon with either China or the Soviet Union. Liberal institutionalists may argue that ASEAN fostered cooperation among member states to reduce transaction costs. Yet, as many ASEAN member states argued, cooperation among them was very slow and limited. Meanwhile, social constructivist would argue that ‘regionalism’ creates an incentive for ASEAN members to form and promote this Southeast Asian institution, resulting in eventual consolidation achieved in the 1990s. Nevertheless, the approach would not explain why ASEAN created the Bali Concord, consolidating intra-regionally first without including others.

Third, the study shed light on what ASEAN was as opposed to what ASEAN aimed to accomplish. Changes in regional and intra-regional balance of power provide an opportunity allowed ASEAN member states to subsume new institutional norms and rules, resulting in ZOPFAN, TAC, and the Bali Concord. In this sense, with each expected change in the regional security environment, ASEAN was constructed and reconstructed by member states. While these norms and principles did not necessarily function as the member states expected, these eventually led ASEAN to be institutionally more resilient. This has implications for current strategic environment in East Asia. Given China’s increasing military and economic capabilities, this factor, in addition to institutional transformation itself, needs to be taken into account when evaluating ASEAN’s utility.

This article provided the theoretical model of institutional transformation as an alternative and comprehensive explanation of transformation of regional organizations. Unlike the mainstream IR theories that have not
specifically analyzed institutional transformation, this demonstrates the importance of its impacts on regional security dynamics. In this study, while ASEAN avoided formal security and political cooperation among member states at its inception, the idea of ‘national and regional resilience’ redirected the concept of security within ASEAN, and it made room for ASEAN to pursue political cooperation in economic fields, albeit not military fields. This cooperation raised ASEAN’s political status in the region, which even major powers could not easily dismiss. In this sense, ASEAN became a security-oriented institution to hedge against a shift in the regional strategic landscape, aiming to ensure member states’ security. Understanding institutional transformation of regional organizations is, thus, imperative in the accurate assessment of a particular institution as well as regional security dynamics.

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Notes

2. See ‘Appendix A. Guidelines that would constitute a Code Of Conduct Covering Relations Among States Within the Zone and with states outside the zone’ and ‘Appendix C. Measures to be taken in the event of violation of the Zone,” in Phan Wannamethee, ‘Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality: A Reappraisal,’ Paper presented ASEAN Experts Group Meeting on Zone of Peace, Freedom, & Neutrality (ZOPFAN), organized by Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia, at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 5–6 January 1991.
4. Some scholars argue ZOPFAN was merely a declaratory policy, which did not have a short-term security impact (Emmers 2003: 276; Leifer 1989: 57). On the contrary, constructivist scholars argue that reaffirmation of ASEAN member states’ commitment under unstable security circumstance had significant political meanings (Acharya 2009: 68–69; Ba 2009: 76).

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