



The Implementation of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in the South China Sea for Regional Stability through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

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Abstract

Despite the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)'s efforts to implement confidence-building measures (CBMs) since its establishment in 1994, there are still challenges that remain in achieving the desired level of trust and cooperation among its 27 member countries, particularly in the South China Sea (SCS). While CBM initiatives have contributed to reducing tensions, there is still a gap further complicated by the shifting power dynamics, particularly China's rise and the United States' strategic responses, which have heightened tensions in the Indo-Pacific region. Furthermore, this study aims to assess the effectiveness of confidence-building measures (CBMs) in defense cooperation and diplomacy within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), specifically in the context of the South China Sea (SCS). By analyzing the existing CBMs and identifying the gaps between the current state and the desired outcomes, the research seeks to provide insights into how these measures can be enhanced to manage tensions better, build trust, and promote regional stability amidst the evolving security landscape in the Indo-Pacific region. This research underscores the importance of CBMs in regional diplomacy and their potential to shape a stable and cooperative Indo-Pacific environment. The research used qualitative research methods, collecting data from scientific journals, websites, and previous research, which were analyzed to explore CBMs' role in enhancing regional security and cooperation. Results indicate that CBMs have played a crucial role in promoting peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and have been instrumental in reducing mistrust and preventing conflicts. However, challenges persist due to the complexity of regional security threats and the diverse interests of member states. Sustained cooperation and adaptability are essential to address evolving security dynamics. The effectiveness of CBMs in the SCS will depend on a commitment to dialogue among parties.

INTRODUCTION

The Indo-Pacific encompasses South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean (Das, 2019). The definition of Indo-Pacific can vary depending on the interpretation and context used. The geographical map of the Indo-Pacific can be seen in Figure 1. The Indo-Pacific is growing in strategic significance, marked by escalating political contention surrounding its geographical definition. Additionally, a substantial portion of global maritime traffic traverses the Indo-Pacific territory, mainly through the South China Sea (SCS) (China Power Team, 2021). The balance of power in the region is shifting, with China's political and economic ascent challenging the established powers (Federal Foreign Office, 2023). The United States has been using the term Indo-Pacific in its foreign policy response to China's growing influence. It seeks to preserve stability and the rule of law while countering China's influence (Townshend et al., 2021). However, China views the United States' involvement through initiatives like the Free and Open Indo-Pacific as a strategic move to curb its rise.



Figure 1. Map of Indo-Pacific and Asia-Pacific (Carlosa, 2022)

The growing rivalry between the United States and China is anticipated to intensify in the Indo-Pacific, impacting regional bilateral and multilateral relations. Such dynamics pose a critical concern for ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), as regional cooperation is central to the Indo-Pacific. Navigating the challenge, ASEAN, with its neutral and active policies, faces the formidable task of maintaining stability and peace in the Indo-Pacific (Hoang, 2021). The evolving contest between significant regional powers is poised to reshape strategic dynamics and influence the order of relations among Indo-Pacific nations. Responding to the complex challenges, ASEAN established the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994 as a platform for dialogue and consultation on political and security matters in the Indo-Pacific (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI, 2019a). The establishment of the ARF was a response to the changing geopolitical landscape in the aftermath of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War had created new dynamics and

challenges, necessitating a forum where countries could engage in open communication, build trust, and address emerging security concerns. It aims to facilitate discussions and align perspectives among participating countries to mitigate threats to regional stability and security. ARF agrees that comprehensive security extends beyond military aspects and traditional security issues, encompassing political, economic, social, and other non-traditional security concerns.

There are 27 participant countries in the ARF, comprising all ASEAN member states (Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste), 10 ASEAN Dialogue Partners (United States, Canada, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Russia, New Zealand, and the European Union), and several regional countries including Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, North Korea, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. ASEAN has many cooperation with countries around the world. The maps of ASEAN and the dialogue partners can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Map of ASEAN and Affiliated Groups Insert a Bridging Sentence Before Explaining CBM (TNPSC Thervu Pettagam, 2019)

Given the complex security environment in which ARF operates, fostering trust and cooperation among its members is important, such as through diplomacy or defense diplomacy. Defense diplomacy is an important component of international relations, foreign policy, and defense policy, focusing on defense, security, and diplomacy (Sarjito & Perwita, 2024). Defense diplomacy also refers to the strategic use of military resources and personnel for non-combat purposes to achieve diplomatic objectives, including activities such as military-to-military dialogues, joint exercises, training programs, exchange visits, and participation in multilateral forums. The aim is to build trust, foster cooperation, and reduce tensions between nations, contributing to regional and international security. Defense diplomacy activities have three types: defense diplomacy for confidence-building measures, defense capabilities, and defense industry (Syawfi,

2009). Moreover, this study will only focus on the CBMs. As implemented globally by various states, CBMs are pivotal in mitigating mistrust, alleviating fears, and preventing conflicts, thereby contributing to regional stability. CBMs serve as a proactive approach to resolving disputes and managing crises, acting as practical tools for fostering a shared understanding of acceptable international standards of behavior (Sheikh, 2023). In this context, CBMs can act as a bridge, facilitating communication and cooperation between nations and ultimately catalyzing establishing and reinforcing international standards.

Countries engaging in CBMs contribute to immediate conflict resolution and the broader framework of fostering collaborative and peaceful international relations. Within the ARF, member states have engaged in numerous CBMs, such as joint maritime exercises, disaster relief operations, and military transparency initiatives (Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2013). Through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), it has worked to increase CBM adoption, including through a series of awareness-raising workshops. These were mainly focused on incident response and regional cooperation. As a confidence-building measure (CBM), ARF plays a role in reducing tensions and preventing conflict, such as in the South China Sea case study (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI, 2000). Furthermore, the ARF's role in promoting security and cooperation has evolved significantly over the years, reflecting a commitment to adaptability and responsiveness in addressing the changing security landscape. The forum continues to be an essential platform for fostering dialogue, building trust, and promoting cooperative efforts among diverse nations to pursue regional peace and stability. The ARF has undergone significant evolution in its role of promoting security and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Evolution of ARF's Role in Security and Cooperation
(Chanto, 2003; EEAS Press Team, 2022)

Years	Agenda
1994-early 2000s	ARF focused on building confidence among participating countries and promoting a culture of dialogue. Confidence-building measures (CBMs) were essential to early ARF efforts to reduce tensions and enhance mutual trust among member states.
Late 1990s-2000s	ARF expanded its agenda to include broader political and security issues. Non-traditional security issues, such as transnational crime, terrorism, and pandemic diseases, gained prominence in ARF discussions. The forum also began to address humanitarian and disaster relief efforts, recognizing the importance of regional cooperation in responding to natural disasters.
1990s-present	ARF expanded its engagement beyond ASEAN member states, including various dialogue partners and other regional countries. The involvement of major powers contributed to a more inclusive and diverse dialogue on regional security.
2000s-present	ARF facilitated discussions and initiatives aimed at resolving regional disputes and preventing the outbreak of hostilities. It encouraged using diplomatic channels and dialogue to manage tensions and promote peaceful resolution.

2015 - present	ARF aligned its activities with the goals of the ASEAN Community, aiming for greater integration and coherence in addressing regional challenges. The forum continued to play a role in promoting the ASEAN-led regional architecture for security and cooperation.
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The growing competition in the Indo-Pacific has profound implications for regional security, stability, and cooperation, particularly within multilateral frameworks like the ARF. The core research problem stems from the gap between the desired state—where CBMs effectively contribute to regional peace and stability—and the current reality, where escalating geopolitical tensions threaten to diminish their impact. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating the CBMs and defense diplomacy within the ARF framework, assessing how these efforts influence regional security, and identifying areas for improvement. This research is particularly urgent given the rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific, which could undermine the ARF’s effectiveness in maintaining regional stability. This study will use a comprehensive analysis to focus on the South China Sea disputes, assessing how the ASEAN Regional Forum can promote confidence-building measures and contribute to stability in this critical maritime area.

Several previous research have discussed aspects of CBMs in SCS. Song (2005) discusses several possible CBMs that could be considered adopted in the planned regional security dialogue in the SCS with the cooperative measures undertaken in the SCS region are expected to enhance trust between the disputing parties, while Pinatih (2015) study found that the implementation of the CBMs scheme in the Southeast Asia region is still not optimal, with one of the reasons being that military exercises and joint military operations are more often carried out with countries outside the region, such as the United States and China. On the other hand, Mustaza & Saidin (2020) found that in the context of the South China Sea territorial disputes, ASEAN has played a major role in preserving peace and security among its member states and between China. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the imbalance in the implementation of CBMs. Although ASEAN plays a role in maintaining stability, the effective implementation of CBMs in the SCS region is still not optimal. It requires a stronger and more comprehensive approach to build greater trust among the parties involved in the dispute. This study fills the gap by analyzing how the ARF, as one of ASEAN’s forums, enhances CBMs and manages conflict in the SCS to prevent it from escalating into war.

METHODS

The method used in this research is qualitative research, focusing on the detailed examination of specific social contexts, including places, actors, and activities (Sugiyono, 2009). The subject of the study is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the object is the confidence-building measures (CBMs) in defense cooperation and diplomacy within the context of the South China Sea (SCS). Moreover, the references used in this research were obtained from various sources, including scientific journals, websites, and previous research on defense diplomacy, CBMs, ARF, and the Indo-Pacific. Previous research from Khadafi and friends demonstrates that defense diplomacy has manifested in multiple diplomatic formats, significantly impacting international relations by shaping norms, identities, and interests within the global system (Khadafi et al., 2023). This method allows for a comprehensive understanding of how defense diplomacy, through activities like joint exercises and information exchanges, contributes to building cooperation and reducing tensions among ARF member states, thereby promoting peace and stability in the South China Sea and the broader Indo-Pacific Region.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the ASEAN Regional Forum

Since its establishment in 1994, the ARF has promoted security and cooperation in the Asia Pacific region through CBMs (Haacke, 2009). These CBMs include hotlines for communication, prenotification of military activities, information exchange, and verification through inspections and treaties to reduce mistrust in the military sphere (Pinatih, 2015; Yuzawa, 2006). Joint maritime exercises and cooperative efforts addressing non-traditional security issues, such as disaster relief and environmental concerns, have also been integral to ARF's approach. These initiatives aim to build trust, reduce tensions, and enhance mutual understanding among participating countries.

The evolution of ARF since its establishment has reflected a commitment to adaptability and responsiveness in addressing the evolving security landscape of the Region. The forum continues to be an essential platform for fostering dialogue, building trust, and promoting cooperative efforts among diverse nations to pursue regional peace and stability. The ARF also faces challenges in promoting security and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, including the growing complexity of regional and global security challenges, the increasingly multifaceted nature of security threats, and the need to address issues of common interest (EEAS Press Team, 2022). Despite these challenges, the ARF remains an essential platform for promoting security and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region, including in the South China Sea.

The effectiveness of CBMs in the ARF is influenced by various factors, including the actors involved, implementation methods, the level of involvement of member countries, and regional stability conditions. CBMs are often discussed in regional diplomatic meetings, referred to as "track 2," which concerns the military and academics (Wilkinson, 2018). By strengthening regional peace and security, participating countries in the Indo-Pacific will have a conducive and prosperous environment in developing their respective national interests (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI, 2019a). Even though the ARF cannot always solve problems, it certainly contributes considerably to building a region with high security, trust, and cooperation between participating countries, especially in the Indo-Pacific (Berger, 2015).

In the Indo-Pacific, ARF can play an essential role in advertising disputes, exacerbating the dispute situation at all stages of CBM. ARF can also be used to resolve future debates. As a result, ARF has the potential to be an important instrument for promoting and cultivating sobriety, a culture of discussion, understanding, and resilience. Its friendly climate will enhance the region's societal development (Perwita et al., 2022). In the South China Sea dispute case study, CBMs need to be supported by several factors. In 2002, it was known that ASEAN promulgated a Declaration of the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Seas (SCS), agreeing to negotiate with China to formulate a Code of Conduct in the SCS, which still needs to be implemented. The first factors that must be considered are mediation, negotiation, or international arbitration. Second, there is a forum that facilitates the countries involved in carrying out dialogue to find solutions to problems. Moreover, it is in the interests of all countries involved to commit to implementing the CBMs that have been attempted to run. However, so far, CBMs are believed to be able to reduce tensions that occur in SCS by using a consensus-building approach, non-intervention, and conducting dialogue to improve excellent and peaceful communication (Darmawan & Kuncoro, 2019).

The Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific are very strategic and dynamic regions. The economic growth in the last few decades has made this region experience geopolitical and geostrategic shifts. Various challenges have arisen in this region due to the shifts.

Southeast Asia, a region between the two, is interested in developing the economy and security in the Indo-Pacific by prioritizing peace, security, stability, and prosperity for society, especially in Southeast Asia. ASEAN, which has been developing an inclusive region for a long time, must show consistency in its collective leadership to shape its vision and mission for closer cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region. Therefore, the ASEAN leaders agreed that further action would strengthen the ASEAN-centered regional architecture called the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) (Kementerian Luar Negeri, 2019b).

AOIP is a defense strategy idea created by Indonesia to create a peaceful, prosperous, and inclusive country in the Indo-Pacific region. Still, this idea was only approved by all ASEAN member countries in 2019 and immediately adopted at the 2019 ASEAN Summit (Anwar, 2020). This idea is also an affirmation from ASEAN to prioritize an open approach to dialogue and cooperation rather than creating competition in ASEAN's priority areas, namely economy, maritime, connectivity, and sustainable development goals (SDGs). Apart from that, this Outlook also prioritizes synergy amidst various concepts in the Indo-Pacific Region to face existing regional and global challenges (Kementerian Luar Negeri, 2019b). AOIP must provide support for conditions in the Indo-Pacific Region. Therefore, AOIP has several objectives divided into long-term and short-term. The long-term goals are (1) encouraging environmental empowerment for peace, stability, and prosperity in the Pacific to overcome problems and challenges, promoting economic cooperation, upholding rules-based regional architecture, and strengthening trust; (2) improving the ASEAN community development process and strengthening existing mechanisms led by ASEAN; and (3) increasing the cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region. There are also the short-term objectives of AOIP, namely (1) encouraging cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region shortly, (2) facilitating environmental programs to support regional peace and stability, and (3) supporting and strengthening existing mechanisms under ASEAN leadership. AOIP also has principles, such as strengthening ASEAN centrality, openness, transparency, inclusiveness, rules-based framework, good governance, respect for supervision, mutual trust, mutual respect, non-intervention, upholding equality, and mutual benefit and respect for international law (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI, 2019b).

AOIP is also a dialogue platform between countries in the Indo-Pacific, one of which can be done through ARF. The existence of the ARF and AOIP mechanisms can enable ASEAN to play a more active and influential role in conducting diplomacy for regional security. This is very important because it can communicate quite well with large countries such as the United States, China, and Japan, which have strategic interests. The connection between AOIP and ARF is hoped to strengthen internal cooperation in facing non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, piracy, etc. (Oktaviano, 2020). In the case study of the South China Sea, AOIP has a vital role in building cooperation in the Indo-Pacific or collaborating with other countries outside the region to help promote an environment that is more conducive to creating peace in the Indo-Pacific (Ramsi et al., 2023). AOIP can also be a forum for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve existing problems. It can also strengthen existing mechanisms under ASEAN leadership, such as an agreement on a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea, to promote regional stability and security. Lastly, AOIP can also strengthen the importance of respecting the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Implementing AOIP can demonstrate ASEAN's commitment to developing regional security cooperation that will be more integrated and responsive to its challenges. Despite its many advantages, AOIP certainly has weaknesses. The existence of other

interests between countries is still one of the obstacles to carrying out closer defense cooperation. Still, with a collaborative and wise approach, ASEAN has the potential to strengthen its position in the international world, especially in the Indo-Pacific Region (Duarte et al., 2024).

Apart from AOIP, ASEAN also has the ASEAN Indo-Pacific Forum (AIPF) to strengthen its position in the Indo-Pacific Region. This forum aims to strengthen inclusive cooperation and collaboration between ASEAN countries and countries in the Indo-Pacific Region. This forum was first held in 2023 in Jakarta at the same time as the 43rd ASEAN Summit and the East Asia Summit. Its inaugural forum was entitled “Implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” (Wisnubroto, 2023). Although AIPF and ARF are two different forums, they both have a solid connection to promoting peace in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The Role of Confidence-Building Measures in the ASEAN Regional Forum Case Study: South China Sea

CBMs are a crucial component within ARF, an influential platform that brings together nations in the Indo-Pacific Region to engage in open dialogue and collaboration. In the context of the South China Sea, a region marked by territorial disputes and geopolitical tensions, CBMs play a pivotal role in mitigating risks and promoting stability. In this case, where competing territorial claims have led to heightened tensions, CBMs become instrumental in reducing the risk of miscalculations, misunderstandings, and potential conflicts (Turcsanyi, 2018). The South China Sea (SCS) has emerged as one of the most contentious topics in international politics. The Indo-Pacific could catalyze a major global war, a pivotal point in Asia-Pacific geopolitics, or as the interface between geopolitics and the global economy. This diagnosis is directly related to The region’s significant economic impact on the world at large as well as the intricate issue of overlapping territory claims amongst the six parties immediately engaged, such as China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines, and Taiwan (Turcsanyi, 2018). From a military standpoint, these actions could have been considered even more advanced than the current assertive behavior (Hayton, 2016). One notable CBM within ARF is the promotion of transparency in military activities and intentions.

The case study of the South China Sea underscores the complex geopolitical dynamics within the Indo-Pacific. CBMs within ARF offer a diplomatic pathway to de-escalate tensions and encourage peaceful resolution. By providing a platform for open dialogue, ARF facilitates discussions on contentious issues and promotes cooperative measures that contribute to regional stability. As examined within the ARF framework, the effectiveness of CBMs in the South China Sea highlights the ongoing efforts to create a conducive environment for dialogue, trust-building, and the pursuit of shared security objectives in the Indo-Pacific Region (Lardo, 2021). As a multilateral cooperation, ARF is crucial in promoting CBM among its participants in the South China Sea (SCS) issue. From the ARF list of Track I activities (2020-2023), there are 24 meetings, workshops, and military activities between August 2022 to July 2023, 29 between August 2021-August 2022, and September 25, 2020-August 2021. These activities enhance and help to achieve ARF’s objectives that foster dialogue and implement CBM among participants (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI, 2019a).

Then, the ARF held a roundtable discussion on the inventory of maritime challenges in August 2004 after making a statement on maritime security—the roundtable aimed to get ARF members to comprehend maritime security commonly. The roundtable participants agreed on common maritime security principles, including supporting

information-sharing initiatives, adhering to UNCLOS 1982, and respecting the ASEAN Way and the ARF principles of preventive diplomacy (Agastia, 2021). The last ARF Intersessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on M.S.) occurred in Indonesia in 2023. The degree to which the ARF ISM-MS should balance its workload between traditional and non-traditional security concerns is a crucial question. Non-traditional security concerns are considered valuable initial building blocks that support the development of regional agreements and mutual trust development. Potential initiatives for fostering confidence and preventive diplomacy in the maritime sector are in the Work Plan on Maritime Security (2022-2026); they are in line with the Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan and are decided upon by consensus. Put differently, the goal is to transform conversation into beneficial collaboration (Haacke, 2009).

As a forum that offers preventive diplomacy and tools for fostering confidence in regional, political, and security, the ARF talks about SCS (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI, 2019a). Moreover, CBMs are planned procedures to prevent hostilities, avert escalation, reduce military tension, and build mutual trust between countries. One of the objectives of the 29th ARF (2022) in Phnom Penh was reiterating the ARF's commitment to uphold peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, including SCS.

Effectiveness and Challenges of ARF Confidence-Building Measures in the Indo-Pacific

When collaboration is operationalized or limited to a certain kind and level of cooperation in which policies addressing common threats can be carried out by mid-level state officials without immediate or direct supervision from strategic-level authorities, it is considered adequate. This is in contrast to mere cooperation, such as high-level talks or agreements for information exchange, which typically represent political pledges but not real-world actions in the field (Agastia, 2021). Policymakers in the ASEAN expressed relief at China's signing of the 2002 ASEAN Declaration on Conduct in the South China Sea, which they saw as a significant victory. Ultimately, all sides were urged to "exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes" in the non-binding Declaration. Some policy leaders and analysts were pleased when China, the Philippines, and Vietnam joined a Joint Marine Seismic Endeavor (JMSU) in a contested area of the South China Sea. JMSU is an agreement that aims to facilitate cooperation among China, the Philippines, and Vietnam in exploring the rich natural resources of the South China Sea. Their most cherished aspirations had come true (Valencia, 2008).

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was one of the most conspicuous additions to the evolving security architecture in the Asia-Pacific in the 1990s. However, from the very outset, assessments of the ARF have been shaped by questions about its usefulness and future direction (Haacke, 2009; He & Feng, 2020). Despite a quarter-century of intense engagement, the ARF has yet to be able to advance its primary goal of reducing tensions and conflicts in the area. The proof is that tension still exists in SCS. The ARF brings together 27 countries from Asia, Australasia, North America, and Europe, each with its interests, perspectives, and capabilities. This diversity can lead to complex negotiations and hinder swift decision-making. In addition, the Indo-Pacific Region experiences rapid shifts in security dynamics. Rising tensions, territorial disputes, and power rivalries create a volatile environment. The ARF must adapt to these changes and address emerging security threats effectively, as CBMs are essential for fostering trust and preventing conflicts. Unfortunately, the ARF lacks robust institutionalization and effective follow-up mechanisms for implementing CBMs (Hassan, 2021). So far, the ARF

has effectively managed the conflict in the South China Sea but has not been able to resolve it due to several challenges. ARF can still manage the conflict by strengthening the cooperation among parties.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

The role and objectives of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) have proven that it can increase confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the Indo-Pacific Region. CBMs can work effectively in increasing trust and cooperation between countries to maintain regional stability and peace, improve maritime security, and build cooperation in various fields such as economics and defense. ARF can also bridge conflicting parties in the South China Sea by dialogue between related parties. The ARF's role in resolving the South China Sea conflict is an example of the synergy between two forums that have different goals but are all helpful in creating an environment conducive to peace, stability, and security in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is a significant platform for security discussions in the Indo-Pacific. It facilitates member nations in building trust and confidence to address a wide range of national interests, aiming to achieve goals. Related to the South China Sea, as the ARF seeks to prevent conflict, promote peace, and find solutions to potential tensions in The region, the ARF has an essential position in efforts to handle the complexity of problems in the South China Sea through a diplomatic and collaborative approach. Evaluation of the ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) success in dealing with an issue can vary depending on the perspective and criteria used. Based on the South China Sea case studies, ARF has succeeded by providing a platform for dialogue and diplomacy between countries in The region and encouraging multilateral cooperation in dealing with the South China Sea issues. Besides that, in overcoming challenges that ARF may face and increasing ARF's effectiveness in The region, this paper recommended ARF continue to strengthen the role and capacity of ASEAN as the driving force of the ARF and promote dialogue and cooperation among the ARF participants can foster mutual trust and understanding and address shared security concerns and interests, with also developing a more strategic and action-oriented approach to the ARF CBMs, which can enhance their relevance and impact.

The limitations of researchers in processing data for all articles present a drawback, mainly due to constraints in data exploration. The method of data analysis, which only comes from previous research scientific journals and websites rather than including field data, makes the translated data less current. Future research can address these limitations by incorporating more data sources. It is recommended that researchers exploring different case studies but employing similar methods should seek and utilize data from multiple sources.

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