ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETIES IN TRANSBOUNDARY COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCE GOVERNANCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA[1]

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Regional and global discussions on peace and security have long been focused on the state as an actor. Diplomatic discussions are conducted between and among states through global and regional fora, such as the United Nations and ASEAN, or what is known as the Track 1[3] mode. Furthermore, the object of diplomatic influence remains to be the formal policies of states, through their governments. However, it is a fact that civil society[4] institutions, which thrive at the sub-national, national, regional and even international levels, have become visible not only in being participants in formal governance structures, but also in providing the foundation for social transformation of communities and societies. The effect of the latter is the creation of forces in society that have bearing on political and economic change. Thus, civil society mechanisms have the potential to directly influence regional cooperation through exerting influence to their respective states, or as a regional group to the ASEAN seen in Track 2 modes[5] such as that of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). What is, however, missing is the mode wherein civil societies interact to influence each other in order to build solidarity and capacity to influence public policy and to provide venues for social transformation which will provide the impetus for policy change, or what can be considered as a Track 3 mode.[6]

In the domain of environmental security, it has been postulated by Homer-Dixon (1991) that a high level of social conflict in a society creates conditions for environmental

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[3] In international diplomatic discourse, Track 1 diplomacy refers to state-to-state level of interactions.

[4] Here, civil society should be seen as the web of autonomous institutions independent of the state that bring citizens together in pursuit of common interests (Korbonski, 1996). Thus, it can mean to be the totality of social life as a whole that goes beyond the domain of the private but is not within the state's purview. Hence, it would include NGOs, people's organizations, religious institutions, academe, media, business, social movements, and basic communities.

[5] Track 2 refers to civil society to state level of interactions.

[6] A Track 3 mode is now being conceptualized as a civil society to civil society level of interactions. An example of this is a recently held People's Conference in Bangkok.

decay, even as ecological degradation, in combination with other factors, can lead to social conflict and political insecurity. Homer-Dixon alludes to the concept of "social ingenuity", or what can be called as "social capital"[7], as an important factor that can provide society the necessary mechanisms to work against such insecurity, and to develop mechanisms to self-recuperate from crisis conditions. Thus, it appears that a strong civil society, with strong social ingenuity and social capital, is a necessary condition not only for environmental security, but also for security in general. When this is taken to a regional context, a regional civil society-based collective has the potential to foster regional security.

This paper presents the potentials of civil-society based processes and structures in fostering regional and global cooperation. This is located in the context of the environmental domain, particularly in the security implications of governing the forests in Southeast Asia, as a common property resource. It explores the role which civil society plays in social transformation to serve as impetus for policy change not only within states, but also across and between states. It also problematize the nature of most security studies as focused on state actors, and explores the possibility for a more expanded role of non-state, sub-national actors. The focus on forests in Southeast Asia is warranted by the growing importance of environmental concerns in security discussions, as well as the strategic importance of the region.

State-Civil Society Relations and their
Implications for Environmental Security
In Southeast Asia

The manner by which power is institutionalized and structured in society has implications on both forest policies and national and regional security. State building projects have relied on the exploitation of environmental and natural resources. In ASEAN, this process of state building and consolidation has led not only to political and economic marginalization of many sectors in civil society, but also to resource capture and ecological marginalization of forest resources. There is also an emerging structure for the regional political economy of natural resource in all the states of mainland Southeast Asia, otherwise known as the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS). All the five countries of the sub-region (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia) have experienced or are currently experiencing severe environmental degradation (Pham, 1994).

In all of the countries, the extraction of forest resources occurred even as civil society mechanisms were either decentered from the political landscapes, or were recruited as apostates in being willing partners, or as scavengers of the remnants, of corporate forestry, even as forest resources were depleted. An elitist mode of constituting power restrained the democratizing element of state building, even as it allowed rent-seeking activities of elites and government parastatals to become the primary beneficiaries of forest extraction activities. In almost all countries of the region, perhaps

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[7] Social capital is defined as the capacity of communities to foster collective action towards a common goal (Coleman, 1990).

with the exception of tiny Singapore and the Sultanate of Brunei Darrusalam, the military segment of the state was heavily involved in resource depletion. Furthermore, resource capture was officiated either by state monopoly capitalism or by a pseudo-market economy dominated by rent-seeking elites.

The entry of civil society in forest governance is seen in the emergence of participatory and people-oriented forest management. This clearly reflects a specific point in the relationships between state power and community-based civil society institutions. This is seen in the Philippines, where a strong tradition of civil society processes articulate with state forest management and governance through Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) strategies. Similarly, it is seen in Thailand, where forest governance regimes have opened up to the idea of participatory forestry, even as there is still an ongoing debate within civil society between those who espouse a conservationist agenda and those who are committed to a social and human development conservation agenda. This is in stark contrast with the situation in Indonesia and Malaysia, wherein strongly-statist governance structures restrain the growth of civil societies in the environment and forestry sectors. Similar trends can also be seen for Myanmar, wherein an authoritarian state has brutally crushed the re-emergence of civil society. Forest policies in these countries are still very much in the "command and control mode", while the dominant modes of forest production are all oriented towards exports. However, there is growing evidence that local cultural communities and environmental activists are beginning to become more active and vigorous in offering their challenge, if not alternative, to state practices and policies in Indonesia and Malaysia. It is important to highlight that despite the extremely elitist-statist modes of governance, indigenous civil society mechanisms remain in existence, particularly in creating local spaces. In Indonesia, such organic identity communities have led to the explosion of ethnic violence. Positively, civil society processes have also been relied upon as long-standing structures, existing autonomously in providing coping mechanisms in areas that are not reached by state power, or in opposition or as an alternative to it. Civil society, based on the experience in Southeast Asia, serves the dual purpose of providing logic for resistance in the face of the onslaught by the state, or logic for coping in the face of its absence or neglect.

The weakness of civil society movements in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam is a function less of state repression and more because of the events that have enveloped the historical trajectories of these countries. The social project for consolidating society is now focused on rebuilding the polity and the economy after sustaining damage from long years of war and violence. The state-rebuilding projects in these countries have led to the adoption of reformist policies as well as the emerging important role of external donors. In Cambodia, the state controls the growth of civil societies, but not in the context of brutal suppression as in the case of Malaysia and Indonesia, but in the form of appropriating their logic to serve the ends of the state. In Vietnam, civil society is re-emerging and while the state has attempted to limit its growth, there is evidence that it is unable to completely erode its growing role. What is even encouraging is the fact that the Vietnamese state has embarked on a progressive social reform approach for the upland communities. In Laos, there is even evidence of strong community structures, and there

is no evidence that the state deploys violence to curtail civil society. In fact, it is the weakness of the Lao forest bureaucracy that leads to a situation wherein it is unable to harness civil society forces in forest resource management.

The timber famine that resulted in the Philippines and Thailand created a situation that tested the strength of its mode of governance. In the face of the crisis, the two countries adopted policy reform. In this situation, the need for policy reform fed into the agenda of civil society movements that were spawned by political democratization. Both Thailand and the Philippines experienced military-rule, Thailand under its numerous coup-installed governments and the Philippines under Marcos. Resistance to such elitist-statist modes of governance provided the foundation for political democratization to influence a "paradigm shift" in the manner by which the state engages civil society and its forest resources. Democratization movements paved the way for policy reform and have created a big space for accommodating civil society actors in the development and implementation of forest policies. In the face of an ecological crisis of timber scarcity, the political crisis of state legitimacy brought by authoritarian structures did not deter the emergence of democratization. The key to this, in both Thailand and the Philippines, is the presence of a strong and healthy civil society. This made it possible for the Thai and Philippine state to be secure. Both achieved the emergence of governance mechanisms that has the capacity to promote political and ecological security.

However, the political and ecological security within the boundaries of a nation-state can be achieved at the expense of other states, as shown by the stories of Japan (Dauvergne, 1997) and other countries who were able to protect their environments by raiding other countries of their resources. In Southeast Asia, this is particularly illustrated by Thailand in relation to its neighbors. Other than the Philippines, Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia that saw the development of democratic structures and of policies that are conducive to civil society participation in forest and environmental governance. Both countries faced timber famine, and have since then designed environmental measures to address the problem. Both countries imposed logging ban with Thailand declaring it totally while the Philippines has opted for selective ban in ecologically crucial areas. Being an isolated archipelago, the Philippines had to rely on expensive log imports to add to its limited resource base to satisfy local demand. Thailand, with its total log ban, had to rely solely on imports. Moreover, it had the luxury to negotiate with neighboring countries to secure for its logging companies rights to operate within the latter's boundaries. Beyond the legal imports and off-country logging operations, it is also a well-documented fact that Thai companies and the military, in collaboration with their counterparts on the other side of the border, have been involved in illegal timber trade with Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. These operations have been largely responsible not only in resource degradation but also in social dislocation of many communities. This leads us to a very interesting situation wherein the Thai state, responding to environmental scarcity within its borders, was able to secure its environment, but in the process creates a predatory economy that feeds into the craving of its neighbors for capital. Thus, while it can be said that ecological security may have been assured within Thailand, it could not be said that it is a bearer of

ecological security in relation to its neighbors. The reported silence of Thai civil society actors on these issues is also interesting to note.

Environmental security rests not only on the absence of ecologically induced threats such as floods, drought and forest fires which may induce social, economic and political crisis. The other dimension requires an absence of political threats to the environmental systems and the social domains that rest on it. A political system that breeds ecological disaster, not only within its boundaries but also outside, is not only a political security risk but also an environmental security hazard. In the Philippines, an elitist-statist mode of governance characterized by a political economy of elite rent-seekers within a command and control forest policy climate established a structural foundation for the occurrence later of not only social but also ecological disasters. Unbridled exploitation of forest resources led to present-day floods and landslides, as well as drought and reduced farm productivity. It is the occurrence of these environmental disasters that made the task of state building more complex. It exposes the vulnerability of the state not only in its weakening capacity to respond to present-day tragedies brought upon by its past excesses, but also in its legitimacy to reassume a command and control position in policy making. The secret why there was no widespread breakdown of the polity despite the weakening capacity of the state to consolidate power lies in the resiliency of Philippine civil society. Civil society structures which have long provided support mechanisms by which ordinary people cope with human and natural induced disasters have provided an alternative structure by which political consolidation occurred. In the Philippines, the strength and the depth of this civil society, despite being de-centered by an authoritarian regime, has allowed organic structures to cushion the impacts of the onslaught of economic, political and ecological crisis. Thus, a strong civil society with an organic horizontal social capital mitigated the security risks that went with the political and economic turmoil that beset the country from the Marcos to the post-Marcos years. A polity that possessed high levels of trust and confidence, despite its being geographically fragmented, negated the lack of vertical social capital between the Marcosian state and the citizenry. A vivid example of how Philippine civil society operates was seen during the 1986 EDSA uprising, when the polity survived during the days that a government was not in existence. More recently, the Asian economic crisis once again provided civil society structures the opportunity to rescue the polity from possible collapse. It is also this high level of social capital that is now availed by community-based forest resource management and sustainable development advocates.

The case of Thailand is similar to the Philippines. However, the civil society institution that provides the Thai polity a security blanket is the existence of its revered monarchy. During the political and economic crisis, the monarchy provided a single image of political consolidation. The tendency of Thai politics to be enmeshed in rent seeking and corruption is checked by the presence of the meta-political figure of the venerable King. One can just admire the manner by which the figure of the King was able to evoke and command stability despite the many *coups* that regularly threatened the Thai polity in the past. The beauty of Thai politics is the fact that even as an elitist figure such as the King remains a potent force, it enables the emergence of spaces by which

pluralist modes of constitution can mature, and in which civil society institutions articulate with the state in social development and environmental protection. The only problem in Thailand is the internal struggle within its civil society, wherein elitist green-type, and mainly urban-based, environmentalists that espouse a conservationist agenda is locked in an ideological battle with the social development advocates. However, this, in itself, is not a security risk. If at all, it only provides a testing ground for the maturation of Thai environmental civil society, of how it can politically construct social capital across various ideological positions. The other decisive test for Thai civil society is on how it can effectively challenge state and corporate forestry actors in its exportation of forest degradation to its neighboring countries. As the central political economy in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, Thailand is evolving as the core. Evidence indicates that it is becoming a predatory core. Thus, it behooves Thai civil society advocates to provide the necessary critique against these predatory tendencies of the Thai political economy, lest it be accused of hypocrisy in its struggle for environmental and social security within its boundaries, but insensitive about the insecurities it exports to its neighbors.

What makes the situation in Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as Myanmar, delicate is the lethal juxtaposition of unraveling authoritarian state structures, fractious or weak civil societies, and rapidly degrading resource bases. In Indonesia and Malaysia, civil society is either composed of structures that are weak or is characterized as a fractious set of groups which themselves individually possess strong social capital but as a collective becomes a volatile social arena of competing ethnic identities and loyalties. In Indonesia, the power of the New Order of President Suharto has unraveled even as politics of ethnic identities become the battering ram that threaten to tear Indonesian polity asunder, as it is already happening in many parts of the archipelago. East Timor, to provide an example, emerged out of the ashes of protracted ethnic resistance that exploded into a full-blown war of independence. In Malaysia, the capacity of Mahathir and of UMNO to politically consolidate power is now gradually being challenged not only politically but also by the growing restiveness of indigenous social movements. However, there is still doubt as to whether the various civil society centers in Malaysia can provide a wide and deep network that can establish a pluralist plank that can open spaces to reform the state. In Myanmar, the SLORC rules with an iron fist, but organized resistance remain as a potential threat, even as resources are being rapidly degraded.

Malaysia, Indonesia and Myanmar offer a contrast to the cases of the Philippines and Thailand. This analysis can be taken to an examination of the role of democratization in forest governance. In Malaysia, Indonesia and Myanmar, forest governance was seen in the context of capital production through a statist command and control strategy of sequestering forestlands and transforming these into state-controlled enterprises. What is interesting is that in Indonesia and Malaysia, a move to shift paradigms in forest management is denied a crisis-inducement with the absence of a timber famine. However, this did not restrain the unbridled extraction of resources and the massive conversion of forestlands into plantation estates for more export lucrative crops such as oil palm, and in the case of Myanmar, teak. However, there are signs that civil societies are beginning to organize and challenge the state not only in the domain of policy reform but in political and economic restructuring of society. The absence of a

timber crisis in Indonesia, which the Philippines and Thailand had to face, is replaced by a political crisis of legitimacy that threaten the very survival of a unified Indonesian state. On the other hand, Malaysia's political future lies on the capacity of UMNO to consolidate its hold on a growingly restive Malay population and a reasserting growth of Islamic fundamentalism not only in the grassroots but also even in electoral and academic politics. In Malaysia and Indonesia, while a timber crisis is absent, there exists an ecological crisis spawned by policies encouraging the establishment of plantations. The incendiary method of clearing land is the primary cause for the annual forest fires. These fires take on a regional context when they carry with them impacts that are not confined within the boundaries of their state of origins. In Myanmar, the presence of rebel forces effectively challenging the Rangoon government and taking the battle to forested areas provide venues both for political conflict and ecological degradation. Furthermore, the marginal attention given by the state to indigenous people, and the minimal recognition of the capacity of communities to become partners in resource management may add to the local forces which can create further cleavages in an already volatile society. The presence of deep ethnic divides in Malaysia and Indonesia reveals a fragmented collective that is evident of the failure to politically-construct social capital across different identity positions. Faced with this reality, civil society may not provide the cohesive legitimacy to serve as an anchor for political consolidation. Worse, it can even be said that the fractious elements of the Malaysian and Indonesian civil societies will be the political forces that will fuel the weakening, if not disintegration, of a united polity.

The central thesis of this paper is the argument that pluralist-statist modes of governance offer a stable and secure foundation. Thailand and the Philippines are examples of this case. This secure foundation rests on the fact that a shift from an elitist-statist mode to a pluralist-statist mode entails a transformation in the mode of constituting power. It is important to add that a dispersal of power from elite centers to plural power agents, when occurring simultaneous with a reforming and democratizing state, or a reformed and democratized state, occurs in accordance with an evolutionary process of political modernization. This is what happened in the Philippines and Thailand, not only in the national policy and political arena, but also found concrete expression in the evolution of community-based forest management policies and participatory community resource management politics. It is within these institutional arrangements that civil society modes of institutionalizing power gains entry into the governance arena, and which makes the emergence of a pluralist-civil society mode possible. This stable system enables civil society to provide a viable alternative to a "softening" state in the process of being reinvented and reformed. However, it must be emphasized that the emergence of a civil society mode of governance does not entail the abolition of the state. In a pluralist-civil society polity, the state is reformed and democratized to yield to civil society modes of institutionalizing power. A radical pluralism is allowed in a post-modern society wherein the state becomes a mechanism to aggregate interests, and not a rule that lead to the privileging of some interests over others. In this context, the state remains as a necessity and as crucial for the survival of a pluralist polity. In Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, the fragile polity, while remaining elitist-statist and is faced with rapidly degrading resources, has all embarked on reformist policies. Furthermore, even as civil society forces may be controlled, they are at least not subjected to extreme measures of

repression. This has the promise of allowing for the creation of spaces for civil society to consolidate and offer alternatives.

In Indonesia and Malaysia, elitist-statist modes of governance exist in an authoritarian state and a fragmented civil society. In Myanmar, civil society is unable to re-emerge due to the repressive rule of the state. Within the framework of this paper, this provides a very insecure condition not only to the health of civil society but also to the integrity of the state. This insecurity may spillover even to the Southeast Asian Region and the whole Asia-Pacific Region in that it may provide a constraint for the emergence of evolutionary processes towards political development and may create conditions for revolutionary change or for the "balkanization" of the state. In Indonesia right now, there is even reason to argue that devolution and decentralization of the state is less of importance in terms of area of inquiry as its disintegration. In elitist-statist modes of governance, the dispersal of power from elite centers in which it is presently concentrated to plural agents is prevented by a state that continues to operate in a command and control arrangement. The danger is that these regimes are facing the risk of falling into the "proliferation and shrinkage" trap that Offe theorized about. When a civil society is strong and when social capital is established at the level of the nation-state, the weakening of the state apparatus may not be as hazardous to political and economic security, as when civil society is weak and social capital is fragmented across ethnic loyalties. In the latter case, an effort to mobilize politically around a weak social capital may be possible. However, this is only through a command and control type revolutionary process which will produce as an outcome a re-establishment of statist modes; or through a fragmentation of the state as a transitory phase towards the establishment of even more elitist-statist modes of governance based on ethnically-purified smaller states carved from the previous one, as what happened to the Balkans. Either way, a pluralist-civil society mode will not be achieved.

The Politics of Critical Engagement in Regional
Forest Governance: The Prospects for the role of
Civil Societies in Transboundary Resource Governance

The political security of states within Southeast Asia is all in precarious balance, although at different levels and magnitudes. Indonesia faces the risk of possible disintegration, while Malaysia's ethnic divides are simmering. Secessionist movements threaten the Philippines, not to mention Indonesia, while rebellion confronts Myanmar. Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam appear to be opening up to economic reforms, but cultures of violence remain a formidable threat to stability. In Laos, a weak state is unable to deliver development effectively. Thailand seems to be at peace with itself, but has to contend with border insecurities with its neighbors, and the internal fragility of all the countries surrounding it will always pose a threat to Thailand's own security. International "terrorism" has increasingly become a regional concern, with evidence showing the presence in the region of groups with connections to the Al Qaeda network of Osama bin Laden.

The modes of governance in all these countries are mostly elitist-statist, except for Thailand and the Philippines. However, high levels of corruption and bureaucratic incapacity remain a problem for all countries, even these latter two. Economic reforms are now taking shape in Vietnam and Cambodia, and democratization movements have always been present in Indonesia and Malaysia, and to a lesser extent Myanmar. The strength of most of the states, are based not on legitimacy based on hegemony, but on the rule of coercive structures. In fact, it can even be said that this leads to superficially-strong states, the stability of which are on precarious balance when seen in the context of on-going or emergent voices of resistance.

A historical analysis of the Southeast Asian region shows that elitist-statist modes of forest governance have favored command and control policies that alienated the resource from the wider population only to be exploited by the few elites. Forest fires in Indonesia and Malaysia are largely effects of a political economy that embodies this tendency for rent seeking. This was also the mode of governance that led to timber famine in Thailand and the Philippines, even as similar trends are seen as prevalent in the other countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. In a globalized world, political, economic and ecological disasters in one country have far-reaching implications. The modes of governance in Malaysia and Indonesia, while remaining a prerogative of their states, possess enormous potential to affect not only the lives of their people, but also may have serious repercussions in other parts of the region. Forest policies of these countries which allow for incendiary methods to clear forest lands is no longer just a local environmental security threat, but become a regional, if not a global one. The ecological disaster that occurred in Thailand led to the emergence of environmentalism. This is in the context of a pluralist-statist mode of governance with a healthy civil society at home, even as it encouraged the development of a political economy that thrives on raiding the resources of its neighboring countries, often with tacit approval by the latter that are mostly governed by elitist-statist modes of forest governance.

The relations between states and civil societies have long been established as a critical and complex one. States emerge and gain legitimacy from civil society institutions and processes, even as the state limits civil societies through its legal-bureaucratic authorities manifested in law and public policy. With the increasing role of civil society institutions in recent years, state policy, including foreign policy, could very easily be influenced by it. In Southeast Asia, particularly in the realm of the ASEAN, states have been traditionally seen as the actors as well as the objects of diplomacy. In the context of the policy of non-interference which has long been upheld by ASEAN, transboundary environmental concerns, such as haze from forest fires in Kalimantan and Sumatra, or transboundary timber poaching and other forms of illegal trade in forest products that traverse the Greater Mekong Sub-region, remain as difficult issues to address. When one looks at the problem deeper, both forest-based issues are deeply rooted in problematic governance arrangements, of which the individual states concerned are largely responsible. Numerous authors have concluded that the annual forest fires that ravage most of Sumatra and Kalimantan are outcomes of state policy on land use. The illegal timber trade that crisscrosses the Mekong River basin is also an indirect result of either forest policies or the lack of it. In a context wherein diplomatic intrusion is

anathema, and wherein consensus politics is the norm, the achievement of a desirable outcome would only be confined to reactionary palliatives,[8] and not to long-term solutions that directly address the root cause.

It could not be over-emphasized that Southeast Asia remains a very important region, both politically and ecologically. The region remains politically strategic to the interests of the West, Japan and China. Its forest resources, as well as its other natural resources, remain as home to a significant level of biodiversity. Its forest resources remain as potential sinks that have the capacity to sequester significant amounts of carbon in the atmosphere. Thus, any erosion of the quality of natural resources, and the political stability of the states can only but have significant impacts beyond the region. Existing institutional arrangements are already in place to satisfy the need for internal consolidation, such as the ASEAN and its spin-off, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), as a vehicle of the region to deal with its growing importance to the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the scorecard for ASEAN has been not very encouraging. Its adoption of a policy of non-interference has weakened the capacity of the organization to consolidate itself. ASEAN remains stuck in a neo-realist practice of state-centric diplomacy, with most of its member-states being always on a constant state of paranoia of being subjected to some imaginary threat by an "outside" enemy. This paranoia is legitimized through the deployment of a non-interference policy which privileges silence over constructive critique of other members' conduct. Hence, even as Thailand and the Philippines have consistently argued for critical engagement as a policy, as an alternative to non-interference, the organization has reaffirmed its commitment to a form of engagement that only preserves authoritarian interests in the guise of the "Asian" way. This was seen in the last meeting of the ASEAN Ministers held in Bangkok. What sealed the fate of the Thai-Philippines alliance towards critical engagement is the entry of Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam into the organization, all of which are governed by authoritarian structures that naturally would be hostile to the intrusion of outsider-generated criticisms of internal policies. Naurine (1998b) correctly pointed out that in expanding its membership, ASEAN might have also increased its international political influence, yet this may also introduce more competing interests as well as strategic perspectives. The ARF, for its part, promised a more open and liberal forum for discussion, and has attempted to expand this to include conflict resolution. However, as Naidu (2000) points out, this may be difficult to achieve in the context of the "ASEAN way" of consensus politics. This is earlier echoed by Tay (1997) when he called attention to the fact that preventive diplomacy, whether on issues of political or environmental security, is compromised by a full adherence to the norm of non-interference.

However, the space for imagining alternatives could not be left for states to dictate, particularly not in the context of a burgeoning civil society movement not only within countries but also across countries. The neo-realist theory in international relations could not simply be relied upon in imagining creative ways that now has to include non-state actors. The main point of this paper was that a pluralist-statist mode of governing forest resources, in the context of a healthy state-civil society relationships

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[8] Examples of this include as the establishment of bilateral Forest Fire councils or of bilateral agreements on how to render mutual assistance when fire breaks out.

provide a stable base for conflict resolution and for adaptation, or what can be considered as "preventive" diplomacy. The development of what Homer-Dixon calls as social "ingenuity", or what Fox can call as the political construction of social capital becomes easily achieved in situations wherein civil society actors are allowed to provide alternative ways to the state. In international diplomacy, there have been references to "Track Two" mechanisms wherein non-state actors participate in the crafting of policy alternatives and options that can then feed into the more formal state-to-state bilateral or multi-lateral dialogues. The ARF has been referred to as a possible venue for Track Two discussions (Tay, 1997). Again, as pointed out by Naidu (2000), the effectiveness of ARF has been compromised. This paper argues that the failure of ASEAN and ARF to bring to fore creative reforms in the state that comprises the region lies in the nature of its audience, which is the States themselves. Civil society actors, while allowed to enter the discussions as parallel forum for ASEAN discussions, or even as key actors in ARF, remain as marginal focus for transformation. The possibility to be creative is limited by the fact that the object for transformative politics has always been the state. However, in Southeast Asia, much work has to be done to transform civil society itself.

It is equally possible to celebrate civil society beyond merely an appendage of the state, but as a structure that will challenge it, and provide spaces for resistance to emerge by becoming bearers of counter-ideologies. In the domain of forest and natural resources governance, civil society networks across countries can provide not only a venue to craft policy alternatives which can be offered to states for their adoption. Beyond this, such networks can provide impetus for the establishment at the grassroots of capacities, structures, and processes that are both creative and politically ingenuous in getting around the obligation of the state to be polite to its neighbors. The non-interference norm, obviously by virtue of its construction, only applies to state actors. Civil society remains a property of the unbound polity, as distinct from the states that oftentimes restrict it, but can also be the object of its transformative power. In countries where it can exist, it is possible to "regionalize" its logic by taking a more progressive advocacy not only within the boundaries of its home but also outside. The ASEAN is a venue for Track 1 diplomacy among states; the ARF can very well be venues for Track 2 discussions wherein civil society and epistemic communities come together to generate enough academic material to input into formal diplomacy. What is now suggested in this paper is a Track 3 mode of political action, one wherein civil societies interpenetrate each other's domain to engage in political intercourse, not to change the behavior of states, but to change the behavior of peoples, communities and societies, so that these can provide the necessary basis for a transformative project. This is what is missing in the present regional interactions, in as much as it is also what is absent in international relations theory.

Thus, while environment ministers can convene to discuss biodiversity and haze concerns under Track 1; and while academics and NGOs can meet to generate epistemologically-enriched treatises on science-policy connections on carbon sequestration and biodiversity protection zones within the Track 2 model; a Track 3 mode will be ideal for creating space wherein grassroots organizations, academics and NGOs, and other elements of civil society from all contending parties, either as bilateral or

multilateral entities, acting not on behalf of their states, can engage in political discourse of how to create conditions for transformative politics from below. The challenge is to harness radical pluralist politics not to destroy states but to transform them through a transformation of the basis upon which the state's legitimacy is derived.

In the Philippines and Thailand, civil society forces have acted to provide the state a different playing field in the realm of forest governance. It is an enormous challenge to regionalize this effort to create a regional community of civil societies, a Southeast Asian civil society, that will collectively offer a venue to imagine a different playing field not only for each of the countries, but for the region as a whole. This alternative model rests on a constructivist theory of international relations, which according to Naurine (1998a), "focuses on the power of systemic interaction to alter international social structures and subjective identities." It is in my opinion that the state, or ASEAN, and even ARF, is not the domain for this particular type of politics. A new collective will have to be established for civil society actors and by civil society actors, for this purpose. The challenge for civil society forces in Thailand and the Philippines is to transcend the limits of state boundaries and extend the civil society into the domain of regional cross-boundary civil society movements. Of particular concern is the role that Thailand's civil society should actively play in extending its advocacy beyond its borders to include concerns about transboundary logging, and the participation of the Thai state in the maintenance of a predatory timber political economy in relation to its neighbors. The civil societies in the Philippines and Thailand will have to take the lead in bridging the gaps and breaking down the fences that isolate civil society movements in other countries in the region.

Concluding Remarks

It is never the argument of this paper that democratization and the presence of a healthy civil society will ensure a risk-free and totally secure political and ecological systems, inasmuch as a healthy civil society is at best only a necessary condition for attaining these. It is granted that a pluralist mode of constituting power and a civil society mode of institutionalizing power articulating with a reformed and democratic state may not automatically create the condition for a pristine forest cover and a stable social fabric, in the same manner that it may not be even enough to create a stable economy. However, it is safe to argue that such is resilient and will surely provide a social and political infrastructure that can have the capacity to self-recuperate and to rely on its own powers to establish these secure conditions. As experience tells us, an elitist-statist mode may even be better in the short run to deliver good infrastructures and faster economic growth. However, it is also possible that such system does not provide a secure foundation for self-recuperation at the onset of a crisis. This situation is compounded when authoritarian instruments are relied upon to consolidate political power. Such regimes can only but fall victim to a legitimacy crisis. It is therefore argued that the security of citizens, nation-states, and of the global community, as well as their resources and environments will be served best by a pluralism of political and economic

actors and of the strengthening of local, national, regional and global civil societies. It is only through this that the State could be transformed, and not just merely reformed.

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