

SECURITY MINILATERALISMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE CASES OF  
SULU SEA TRILATERAL COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT (TCA)  
AND MALACCA STRAITS PATROL (MSP)

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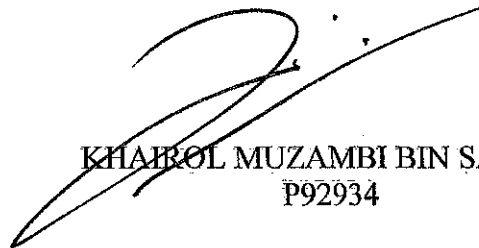
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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## ABSTRACT

This research examines the emergence of minilateral security cooperations in Southeast Asia, on the side-lines of ASEAN security framework. It investigates the claims that the Southeast Asian regionalism is inadequate, is having some shortcomings or is lacking in fulfilling certain member states' needs in addressing certain non-traditional security (NTS) threats. This research is guided by three research questions. The first, to ascertain if there are any shortcomings in the ASEAN regional security framework that causes the emergence of minilateral security cooperation (minilateralism) on the side-lines of ASEAN construct. Second, to ascertain the motive why minilateralism is preferred by certain ASEAN countries rather than enhancing the regional security framework of ASEAN Community specifically the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) aspirations and how does minilateralism fills the gap. Third, to ascertain if minilateralisms is considered as a form of alliance of conveniences to pursue certain interests. In addressing the research questions, this research drew three research objectives; first, to investigate the factors and causes of the emergence of security minilateralisms on the side-lines of ASEAN security framework. Second, to investigate how the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA), as a security minilateralism fills the gap left by the formal ASEAN security framework – APSC. Third, to investigate how the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP), as a security minilateralism fills the gap left by the formal ASEAN security framework – APSC. This research has confirmed two hypotheses; first, the rise of NTS threats does resulted to the rise of security minilateralism between ASEAN states. Secondly, high sovereignty costs led to ASEAN member states to prefer a lower level type of security cooperation/initiative (unilateral, bilateral and minilateral) and conversely, ASEAN member states will accept a high-level security cooperation/initiative (multilateral) if the sovereignty costs it bears is low. Additionally, this research confirms several findings. First, there is no lacking in the ASEAN security framework, but it was not preferred due to the nature of integration and socialization within ASEAN that converged making minilateralism as the most ideal option in addressing the security issues in both the Sulu Sea and Straits of Malacca (SoM) without undermining ASEAN centrality. Second, the ASEAN member states would always measure the level of sovereignty costs that they can accept before committing to any type or level of security cooperation/initiative in addressing certain security issue. Third, non-intervention policy is being used by both the states affected by the rise of the NTS and the non-affected states, whenever convenient for them since sovereignty is still central in any foreign policy choices of ASEAN countries. Lastly, unilateral initiative is far from effective in addressing the issue in the Sulu Sea and SoM and multilateral would impose too high of sovereignty costs to the affected states. Hence, minilateral security cooperation was dubbed as the next best solution which stemmed from the ideas of shared problems, shared responsibilities and shared sovereignty dilemma to the affected states.

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