

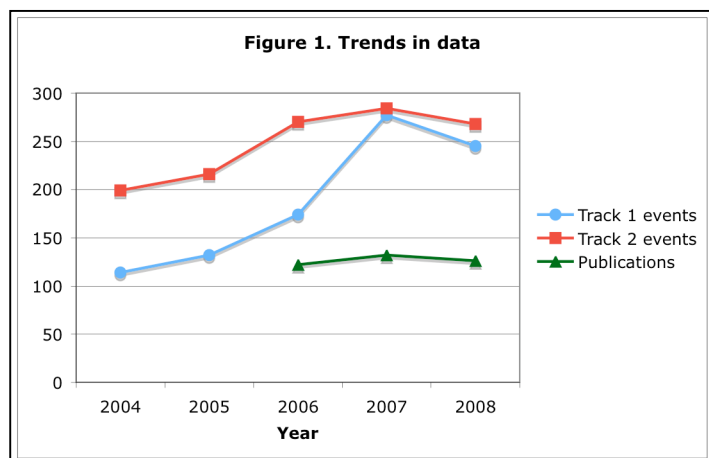
## Dialogue and Research Monitor 2008: Overview

This volume of *Dialogue and Research Monitor* includes dialogues and publications conducted or published between January and December 2008 that were focused on East Asia regional cooperation on security-related issues broadly defined or on community building. The year 2008 witnessed a mixture of constructive and destructive forces. On the one hand, the region played host to major international events as China hosted the Olympics and Japan hosted the G8 Summit. Significant new dialogues were launched, such as a trilateral China–Japan–South Korea summit meeting, and the ASEAN Charter came into force at the end of the year. On the other hand, back-to-back natural disasters struck Myanmar and China, and a manmade disaster in the form of a global financial crisis struck the region and much of the world as the subprime loan crisis that originated in the United States had a staggering ripple effect. In addition, a combination of natural and manmade factors led to a spike in the prices of oil and food, putting new pressures on efforts to alleviate poverty and hunger. And while some security issues such as piracy seemed to be improving in Asia, others, such as the situation on the Korean peninsula, appeared to be as intractable as ever. It is against this backdrop that we examine the dialogues and research products of 2008.

### The Big Picture

Our survey of dialogues and research conducted in 2008 yielded 245 Track 1 and 268 Track 2 dialogues, as well as 119 publications. As seen in figure 1, the number of Track 2 dialogues and publications held fairly steady, while there was a slight dip in Track 1 meetings. Despite this minor decline, the numbers remain much higher than the levels we saw in 2004, for example, when we identified 114 Track 1 and 199 Track 2 dialogues.

As in the past, we saw a number of new initiatives launched on the Track 1 level. A total of 16 dialogues were held for the first time, some adding another level of dialogue to an existing forum, such as the first informal consultations among foreign ministers from the East Asia Summit member nations, or the 1st Senior Officials Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Democracy Partnership. Others established new forums for the discussion of energy security, nuclear energy safety, poverty alleviation, the environment, and democracy. Interestingly, we only identified 4 new Track 2 dialogue series, down substantially from 17 last year. These new dialogues included a women’s forum, a regular meeting on regional disaster risk



management, a task force on regional institutional architecture, and a high-level eminent persons group. The implications of this dip in new Track 2 forums are unclear. Has the region reached a saturation point in terms of ongoing forums as opposed to project-based meetings and conferences? Or did the onset of the financial crisis limit the ability of regional NGOs to launch new initiatives?

The following tables show the themes that appeared most frequently in the 2008 survey. Table 1 presents the predominant central themes of the meetings, while table 2 includes all issues that were on the agenda at meetings. (In other words, a meeting's main theme might be the future of the Asia Pacific region, and it would therefore be included in table 1 as "East Asia/Asia Pacific," but participants at the meeting might have discussed development, economic cooperation, and the environment, which would be reflected in table 2.)

**Table 1. Top ten dialogue themes, 2008**

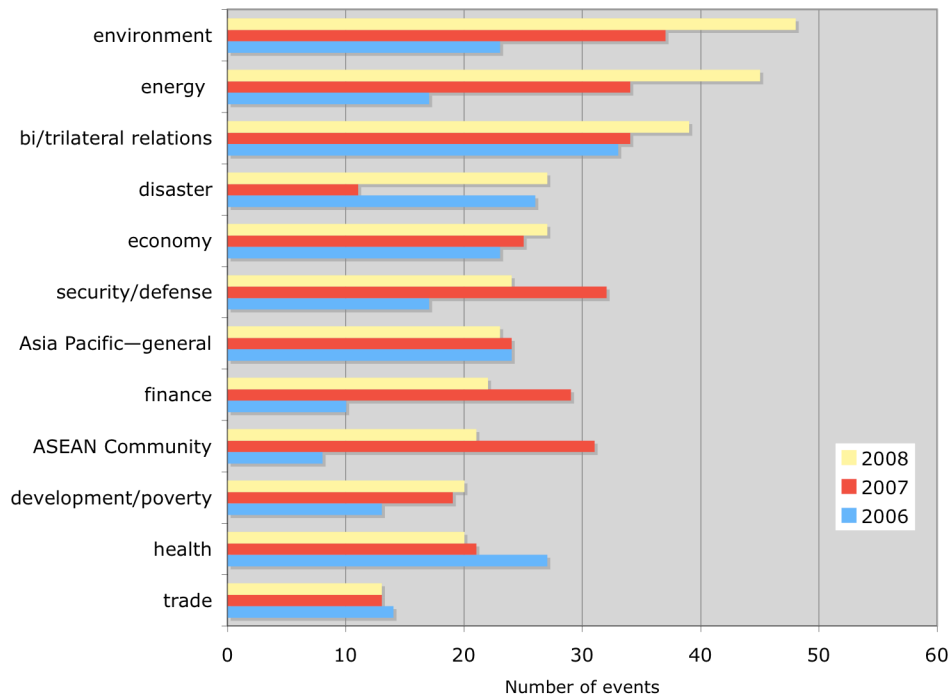
<i>Track 1</i>			<i>Track 2</i>		
1	Environment	22	1	Energy	27
2	Bilateral/trilateral relations	20	2	Environment	26
3	ASEAN/ASEAN Community	18	3	Bilateral/trilateral relations	19
	Energy	18	4	Disaster	17
5	Economy/economic cooperation	17	5	East Asia/Asia Pacific (general)	16
6	Finance	16	6	Traditional security	13
7	Transnational crime (incl. human/ drug trafficking, corruption)	12	7	Development/poverty	12
8	Traditional security	11	8	Economy/economic cooperation	10
	Disaster relief/risk management	11		Health	10
10	Health	10		Integration	10

**Table 2. Top ten topics discussed at dialogues, 2008**

<i>Track 1</i>			<i>Track 2</i>		
1	ASEAN/ASEAN Community	54	1	Environment	79
2	Environment	53	2	Energy	52
3	Economy/economic cooperation	48	3	Development/poverty	48
4	Development/poverty	39	4	Finance	36
5	Trade	38		Economy/economic cooperation	36
6	Energy	34	6	Traditional security	31
7	Disaster relief/risk management	32		Trade	31
8	Integration	25	8	Integration	28
9	Finance	23	9	United States	27
10	Health	22	10	China	25
	Terrorism	22			

Figure 2 shows the combined total of dialogues and publications in major categories, offering a snapshot of trends over the past three years. As will be discussed below, this shows a steadily increasing focus on bilateral and trilateral relations and on development and poverty, as well as a significant leap in attention to energy and the environment. In this overview, we will explore some of these key trends that we observed in 2008.

**Figure 2. Trends in total number of events in major categories, 2006–2008**



## ASEAN and East Asia Community Building

ASEAN community building was moving forward in 2008, but it was a year in which there seemed to be less talk and more action. Whereas 2007 had marked ASEAN’s 40th anniversary and was therefore a time for reflection, the focus in 2008 was on developing blueprints for the ASEAN Political-Security Community and Socio-cultural Community to complement the economic blueprint developed the previous year. Moreover, because the ASEAN Charter had been adopted in November 2007, there were substantially fewer meetings focused on that topic in 2008 (just two). Each member government needed to focus domestically during the year to ratify the charter in its country, and the charter then officially came into effect at the end of the year after being ratified at the annual ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting.

As in previous years, the development of the *ASEAN Community* was a topic left primarily to official discussions. Of the 22 meetings that specifically focused on ASEAN, only 4 were Track 2 dialogues. These included a workshop on the nature of the proposed ASEAN Community and the obstacles standing in its way, a roundtable on the ASEAN Charter, and a roundtable on the Economic Community Blueprint—all of which involved Indonesia’s Institute of Southeast Asian Studies—and an ASEAN Business Advisory Council business and investment summit. Officials at Track 1 meetings focused their attention on how to implement the provisions of the ASEAN Charter and how to establish an ASEAN Human Rights Body, as well as on the drafting of the blueprints noted above. The subject of ASEAN community

building was on the agenda of 79 meetings in all, and here again, more than 70 percent were Track 1 events.

The expanded use of the **ASEAN+3** framework continues to be evident in this year's list. A total of 27 ASEAN+3 events were identified (as compared to 25 in 2007), led by 6 meetings each on energy and health-related issues (primarily infectious disease). Other meetings addressed issues related to agriculture, development, disaster management, the economy, finance, the environment, labor, and drug trafficking.

Fifteen meetings on our list—13 Track 1 and 2 Track 2—were conducted by the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)**, down just slightly from last year's survey. In addition to more traditional security and confidence-building issues, meetings also examined disaster relief, energy security, terrorism, and peacekeeping. For example, ARF members called for greater cooperation on disaster management and relief and, having held a desktop exercise in May 2008, they subsequently agreed to hold the first ARF disaster relief field exercise, during which civil and military participants would respond to a hypothetical typhoon disaster in Luzon, Philippines.

The **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** forum organized 23 of the dialogues on our list—9 Track 1 and 14 Track 2—which was up from 18 in 2007. In addition to meetings on the economy, finance, trade, and regional integration, topics included growth, equity, and sustainable development; emergency preparedness; renewable energy; education; and aging. The key theme for APEC in 2008 was "A New Commitment to Asia Pacific Development," and they examined how to promote regional integration in ways that would reduce the gap between developed and developing member economies.

The **East Asia Summit (EAS)** was not held in 2008. It was postponed until 2009 as a result of domestic political instability in the host country of Thailand. Work did proceed, however, on energy and environmental issues—topics identified as priorities at the 2nd and 3rd EAS—as six task force and ministerial meetings were held in addition to meetings of EAS senior officials and foreign ministers.

The respective roles of the EAS and other regional forums such as ASEAN+3, ARF, and APEC were still vague, and questions remained at the end of 2008 as to how to ensure that they are complementary rather than redundant, and whether they will contribute to the formation of a broader, institutionalized East Asian community. As will be discussed below when we examine the publications, the question of regional architecture was on people's minds in 2008. For example, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) launched a two-year task force to assess the current architecture of the region, while the APEC Studies Centers Consortium Meeting looked at the regional institutional architecture as part of its discussions on the role of APEC, and other meetings considered the regional and subregional security architecture.

## **Major Powers in the Region and Subregional Community Building**

The role of major powers in the region was a less prominent issue in 2008 than in previous years. **US involvement in Asia** was touched upon in just 32 meetings, of which more than half were bilateral or trilateral dialogues, such as the ROK-US-Japan Security Workshop, the US-Japan-China Trilateral Conference, the Japan-US-Australia Trilateral

Strategic Dialogue, and so on. Only a few dialogues examined the relationship of the United States with the region, such as “New Power Dynamics in Southeast Asia: Issues for US Policy” or “2nd Japan-US-Asia Dialogue: An East Asian Community and the United States.” With the exception of one project on cultural issues—“The Role of Islam in Multicultural Asia and the Changing Role of the United States in the Region”—the rest of the projects were examining general security and strategic relations. As in the past, these events failed to look at the US role in addressing transnational challenges in the region.

**Japan** was on the agenda of 29 discussions (the second year in a row that it has decreased), and **China's** role in the region was discussed at 30 meetings (a significant drop from the previous year). As was the case with the United States, China and Japan were discussed primarily in the contexts of bilateral or trilateral relations, the balance of power in the region, economics, and security. There was less emphasis than in 2007, however, on the “rise of China” and its implications for the region, which may be a reflection of the economic downturn. Discussions of **India** similarly seemed to be declining in 2008, as only 12 events included the topic on their agenda in contrast to 21 the previous year.

**Community building in Northeast Asia** was the focus of 3 Track 2 dialogues and served as the geographical context for more than 26 dialogues in all—8 governmental meetings and 18 nongovernmental meetings—which was a significant drop from 40 the previous year. Of note among Track 1 meetings was a trilateral meeting held in December 2008 among the leaders of China, Japan, and South Korea—the first time such a summit was held independently from other multilateral events. The meeting examined ways to promote cooperation and set forth guiding principles for trilateral cooperation, including openness, transparency, trust, common interest, and respect for the diverse cultures. Specifically, the leaders agreed to further regional cooperation to stabilize financial markets and to fight against protectionism. In addition, they agreed to take necessary measures to increase economic growth and expand domestic demand; addressed ways to strengthen disaster management for earthquakes, typhoons, floods, and other natural disasters; and discussed regional issues including North Korea and such global challenges as the environment, disarmament, and nonproliferation.

Energy and security continued to be the key themes for this subregion, with the Korean Peninsula being a key concern. As will be discussed below, progress in the **Six-Party Talks** was erratic at best in 2008, and this cast further doubts on the appropriateness of the Six-Party process as a model for the creation of a Northeast Asian regional institution, although the desirability and possible paths for such an institution were discussed in various dialogues and publications in 2008.

The majority of discussions regarding the **Southeast Asian region** continued to be framed primarily in the context of ASEAN. Just three Track 2 dialogues examined issues within that subregional context, looking at the “new power dynamics,” “democracy, crisis management and new regionalism,” and “bilateralism versus multilateralism.” As was the case last year, among the 26 dialogues that included Southeast Asia on the agenda, topics were more varied than those looking at Northeast Asia, ranging from the environment to nonproliferation, democracy, energy, migration, maritime security, terrorism, trade, and transportation. Five of the events looked at relations between individual countries and the region, such as a “Workshop on Changing Interactions between China and Southeast Asia at the Turn of the

21st Century,” and “The United States and Southeast Asia: Toward a Strategy for Enhanced Engagement.”

A number of events also focused on *smaller subregions*, such as the Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines–East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA); the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle; the CLMV countries (Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam region); the Greater Mekong Subregion; and the Pacific Islands. Some of these groupings primarily target the promotion of trade and development, but a number of meetings also addressed transnational issues. In particular, projects related to the Mekong region (seven Track 1 and six Track 2) covered the environment—e.g., the impact of climate change on development, food security, energy security, and tourism in the region—agriculture, human trafficking, regional integration, and drug use among the youth of the region.

## **Economic Community Building**

The ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint was officially adopted in November 2007 with the goal of transforming ASEAN into “a single market and production base, a highly competitive economic region, a region of equitable economic development, and a region fully integrated into the global economy.” Fifteen meetings in 2008 looked at the issue of *regional economic integration*, including five at the Track 1 level. Some were ongoing meetings, such as the 13th High-Level Task Force Meeting on ASEAN Economic Integration, or the meeting of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Task Force, which looks at subregional integration among the CLMV nations. Several meetings compared European and Asian integration experiences, while others focused on issues such as regulatory reform that will lay the groundwork for further integration.

Economic integration gained even greater saliency in 2008—just one decade after the Asian financial crisis, a new *global economic crisis* had begun, triggered by the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the United States in September 2007. The following year would see the impact of the subprime mortgage crisis create ripples throughout the world. Not surprisingly, then, the economy was fifth on our list of main topics for Track 1 dialogues in 2008, and if you add in the meetings that focused on trade, finance, and economic integration, it would be well in the lead. Much of the discussion centered on the need for continued integration in the Asian financial markets, liberalization of trade within the region, and coordination to overcome the crisis. In May 2008, for example, ASEAN+3 finance ministers worked to set up an emergency fund to help stabilize the region’s financial markets. And in November, when the 16th APEC forum was held in Peru, the theme of “A New Commitment to Asia-Pacific Development” ended up being overshadowed by the global recession. In the face of this crisis, the leaders stressed the need for coordinated action and a continued commitment to trade liberalization, including further exploration of the potential for a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

Roughly a dozen Track 2 meetings also examined the impact of the crisis on the region. Several meetings that involved Asia and Europe, for example, emphasized the ways in which the ongoing crisis was affecting both regions, such as a meeting in December that gathered scholars, policymakers, and business executives to examine the causes of the crisis, its

consequences, and the actions needed at the global, regional, and national levels. Another meeting, which drew 300 participants in November, examined “The Future of Economic Integration in Asia: Challenges amid Global Financial Turmoil.” The annual Future of Asia forum and the annual meeting of the Trilateral Commission’s Pacific Asia Group both featured sessions that examined the effects of the financial crisis on East Asia and on regional integration. Naturally, meetings in which the business sector was heavily involved also took up the issue, such as the APEC Business Advisory Council’s final meeting of the year, which considered how to seize the opportunity in responding to the global economic crisis to chart a course toward recovery and renewed growth in all APEC economies, or the ASEAN Business & Investment Summit that looked at ASEAN responses to the crisis.

The impact of the crisis on regional development was also a concern given that the World Trade Organization’s Doha Round negotiations came to a standstill in July 2008 when the United States, India, and China failed to reach an agreement on agricultural trade issues. **Development** and the **alleviation of poverty** were the focus of 8 Track 1 dialogues and 12 Track 2 dialogues, showing a slight increase over 2007. There was also a substantial increase in the number of publications we found in this field—10 publications in 2008 as compared to just 5 in each of the previous 2 years. As was the case in 2007, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) played a dominant role in this field, organizing half of the dialogues we identified that focused specifically on development or poverty in the region and one-quarter of all regional meetings that included the topic on their broader agendas.

## Security Cooperation in the Region

**Traditional security** issues declined slightly as a major focus of regional discussions, dropping from a total of 73 dialogues in 2007 to 52 in 2008. They still account for roughly 10 percent of the meetings in our survey, however, and roughly the same percentage of the publications. Interestingly, the drop was even more significant if we look at how often this topic was discussed in broader contexts. The biggest gains, on the other hand were seen in **nontraditional security** issues, including environmental issues and energy security. This section will examine trends in both traditional and nontraditional security.

Nonproliferation was one of the topics that showed a significant drop in terms of its inclusion on broader agendas. It was the main focus of 11 meetings in 2008, down just slightly from the previous two years, but whereas it was discussed at 47 meetings in 2007, it was only addressed at 28 events in 2008. Of course, the Korean Peninsula looms large in the region’s discussions of nonproliferation. The **Six-Party Talks** seemed to be making some progress in the middle of the year—in June the North Korean government destroyed the cooling tower of the nuclear reactor at Yongbyon to show its commitment to denuclearization, leading to a resumption of the talks in July after a nine-month break. By September, however, the International Atomic Energy Agency was reporting that North Korea had suspended the disabling of the Yongbyon nuclear facility and expelled UN monitors from its reprocessing plant. In October, the United States announced that it had removed North Korea from its State Sponsors of Terrorism List (despite Japanese objections) and North Korea

announced that it would allow the monitors back in. In December, Six-Party Talks were held in Beijing, but the parties failed to agree on a protocol to verify North Korea's declaration regarding its nuclear activities, leading to further tensions and threats. The number of events focused on the Korean peninsula dropped from 11 in 2007 to just 2 in 2008, and those were both meetings of the Six-Party Talks.

**Maritime security** has been a key issue in the region in past years, but in 2008 it was brazen piracy off the Horn of Africa that was making headlines, while the Southeast Asian waterways were relatively calm. This was primarily a result of increased cooperation between Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia, and thanks to international capacity-building assistance in recent years. The number of events focusing on maritime security fell from seven in 2007 to just three in 2008.

Nor was **terrorism** a front-page issue in East Asia in 2008, although South Asia suffered a terrorist attack in November, when gunmen launched a coordinated assault in Mumbai. We identified 8 regional dialogues focused on terrorism in 2008 (7 Track 1 and 1 Track 2), while the overall number of meetings that included terrorism on the agenda dropped from 46 to 29 over the past year.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was the main actor in the security field, holding 10 meetings on general issues of regional security as well as additional meetings on terrorism, peacekeeping, disaster relief, and energy security. The 15th ARF was held in July, but there again it was disaster relief that dominated discussions rather than the traditional security issues, although the meeting did also address North Korea's nuclear program, terrorism, the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand, and the current food and energy crisis. The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) was a key player on the Track 2 side, holding meetings on regional security, nonproliferation, maritime security, and energy security.

Energy security and food security figured prominently among the **nontraditional security** issues of 2008. **Energy** ranked fourth in terms of Track 1 topics (18 dialogues) and first among Track 2 (27 dialogues), continuing a trend that we first saw in 2007. It did not show up prominently yet among publications, however. This increased interest in energy was in part a reflection of the jump in oil prices, which topped US\$100 in January and climbed to over US\$140 later in the year, highlighting the need for greater energy self-sufficiency among those countries dependent on imports, and also the need to explore alternative sources of energy. A second, related issue was **food security**. The prices of grains around the world were rising rapidly in 2008, in part due to the diversion of corn for use as a source of biofuel (i.e., the lower supply of corn available for human consumption and for feed caused prices to rise), but also due to surging demand for rice and other grains in developing nations like China, and to poor harvests caused by droughts and other environmental factors. Several major rice exporters imposed export controls to ensure the food supply for their own populations. The ability of nations to secure a stable food supply for their citizens, the implications of this for development, and the interconnectedness of environment, energy, food, development, and human security were brought to the forefront in 2008.

When Japan hosted the G8 Summit in July 2008, food and energy security were among the key issues on the agenda. ASEAN, ASEAN+3, ARF, the EAS, and ASEM all held meetings on energy security, including two new initiatives: the ASEAN Nuclear Energy Safety Sub-Sector Network was established to discuss civilian nuclear energy safety and security issues

and to develop a nuclear safety regime at the regional level that meets international standards, while ASEM held its first Forum on Energy Security as well, discussing energy security policy and cooperation and concentrating on new and renewable energies, energy substitutes, maintaining traditional energies, intensifying energy security, and sharing Asian and European experiences on energy policy planning, technology transfer, and investment facilitation. Among the 27 Track 2 dialogues, the focus ranged from regional energy cooperation and public-private partnerships for energy security, to the benefits and challenges of biofuels and their impact on development, energy trade and investment, and climate change and energy security.

While the number of dialogues focused exclusively on food security remained small—just four Track 1 meetings—there was a noticeable leap in the number of projects that included food security on the agenda (from 10 in 2007 to 36 in 2008). It was discussed in the context of broader regional economic dialogues, meetings on nontraditional security, meetings on information technology's impact on emerging issues in the region, meetings on energy, meetings on the environment, and meetings on bilateral and trilateral relations. In December 2008, for example, ESCAP held a high-level policy dialogue that addressed the food and fuel crises and the issue of climate change in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

## **Regional Cooperation on Transnational and Global Issues**

In addition to the issues discussed above, three common issues continued to serve as focal points for regional cooperation, all of which have security implications as well: disaster prevention and relief, health issues, and the environment. There were 10 Track 1 dialogues that focused on *disaster relief and prevention* in 2008, and a total of 32 events included discussions on the topic; among Track 2 dialogues, 17 were focused on disasters. These numbers are up significantly from 2007, but are similar to what we saw in 2006. To some extent, of course, the number of dialogues on this topic will inevitably reflect the number and severity of incidents that occur in a given year. In 2008, the region was struck by two major disasters that tested new regional and global mechanisms that were developed in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami.

Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar on May 2, killing close to 140,000 people according to many estimates, and affecting millions. Less than two weeks later, a 7.9-magnitude earthquake hit Sichuan Province in Western China, killing about 70,000 people and leaving thousands missing. These two disasters highlighted the political complexities of disaster relief and the potential impact of regional integration efforts. Despite the devastation it faced, the government of Myanmar initially turned away American and French ships carrying relief supplies. It did, however, agree to work with the ASEAN Secretariat, and by May 9, an ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team comprised of government officials, disaster management experts, and NGOs from ASEAN member nations, was on the ground in Myanmar, assessing the damage and the needs. This resulted in the creation of an ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force to handle the diplomatic aspects of recovery, and a Tripartite Core Group in Yangon (consisting of ASEAN, the government of Myanmar, and the United Nations) that oversees the daily implementation of recovery assistance. This was the first such effort for ASEAN. Many

have pointed to ASEAN's policy of constructive engagement with the Myanmar junta—including its success in engaging Myanmar in many of the types of dialogues we survey in this publication—as having been instrumental in enabling ASEAN to assist the people of Myanmar in a time of crisis.

China also received aid from its regional neighbors following the earthquake, including the dispatch of rescue teams from Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Russia, and Taiwan. This was the first time that the Chinese government had accepted foreign professionals for a domestic disaster rescue and relief operation. The outpouring of sympathy and aid from Japan reflected a positive shift in bilateral relations, and the fact that China was willing to accept Japanese aid (although it did refuse to allow Japan's military planes to deliver that aid), showed progress as well. In late June, a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer delivered earthquake relief supplies to Zhanjiang, becoming the first Japanese warship to visit China since WWII.

The Chinese government was generally praised for its quick response to the earthquake and for allowing more freedom in the media coverage of the disaster. On the other hand, the collapse of a number of buildings—particularly schools—due to diverted funds and shoddy construction, drew attention to the ongoing issues of graft and governance in the region, while the government's attempts to silence those who spoke out on the school construction issue served as a reminder of the ongoing human rights issues in the country. Nonetheless, the topic of *human rights* did not figure prominently in regional discussions in 2008. It was the focus of just 2 Track 1 and 4 Track 2 events in our list—as compared to 3 and 10 respectively in 2007—and there was an even more dramatic drop in terms of the number of meetings that included human rights on the agenda. Similarly, *governance* and *corruption* were only the focus of two events each in 2008.

The *health* field has been a major area of regional cooperation in Asia Pacific, but has seen a steady drop in our listings over the past few years, both in Track 1 and Track 2 dialogues, and in publications as well. In 2008, there were 10 Track 1 dialogues focused on health issues, with the main focus being on *infectious diseases*. The ASEAN+3 Health Ministers Meeting, however, examined the topic from a slightly different angle, looking at “Trade Liberalization: Its Adverse Impact on our Borderless Health Problems.” The health ministers examined the positive and negative implications that globalization and trade liberalization have for the health sector in terms of cost saving and ensuring equitable and affordable access to quality care. Among the 4 Track 2 dialogues in 2008, there was a similar focus on infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and avian influenza. The one outlier here was the Pacific Health Summit, which this year took on the issue of nutrition, looking at the complex challenge of there being too little of the right nutrition for vulnerable populations, and too much of the wrong kind of nutrition in both developed and developing societies. It is still unclear whether this apparent decline in the regional focus on health is a temporary phenomenon or a long-term trend, perhaps caused by greater coordination at the international rather than regional level.

Moving in quite the opposite direction numerically is the *environment*, which was the number one topic among Track 1 events in the region and number two among Track 2 events. If we look at overall agendas, those rankings flip—the environment was second only to building the ASEAN community on the Track 1 side, and on the Track 2 side, it was the leading topic by a significant margin (79 dialogues in all discussed environmental issues, as compared to the runner-up, energy, with 52).

Among the 21 Track 1 events focused on the environment, perhaps the two most notable traits are the focus on subregional groupings such as the Greater Mekong Subregion or

Northeast Asia, and the overwhelming number of ongoing events. Only a handful of the dialogues were not part of a preexisting dialogue series, and of these only one, the ASEM Seminar on Adaptation to Climate Change, seems to be a one-time-only event. The others appear to be creating new dialogue series in the region, including the Inaugural EAS Environment Ministers Meeting; the 1st ASEAN-Japan Environment Dialogue; the 1st Meeting of the Technical Working Group on Transboundary Haze Pollution in the Mekong Sub-Region (TWG Mekong); and the BIMP-EAGA Regional Environment Program Inception Meeting. Among the Track 2 events, there was an ongoing focus on air quality issues, biodiversity, and “green growth,” but also an increased focus on climate change, particularly with an eye to the post-Kyoto protocol; on the connection between fuel, food, and climate change; and on the development–climate change balance. Several meetings also stressed the benefits of climate change initiatives from an economic perspective, such as a “US-Japan Workshop on the Co-benefits of Climate Actions in Asia,” in which participants from the United States, China, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand exchanged views on policies and measures to achieve developmental goals while also reducing emissions of greenhouse gases; “Green Asia—Moving toward Win-Win through Change,” which addressed public-private partnerships in the green energy sector; and a PECC seminar on “Climate Change and Green Opportunities—Business, Society, and Cooperation.”

## By the Book

The *Dialogue and Research Monitor* reviews the year’s literature related to East Asia as a barometer of research being conducted in recent years. Because our list is limited to English-language publications, there is naturally some bias in this selection. It is more reflective of research aimed at the broader, international community than at a domestic constituency, which may slant the way issues are framed and analyzed. It also focuses on books and reports of a substantial length (in general, 50 pages or more) because we believe these are more indicative of ongoing research projects or collaborative dialogues. Despite these caveats, we believe that the list sheds light on what research has been done over the past several years and what publications might be shaping the debate in the years to come. As noted above, we were able to identify 119 relevant publications that were released in 2008, which was a slight dip from the previous year. While there was a wide array of topics, the top themes addressed in these studies are summarized in table 3 below.

Once again, publications that focused primarily on **traditional security and defense** issues were the most prevalent. Five of the 10 publications in this field, however, were broad, annual reviews of regional security issues—*Asia Pacific Security Survey 2008* (East-West Center, USA); *Asian Strategic Review 2008* (Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, India); *CSCAP Regional Security Outlook 2008*; *East Asian Strategic Review 2008* (National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan); and *Strategic Asia 2008–09: Challenges and Choices* (National Bureau of Asian Research, USA). Among the remaining five, one is a look at Asia-Pacific security issues undertaken as part of a joint Japanese-Russian research project. Another looks at the shifting security relations between India and Southeast Asia. A third looks at the impact of globalization on the economies, security policies, and military-industrial complexes in Asia

Pacific. And the final two publications look specifically at Northeast Asia and the potential for a regional institution or architecture to promote peace and security.

**Table 3. Main themes of publications in 2008**

<i>Theme</i>	<i>No.</i>
Traditional security/defense	10
Development/poverty	10
Regionalism	9
Bilateral/trilateral relations	6
ASEAN community	6
International relations/balance of power	6
Economy/economic cooperation	5
Asia Pacific/East Asia—general	4
Southeast Asia	4
Environment	4
Energy	4

Another topic at the top of the list with 10 publications was **development and poverty**—up from just 5 publications each of the previous two years. Three of the publications in 2008 were annual surveys: the ADB's *Asian Development Outlook 2008*; the UNDP's *Asia-Pacific Human Development Report 2008*, which focused on corruption this year; and ESCAP's *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2008: Sustaining Growth and Sharing Prosperity*, which calls for a comprehensive liberalization of global trade in agriculture. Several publications focused on the Millennium Development Goals and the progress made to date in achieving those targets in Asia Pacific. ESCAP published *A Future Within Reach 2008: Regional Partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*, as well as *Delivering As One: Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Road Map 2008–2015*. Other publications looked at such issues as the impact of the global financial crisis on Asian development, and on reducing poverty through sustainable fisheries or through agriculture and secondary crop development. It is important to note, however, that out of these 10 publications, 8 were published by international agencies rather than academic institutions or think tanks.

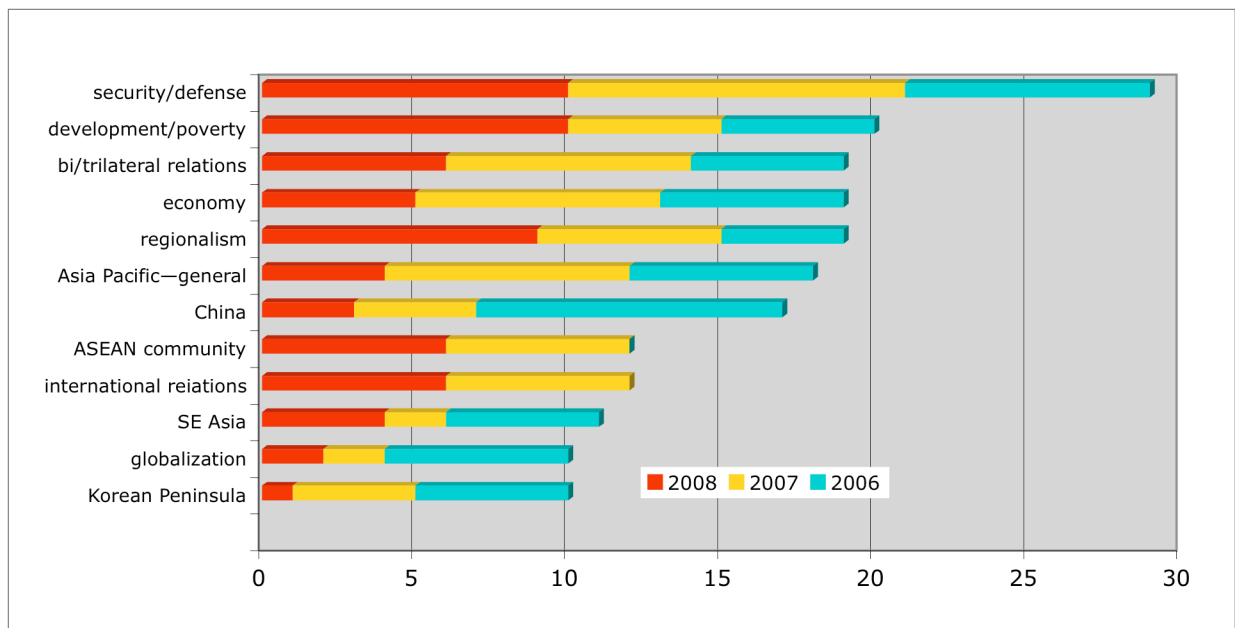
While our survey does not include publications that only examine a single country, we do include those that focus on the role or influence of a country on the region. Such books, however, are on the decline. Compared to 2006, when 10 books looked at **China's impact on Asia**, only 3 were found this year. These included *A Rising China and Security in East Asia*, and *China, East Asia and the Global Economy*. Interestingly, this number was matched by publications on the role of the **United States in Asia**, such as *America's Role in Asia: Asian and American Perspectives*. There was just one publication on **North Korea** in our survey, *Nuclear Matters in North Korea: Building a Multilateral Response for Future Stability in Northeast Asia*, and no publications focused on **Japan**. There were also a number of studies that looked at the **bilateral or multilateral relationships** among these countries, such as *Japan and China in East Asian Integration*, or *Bridging Strategic Asia*, which looked at the US-Japan-India triangle.

**Energy**-related publications showed a slight increase in 2008, up by two over the previous year. These included broader surveys of the field, such as *Northeast Asia Energy Outlook*, as well as two publications on energy security in the region. We anticipate that this issue will become more prominent in the coming years, particularly in light of rising fuel prices and the increasing focus on the nexus between fuel, food, and climate change.

The number of publications on the **environment** held steady, with four publications this year focused on climate change. One, for example, looks at the domestic institutional processes in Asia to address climate change, circumstances impeding countries from fully participating in the climate change debate, and Asian perspectives on a plausible climate regime following the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period. Two others look at the post-Kyoto regime as well, and one looks at ways to reunite climate change and sustainable development.

Finally, the topics of **regionalism, integration, and the ASEAN community** continued to be key subjects for researchers, reflecting the trends in dialogues as well. JCIE's *East Asia at a Crossroads*, for example, looks at the dynamics of community building in the region. Perhaps most striking among this year's publications was the heavy emphasis on the institutional underpinnings of regional and sub-regional integration. Titles include, for example, *Institutions of the Asia-Pacific: ASEAN, APEC and Beyond*; *Asia's New Institutional Architecture: Evolving Structures for Managing Trade, Financial, and Security Relations*; *Institutional Balancing in the Asia Pacific*; and *Do Institutions Matter? Regional Institutions and Regionalism in East Asia*. Two publications focus on the potential for greater institutionalization of relations in Northeast Asia: *Peace and Security in Northeast Asia: Ways for Institutionalization* and *Institutionalizing Northeast Asia—Making the Impossible Possible?* While this was an underlying current of discussions at many of the dialogues, it seems to be explored much more directly and explicitly in the research.

**Figure 3. Publications in top 12 categories, 2006–2008**



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For more than a decade, the *Dialogue and Research Monitor* has tracked developments in dialogue and research on security and community building in Asia Pacific. We have catalogued the steady increase in governmental and nongovernmental events and research on a broad range of topics, including longer-term issues of international relations, regional institutions, economic integration, and governance, as well as more immediate and pressing transnational issues such as disaster management and relief, energy security, food security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, responses to financial crises, and terrorism.

The English-language literature on these topics has expanded, but there still tends to be a bias toward single-country studies (not included in this survey) and traditional security studies, which undoubtedly reflects traditional academic and institutional frameworks. This disconnect between research and the policy discourse in the field needs to be bridged to ensure that the rich array of dialogues in the region, many of which are becoming increasingly institutionalized, are grounded in an equally broad range of empirical research and contextual analyses. It is essential that dialogues go beyond being mere “talk shops” and that they do not expand in a way that creates redundancies or saps essential resources. In particular, at a time when new regional dialogues and initiatives are proliferating, there is a need to look at how these pieces fit together, to consider what is working and what is not, and to present best practices on specific issues of common concern.

There can be no question that increased dialogue in Asia Pacific has led to confidence building among nations and to greater stability in the region. While certain tensions do remain and challenges abound, the underpinnings of the regional community are gradually being put into place and should continue to be developed and strengthened in the years to come.

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