

Box 3.6 Regional Organizations: ASEAN and the CSTO

Regional organizations have long been identified as important actors in peacekeeping and conflict resolution. The African Union, European Union, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), among others, all play critical roles in regional stability. In 2011, two regional organizations, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), took important though still untested steps forward in their efforts to respond to regional conflict.

In mid-2010, widespread protests erupted into large-scale violence in Kyrgyzstan, resulting in over seventy-five deaths and the resignation of the president. During the violence, Kyrgyzstan requested intervention from the CSTO; however, the organization stated that the unrest was an internal matter and limited its support to humanitarian assistance. The events pointed to weakness in the CSTO's ability to provide security guarantees within the region.

Though CSTO members had discussed creating a collective peacekeeping force for several years, these efforts gained momentum in late 2010, at least partially due to the failure to act during

the violence in Kyrgyzstan. In April 2011, the CSTO formed a collective peacekeeping force with approximately 4,200 peacekeepers. This force is complemented by an existing 17,000-strong CSTO rapid reaction force. The peacekeepers have yet to deploy, but the CSTO has agreed that they may be deployed within its member states and globally under the authorization of the UN Security Council. Further amendments to the CSTO's charter are anticipated, including efforts to develop the organization as the primary peacekeeping force in Central Asia.

In Southeast Asia, tensions flared along the border between Cambodia and Thailand in 2011, reigniting a long-standing territorial dispute between the two countries over the Preah Vihear temple. In 1962 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) awarded the temple to Cambodia, but both countries claim the territory around the temple. The dispute escalated in 2008 when Cambodia applied for and successfully registered the temple as a World Heritage site under the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Hostilities resumed in 2011, with the resulting

exchange of fire killing eight people and displacing thousands.

In response, Indonesia, acting in its capacity as the 2011 chair of ASEAN, invited ASEAN foreign ministers to meet informally on the conflict. It also offered to provide observers to monitor the cease-fire. When negotiations stalled, Cambodia brought the matter back to the ICJ, which ruled that troops from both countries should withdraw to allow Indonesian observers to monitor the border. Though Thailand initially rejected the decision of the Court, both countries agreed in September to comply with its decision.

The observers have yet to deploy and when they do, they will be deployed bilaterally by Indonesia, likely with a limited mandate. Still, this represents an important advancement in ASEAN's engagement in conflicts between its member states, demonstrating an increased willingness under the Indonesian chair to take an active role in member conflicts. However, Cambodia assumed the chairmanship in 2012, all but guaranteeing a substantially different role for ASEAN in this conflict.