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"ASEAN'S FORMATIVE DECADE, 1967-1977 :
AN EVALUATION OF THE ASPIRATIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
OF ITS PARTICIPANTS"

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This thesis is my own work.

All sources used have been acknowledged.

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/\ March 1991
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My aim has been to provide both a record of the development of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and an evaluation of its performance during the first decade of its existence, from its formation in August 1967 to the Bali summit of 1976 and the Kuala Lumpur summit of 1977. The thesis describes the interaction over time of the aspirations that ASEAN's participants held for their Association with the environmental influences that shaped those aspirations. ASEAN's activities were the product of that interaction. My main focus has been, therefore, on the views and objectives of those in the ASEAN countries, especially the elites, who have been responsible for the growth and evolution of ASEAN's activities. I believe there is considerable merit in the argument that any meaningful evaluation of the success or failure of ASEAN must be based on the views of these elites and of others who are members of the ASEAN countries themselves, and not upon preconceived criteria imposed by Western or other outside observers. ASEAN must stand or fall on the degree to which it is able to fulfill the needs that its members perceive it to serve and on their evaluations of its performance. A shortcoming of many previous attempts to evaluate ASEAN's contribution to the region has been the lack of such a regional perspective.

It might be considered that to rely on the evaluations of ASEAN members themselves would permit a too indulgent or lenient appraisal. I am conscious of the fact that the views
expressed publicly by ASEAN's participants are, inevitably, often coloured by rhetoric and by presentational gloss. Against this, however, it is important to note that ASEAN's history has been characterized by considerable diversity of opinion amongst its members about what should be the objectives of the organization. This diversity has on different occasions both impeded and stimulated ASEAN's progress. There has usually been a broad consensus amongst ASEAN's members about its principal objectives, but ASEAN has never been a monolith. There has never been total unanimity about these objectives. As a consequence, while some, perhaps even a majority, of ASEAN's participants may often appear to have been complacent and even apathetic about the pace of ASEAN's development and the scope of its achievements and to have set only cautious and minimal goals, there have always been many who have been more restless and on some occasions sharply critical of ASEAN's performance. Some have continued to hold such ambitious aspirations for the Association that even the most exacting of observers would conclude that realistically there was little prospect of those aspirations being realized. ASEAN's members have frequently been commendably frank in discussing publicly the organization's shortcomings. There is therefore no great danger of too low a standard of achievement being set by focussing on evaluations of the Association that have been made by ASEAN's own members, providing the full diversity of their views is taken into account.
This analysis has been limited to a ten-year time span for mainly practical reasons. A study of ASEAN's history from 1967 to the present would have been too lengthy if an adequate coverage were to have been given to the subject. I have attempted while exploring my main theme - the evolution of the thinking of ASEAN's participants about the most appropriate objectives and activities for the Association - to provide also, as a background, a brief record of the major events and vicissitudes in the history of ASEAN during its first decade, not in exhaustive detail but touching at least on the major developments and the way that ASEAN's members responded to those developments. Such a record has not been provided previously by other researchers.

Furthermore, the first ten years of ASEAN does not represent a totally arbitrary division of the Association's history. The choice of any narrow timeframe of historical research will inevitably leave some trends and developments in awkward suspension, but the choice of this particular timeframe is well-supported by the fact that ASEAN's tenth anniversary was marked by the holding of its second summit in Kuala Lumpur. The August 1977 Kuala Lumpur summit, and the February 1976 summit in Bali, have frequently been described by ASEAN members as providing major watersheds or turning points in the Association's history. They mark the end of ASEAN's formative period in which it struggled, at times
feebly but with perseverance, to overcome teething problems and to develop consensus on concrete steps that would enhance the benefits of regional cooperation and raise ASEAN's international stature in a way that would put it on the path to long-term viability. ASEAN's first two summits were, more than has generally been recognised, in reality more like highpoints in a steady continuum than an awakening from total stagnation; but they do provide a convenient point at which to pause and to assess the early history of the organization. ASEAN's participants saw the end of this first decade as a time to reassess their Association and to chart a course for the future. A study of ASEAN's first decade provides a necessary background to an understanding of its subsequent development. New trends emerged and new strategies were adopted by ASEAN to meet the needs of its second decade of development, but there was also a great deal of continuity in its approach to its major areas of activity.

The lessons of ASEAN's development may not be easily transferable to other regions of the world. In some respects ASEAN's experience may prove unique. Nevertheless, this study may provide some insights for the members of regional organizations elsewhere that would be helpful in their own search for appropriate and achievable cooperative goals.
This thesis has been the result of a protracted period of part-time study. I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors during this period - John Girling, Milton Osborne and Astri Suhrke - for their assistance and encouragement.
In early August 1967 the foreign ministers of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, met in Thailand to discuss the formation of a new Southeast Asian regional organization. After three days of talks at the seaside resort of Bangsaen and in Bangkok, they signed on 8 August 1967 a Declaration establishing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Association was declared to represent "the collective will of the nations of Southeast Asia to bind themselves together in friendship and cooperation and, through joint efforts and sacrifices, secure for their peoples and for posterity the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity". The Declaration also contained a list of seven aims and purposes. The first of these, and the one subsequently given most emphasis, was "to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development" of member countries. These aims appear both laudable and uncontroversial. They do not fully reflect, however, the complex motivations that gave rise to the Association and the breadth of the aspirations and objectives of its founding members.

Antecedents

ASEAN was not the first regional cooperative venture in
which Southeast Asian nations had participated. Previous attempts at regional cooperation can be dated from the beginning of the post-World War II period, when a number of Asian countries secured their independence. Generally, however, Southeast Asian attempts at regional cooperation prior to the 1960s were hindered by the preoccupation of most countries in the region with the pressing post-independence tasks of adapting to the severance of colonial links, establishing and consolidating indigenous political and economic institutions and achieving national integration. Where the countries of the region did come into contact these preoccupations, in combination with the heterogeneity of their socio-political systems and of their past experiences, seemed to lead as often to disputation as to cooperation.

The early 1960s saw the emergence of two regional groupings that, for the first time, were confined to Southeast Asian countries and that on all available evidence were created entirely at regional initiative. ASEAN's origins cannot be adequately understood without an appreciation of the very important precedents that they provided. In fact, rather than a totally new beginning ASEAN was in some respects merely a continuation of the cooperative efforts initiated by these two previous groupings. The first of these regional groupings to be established was the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), formed at a meeting in Bangkok on 31 July 1961 and comprising Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand as founding members.

ASA suffered, especially in its early years, from confusion as to its principal aims and from the apparently
justified suspicion that it was created at least in part to serve the purposes of the Cold War as a potential anti-communist security alliance. Another early problem faced by ASA arose from the inadequate steps its founders took to attract the interest, support and potential membership of other Southeast Asian countries. However, through a series of meetings in 1962 ASA appears to have impressed contemporary observers with its vigour and enthusiasm. The practical and modest approach that it adopted led its members to regard it as a valuable beginning to regional cooperative efforts, as much for its intangible results as for its concrete achievements.

These promising beginnings were soon interrupted. In June 1962 Diosdado Macapagal, who had won office in the Philippine Presidential elections in November 1961, initiated his country's formal claim to North Borneo, which Malayan and British authorities envisaged would shortly become part of the proposed federation of Malaysia. Malaya's objections to the Philippine claim led to the steady deterioration of relations between the two countries. ASA meetings were disrupted by the severance of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and the Philippines following the declaration of the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963.

The second Southeast Asian regional grouping to emerge in the early 1960s was Maphilindo. Maphilindo had its origins in President Macapagal's proposal for the formation of a "Greater Malayan Confederation", made shortly after he stated the Philippines' claim to North Borneo in June 1962. In
contrast to Macapagal's extravagant hopes, Maphilindo's achievements were destined to be very modest indeed. Perhaps the best that can be said of Maphilindo is that it probably helped temporarily to moderate the level of animosity between its members as a consequence of Indonesia's Confrontation policy and the Philippines' claim to North Borneo - which with the formation of Malaysia was renamed "Sabah". However, Maphilindo had greater importance than it would otherwise merit due to the fact that it was the first Southeast Asian regional grouping in which Indonesia participated, even if at times half-heartedly.

ASEAN's indebtedness to both ASA and Maphilindo is illustrated by the contest that ensued from the latter part of 1965 to decide which of the two, or what particular combination, should provide the basis for an expanded regional grouping. The event that made it possible for this debate to develop was the abortive coup of 1 October 1965 in Indonesia that led by stages to the political demise of President Sukarno, whose encouragement of Confrontation had so seriously affected relations with neighbouring countries. The new architects of Indonesia's foreign policy, General Suharto and especially Foreign Minister Adam Malik, were keen to bring Confrontation to an end and evinced a greater interest than had Sukarno in playing a constructive role in regional cooperation.

With regard to ASA, Indonesia's new leaders evidently considered that it would be dangerous politically to endorse an organization that under the Sukarno regime had been grouped
in the same neo-colonialist category as SEATO. Indonesia therefore looked to the ideals and principles outlined in Maphilindo documents as a means to offset ASA's neo-colonialist image. Considerations of prestige are likely to have been an additional factor causing Indonesia to be reluctant to join an existing organization rather than play a leading role in the formation of a new organization. The eventual acquiescence of ASA members to Indonesia's wishes was no doubt due to the reason stated by Malaysia's Minister of Home Affairs, Tun Ismail, that: "It would be idle to pretend that in the long run Southeast Asian countries could gather together their strength and pool their resources, in order to defeat the encroachment of hostile forces, in whatever form, without the cooperation of the Republic of Indonesia." With Indonesia's inclusion in a new regional grouping taking elements from both ASA and Maphilindo, prospects for regional cooperation were significantly enhanced.

The ASEAN Declaration

The Indonesian proposal for a new regional organization in Southeast Asia was first presented publicly in June 1966, following discussions between Indonesia and Malaysia that would lead two months later to the end of Confrontation. Late in 1966, following meetings with Malik and Indonesian officials, Thailand's Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman reportedly circulated a "Draft Declaration" to Manila, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur proposing the establishment of a "Southeast Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SEAARC)". During the first half of 1967 Malik visited Bangkok, Kuala
Lumpur and Manila to discuss the proposal. He also visited Rangoon and Phnom Penh in an unsuccessful attempt to secure the participation of Burma and Cambodia. Malik made it clear that "theoretically, there will be a place for every Southeast Asian country". Singapore's announcement in early May that it would support the new association prepared the way for ASEAN's formation three months later.

Given ASEAN's subsequent prominence there may be a tendency to assume that its original program of objectives and activities was more carefully conceived than was in fact the case. It was some time before ASEAN played a significant part in the foreign policies of its members or commanded much attention and comment in the media or in academic literature. Even the birth of the new grouping attracted little attention at the time. It was probably assumed that its prospects would be little different to those of any of its ill-fated predecessors. It is instructive to note a comment made by Singapore's Foreign Minister Rajaratnam in his closing statement to the Seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in May 1974 when he remarked somewhat flippantly: "You might recollect at the first meeting in 1967, when we had to draft our communique, it was a very difficult problem of trying to say nothing in about ten pages, which we did. Because at the time we ourselves, having launched ASEAN, were not quite sure whether it was going anywhere at all." Though Rajaratnam may have overstated the case, his comments confirm that member-countries did not at this early stage have an entirely clear or unified conception of ASEAN's future role, in spite of the fact that the Bangkok meeting was preceded by an
intensive exchange of views over a period of several months concerning the form of the new organization.

In these circumstances, and given ASEAN's indebtedness to both ASA and Maphilindo, it was not surprising that the ASEAN Declaration drew heavily on the founding documents of these two organizations. The Declaration, signed in Bangkok on 8 August 1967 at the conclusion of ASEAN's inaugural meeting, followed closely the "Draft Declaration" circulated in late 1966 by Thanat Khoman. To a large extent it is based word-for-word on ASA and Maphilindo documents.

Thanat's draft was not accepted without question, however. The lengthy debate which took place at the inaugural meeting over the contents of the Declaration provides important clues to the motivations of ASEAN's founders. A number of differences emerged in negotiations over the text. They are worth examining in detail as they illustrate some important divergences amongst ASEAN members about the most appropriate objectives and goals for the new body.

The negotiations over the Declaration's preamble proved to be the most difficult, particularly two portions adapted from the Maphilindo documents that referred to security and to foreign military bases within the region. The principal dissenter was the Philippines, which provided an alternative draft that omitted these references. The first preambular reference to which the Philippines objected noted that the countries of Southeast Asia "share a primary responsibility for ensuring the stability and maintaining the security of the
area from subversion in any form or manifestation." The Philippines' delegation apparently believed that the reference to a shared responsibility for the security of the area went beyond its preferred definition of the new organization as a social, economic and cultural association and suggested instead that it might become a military alliance. It was successful, presumably against Indonesian objections, in having the wording altered so that security no longer was referred to directly as a shared responsibility. On his return to the Philippines, Foreign Secretary Narciso Ramos emphasized that the new association was "neither a political power bloc nor a military or security aggrupation".

It was probably a second preambular reference, however, that most concerned the Philippines. President Marcos reportedly instructed the Philippine delegation to work for its deletion. It stated that the members were in agreement that foreign bases were "temporary in nature and should not be allowed to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the independence of their countries" and that collective defence arrangements "should not be used to serve the particular interest of any of the big powers." This was seen by the Philippines as a critical reflection on the presence of U.S. bases in the Philippines under the 1947 Military Bases Agreement and on the Philippines' membership of SEATO and its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty with the U.S. It was probably the negotiations over this issue that prompted Ramos to refer in his public address at the conclusion of the meeting to "long and tedious negotiations which truly taxed the goodwill, the imagination, the patience and the
Adam Malik reportedly insisted that a reference to foreign bases should be included in the Declaration. The proposed passage had been taken without any substantive alteration from a Maphilindo document. The reference to abstention from the use of collective defence arrangements that served big power interests was in turn taken from one of the ten principles enunciated at the 1955 Bandung Conference. The Philippines was successful in having this reference removed, but Malik apparently argued that some reference to the bases was essential for domestic purposes in Indonesia. Opposition to the presence of foreign bases in the region was one of the hallmarks of Sukarno's policies, the elimination of such bases being seen as a major goal of Confrontation. Though by the time of ASEAN's formation, Sukarno's influence had been eclipsed, Malik evidently believed that many Indonesians would have reacted critically if no attempt had been made to press the Indonesian view on this matter. Moreover, without some such reference there would have been little to distinguish ASEAN from ASA or to dissuade critics from the view that ASEAN was likely to be equally as pro-Western as ASA. Indeed, in an interview shortly after ASEAN's formation Malik reportedly stressed that ASEAN's stand on foreign bases was the principle difference between ASEAN and ASA.

Malik eased the problem by conceding that the timing of the dismantling of foreign bases was up to the countries concerned "in accordance with their own interests and
situation." An Indonesian spokesman reportedly stated that the principal consideration was that the security arrangements of ASEAN member-countries should not be directed against other members. Such arguments appear to have eventually persuaded the Philippines to relent in its insistence on deletion. Malaysia and Singapore were reported to have taken the attitude that in view of Britain's pending withdrawal from east of Suez, the issue was not vital to them. The final wording of the passage was modified a little to remove the somewhat accusative tone of the original. It affirmed that "all foreign bases are temporary and remain only with the expressed concurrence of the countries concerned and are not intended to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence and freedom of States in the area or prejudice the orderly processes of their national development." Ramos later commented that this reference was "not directed against American bases in the Philippines because such bases are of temporary duration, exist with our express consent and are maintained for the mutually beneficial interest of the two states involved."  

Despite the problems that were experienced in negotiating the Declaration, the atmosphere of ASEAN's inaugural meeting does not appear overall to have been one of acrimony. Most other points in the Declaration had been discussed and agreed upon in broad terms before the meeting commenced. Much of the negotiating was left to officials and the foreign ministers found time for rounds of golf and relaxation. Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister Tun Razak lauded the informality of the discussions, which Thanat Khoman had
described as an example of "sports-shirt diplomacy". Thanat, when asked if the meeting had been exhausting, described it rather as "exhilerating", adding that the ministers had met "in an extremely friendly atmosphere". Unlike the preamble, the Declaration's list of seven aims and purposes, concentrating on economic, social and cultural cooperation and modelled closely on the aims and purposes of ASA, apparently found ready agreement. An organizational framework modelled on ASA was also agreed upon and described in the Declaration as follows:

(a) Annual Meeting of Foreign Ministers, which shall be by rotation and referred to as ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. Special Meetings of Foreign Ministers may be convened as required.

(b) A Standing Committee, under the chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of the host country or his representative and having as its members the accredited Ambassadors of the other member countries, to carry on the work of the Association in between Meetings of Foreign Ministers.

(c) Ad Hoc Committees and Permanent Committees of specialists and officials on specific subjects.

(d) A National Secretariat in each member country to carry out the work of the Association on behalf of that country and to service the Annual or Special Meetings of Foreign Ministers, the Standing Committee and such other committees as may be established.

The Ministerial Meetings were to rotate in alphabetical order.
which had the advantage of conferring precedence upon
Indonesia without any need to justify this on other grounds.

ASEAN's potential membership was defined by the
provision in the Declaration that the Association was "open
for participation to all states in the Southeast Asian region
subscribing to the aforementioned aims, principles and
purposes." Matters were complicated by the fact that the
definition of "Southeast Asia" was not entirely clear. At the
inaugural meeting the prospect of Ceylon's membership was
mentioned on several occasions. Ceylon later indicated
its reluctance to join ASEAN allegedly because this would
antagonize China. Even Australia and New Zealand appeared
not to be ruled out by some members, although attitudes on
this hardened later. Asked in November 1967 about U.S.
and Australian membership, Malik reportedly replied
emphatically that "ASEAN remains the Association of Southeast
Asian Nations." Both North and South Vietnam were
considered eligible, though Malaysia's Prime Minister Tunku
Abdul Rahman believed that a peace settlement would first be
required.

According to Thanat Khoman a name for the new
organization was one of the most debated points at the
inaugural meeting. Thanat told reporters that the Philippines
considered that SEAARC, the most frequently mentioned name up
to the time of the meeting, sounded too much like
"shark"! The choice of "ASEAN" was made at the eleventh
hour, and is attributed to Adam Malik.
ASEAN's formal aims and purposes emphasized cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields. Cooperation in technical, scientific, administrative, educational and professional spheres was also mentioned. Agriculture, industries, trade, transportation and communications were listed as specific areas of economic cooperation in which the members would collaborate. Cooperation in other areas was not, however, specifically excluded. The final statement of the Declaration, as cited earlier, was that the Association represented "the collective will of the nations of Southeast Asia to bind themselves together in friendship and cooperation, and, through joint efforts and sacrifices, secure for their peoples and for posterity, the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity." This implied a potentially wide-ranging and multi-functional role for the Association in the affairs of the region. While the Bangkok Declaration which established ASA specifically described that organization as "an association for economic and cultural cooperation", the corresponding part of the ASEAN Declaration described ASEAN simply as "an association for regional cooperation". Similarly, the preamble to the ASEAN Declaration suggested a broad potential scope for the organization. It commenced by stating that the ministers were "mindful of the existence of mutual interests and common problems among the countries of Southeast Asia and convinced of the need to strengthen further the existing bonds of regional solidarity and cooperation." Comments made publicly by ASEAN leaders also indicated a broad conception of the Association's role.
The first of the aims and purposes of the ASEAN Declaration, and the one subsequently most emphasized, was: "To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian nations." Although it will be shown later that other objectives had a major place in the preoccupations of ASEAN's founders, the importance that they attached to economic cooperation, in particular, should not be underestimated. There were several reasons for this.

Firstly, in the scale of expressed national priorities economic development had long held the highest place in most ASEAN countries. It is not surprising therefore that it should have been emphasized in ASEAN. Under Sukarno, Indonesians frequently had asserted that the identification and preservation of national identity was more important than economic development. Given the extent of subsequent deterioration in the economy, however, the New Order, as noted earlier, assigned top priority to economic reconstruction and development. Adam Malik asserted in January 1968 that: "The primary reason for regional cooperation is the necessity for modernization."32. In the post-war period the other ASEAN countries had all pursued basically-pragmatic economic policies and had paid at least lip-service to the notion that national efforts should concentrate on economic development and the improvement of living standards.
Furthermore, ASA and ASEAN members had before them the example of, and the experience of participating in, a number of other regional economic bodies to encourage them in the belief that economic cooperation was a viable and desirable basis for cooperation in any new regional grouping, and that such cooperation could provide valuable assistance to national economic efforts. In particular, the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) and the Colombo Plan, in which all ASA and ASEAN countries were members, provided important precedents. Just prior to ASEAN's formation, moreover, two new bodies for the promotion of regional economic cooperation had been initiated; namely, the Ministerial Conference for Economic Development of Southeast Asia, which held its first meeting in Tokyo in April 1966, and the Asian Development Bank, which commenced operations in Manila in December 1966. Asian economists were at this time enthusiastic about the potential gains from multilateral economic cooperation amongst countries in the area. ASEAN's interest in economic cooperation was also a natural consequence of its being the successor to ASA, from which it inherited a long list of project proposals.

The founders of ASA and ASEAN had made frequent reference to the necessity for greater cooperation in the economic field. Tunku Abdul Rahman drew attention at ASA's inaugural meeting to common economic and social problems facing members. He concluded that the need to tackle these problems was urgent because: "In this world of interdependence and intense competition, individually we are in a comparatively weak position vis-a-vis the more industrialized
countries." At ASEAN's inaugural meeting the shortcomings of concentration on national rather than regional economic efforts were pressed by Narciso Ramos, who asserted that: "The fragmented economics of Southeast Asia, each country pursuing its own limited objectives and dissipating its meager resources in the overlapping or even conflicting endeavours of sister states, carry the seeds of weakness in their incapacity for growth and their self-perpetuating dependence on the advancing industrial nations." In an address to Singapore's parliament in September 1967, Rajaratnam also stressed the notion of economic interdependence when he remarked that at a time when most countries of the world were "welding themselves into bigger and bigger economic units, the countries of Southeast Asia cannot go on believing that economic nationalism and self-sufficiency are the sure roads to modernisation and progress." He noted that ASEAN was "the first substantive step we have taken with other Southeast Asian countries towards regional economy." Similar views were expressed by other ASEAN leaders, and with special fervour by President Marcos in January 1968 when he declared that: "Common problems of development that face the small nations of this region, each virtually helpless in the face of the terrible odds, render traditional divisions obsolete, and call for heroic measures from each of us to banish isolationism and commence a new era of total cooperation."35.

There appeared to be particularly strong interest in cooperation in the coordination of economic relations with third countries. The ASEAN Declaration referred to
collaboration in "the study of the problems of international commodity trade". Just prior to the inaugural meeting Thai officials were reported to feel that as the five countries produced much of the world's rice, rubber, tin, timber, oil, tapioca, copra, maize and other products, they were in a position to bargain in the world market for these commodities. Malik also stressed the potential benefits for ASEAN members of coordinated efforts to maintain price levels for their commodities in Western markets. And in an address to the Jakarta Foreign Correspondents Club in early 1968 Tunku Abdul Rahman observed that the small countries of Southeast Asia were being individually exploited by the industrial powers. He advocated price stabilisation measures "in order to safeguard our collective interest and not to allow ourselves to be victimised by the big powers, who not only buy our products cheaply but also dictate the price. This is where ASEAN can help."

Apart from the intrinsic benefits of economic cooperation, it was frequently argued by ASEAN's founders that the Association's efforts should be concentrated in this field because economic cooperation was a fundamental and essential precondition for the maintenance of political stability and security. Tun Ismail stated in June 1966 that "it is axiomatic that economic cooperation is often the most durable foundation upon which political and cultural cooperation can be built." At ASEAN's inaugural meeting Tun Razak urged that ASEAN should concentrate on economic cooperation because: "The key to peace and stability of our respective countries and of our region and the success of our resistance to external
forces of intervention or interference lie in our ability to surmount the backwardness of our people and to promote their welfare and their wellbeing." He emphasized therefore that "our joint efforts to eradicate poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance should be our main preoccupation."

This argument was sometimes reversed, however. In an interview in mid-1966 when negotiations on the ending of Confrontation were underway, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie stated that Malaysia believed "that the massive task of economic reconstruction of Asia, Africa and Latin America cannot really get underway until aggressor states stop resorting to the gun to gain their objective. For peace is the first prerequisite for rapid economic development." Similarly, in introducing his proposal for a Vietnam peace initiative at the Third ASA Ministerial Meeting Thanat Khoman had described it as an effort aimed at "first securing the conditions of peace which are so desired and at the same time so essential before long-lasting social and economic well-being may be insured for our peoples." The joint communique of ASEAN's Second Ministerial Meeting contained a reaffirmation of members' faith in the ASEAN Declaration "as the expression of their collective will to attain stability and peace in their region as a prerequisite for the well-being and prosperity of the ASEAN peoples."

The chicken-and-egg nature of this debate was pointed out in remarks by Malaysia's delegate, Tengku Ngah Mohamed, to an ASA Standing Committee meeting in March 1966. He stated Malaysia's view that "economic progress is the foundation of
political stability which is the best guarantee of political independence." He acknowledged, however, that "to attain economic progress there must be political stability in the region in which we live. Without peace and stability there can be no progress. Hence peace and prosperity within our region is the concern of all of us." Such thinking provides an explanation why on a number of occasions it was in fact stated publicly that ASEAN would pursue the goals of economic development and of political stability and security simultaneously. Thanat Khoman spoke at ASEAN's inaugural meeting of a "two pronged task" for the nations of Southeast Asia to "free themselves from the material impediments of ignorance, disease and hunger" and to "prevent attempts to deprive them of the right to lead a free and sovereign national existence." A joint communiqué marking President Marcos' visit to Malaysia in January 1968 stated that the two heads of governments expressed the hope that ASEAN would serve "as the region's best vehicle to accelerate not only the economic development of the area through self-help regional cooperation, industrial harmonization and other means, but also the achievement of a lasting and honourable peace, stability and friendlier relations among and between all States of the region." President Suharto, in his opening speech to ASEAN's Second Ministerial Meeting, stressed ASEAN's political and security role as well as its stated economic role. He noted that in Bangkok the previous year members had pledged to promote economic, social and cultural cooperation "in order to achieve peace and stability in our area." He advocated, however, that economic reconstruction and stability were two separate problems whose progress should be
harmonized. "Economic development", he observed, "fosters stability in this region whereas, reversely, increased stability will facilitate cooperation in economic development. We should be able to show our peoples and the world that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is a reality and an effective instrument for the advancement of economic progress and the creation of stability in this region."

The most important reason why ASEAN chose initially to emphasize cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields was probably mainly because such cooperation was relatively uncontroversial - amongst member-countries as well as from the viewpoint of other countries. Member-countries were in broad agreement about the desirability of cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields. If there was disagreement about particular aspects of such cooperation, it was not likely to generate too much heat. In the political and security fields disagreements were both more likely to arise and likely to be more damaging. Moreover, almost any substantial cooperation in these fields was likely to add fuel to criticism of ASEAN from countries such as China, the USSR and North Vietnam.

This consideration probably explains why ASEAN members followed the example of ASA in being content to establish a framework of cooperation in which initial ambitions were modest so that relatively minor successes in uncontroversial areas would encourage the extension of cooperative efforts to more ambitious projects and into other areas. This approach is well illustrated in the case of ASA by a speech by Narciso
Ramos in May 1966 when he suggested that efforts at regional cooperation in Southeast Asia should be seen against a backdrop in which progress in technical and economic cooperation had faced the barrier of conflicting political beliefs. This situation dictated that cooperation "shall be modest in scope and shall have, in so far as this is possible, no political overtone whatsoever." He considered that the Colombo Plan and ECAFE - "the two most successful regional endeavours in Asia" - had these characteristics and that their success was "almost directly proportional to the lack of overt political implication in their projects." In regard to ASA, he stated that from its inception: "Although everyone entertained high hopes for its eventual success, it was tacitly accepted that there would be no grandiose plans .... There is probably no better augury for its future success." Avoidance of controversy was obviously in Tun Ismail's mind also in June 1966. He asserted in reference to the possible formation of a new regional association that: "What is important is that the organisation should be based on the principles of economic, social and cultural cooperation. I cannot think of a single country in Southeast Asia which would repudiate those principles." Adam Malik appeared to agree. In a statement to the Indonesian parliament on 24 June 1967, Malik stated that the proposed new grouping was intended to become "strong and powerful in economic affairs as the basis and source for developments in other fields." He felt that it should not encompass cooperation in fields such as politics, security or military affairs because of the differences in political outlook amongst potential members.
At the time of ASEAN's inaugural meeting the Philippines and Singapore were reported to be particularly concerned to have it spelt out that ASEAN's primary aim was economic cooperation. The Philippines appeared to take this viewpoint mainly because of its difficulties with the political and security references in the draft declaration. Singapore's reasons were indicated by Rajaratnam in an interview in July 1967. He noted: "If you start with a small number of economic projects - even one a year - as the number expands the investment of the countries participating enlarges and political accommodation follows. If the idea of regional cooperation really works, if it really gets off the ground - and this process will take 10 to 15 years - it is inevitable that once regional organisations are functioning, then defence and political institutions will develop naturally." He warned of the danger of reversing this order, asserting that: "Where political and security threats form the basis for cooperation, then the thing breaks up."

Politics

If it were not for their controversial nature, political and perhaps also security cooperation would probably have been given from the beginning much greater prominence in ASEAN's official pronouncements. There are indeed good grounds for the view that political and security considerations played an equal if not more important role in ASEAN's formation than economic factors. Whereas political discussions were conducted privately and "informally", and decisions remained confidential, ASEAN's economic, social and cultural activities
were to be conducted in the full gaze of the public eye, providing the institutional basis for what was in reality a broad range of cooperative interests. Private discussions were facilitated by the fact that ASEAN members developed from the beginning a tradition of confidentiality. At the inaugural meeting Tun Razak urged: "I would like to regard this as an established ASEAN tradition, that we speak little in public, but do much quietly."

Though spoken several years after the event, Adam Malik's observations regarding the basic motivations that led to the establishment of ASEAN are of interest in this context. He commented that: "Although from the outset ASEAN was conceived as an organisation for economic, social and cultural cooperation, and although considerations in these fields were no doubt central, it was the fact that there was a convergence in the political outlook of the five prospective member-nations, both with regard to national priority objectives as on the question of how best to secure these objectives in the emergent strategic configuration of East Asia, which provided the main stimulus to join together in ASEAN." Malik stated that there was "early recognition that meaningful progress could only be achieved by giving first priority to the task of overall and rapid economic development", and that "policies should be consciously geared towards safeguarding this priority objective." This objective, however, was conceived not only in purely economic terms but members simultaneously also saw the need "to secure the essential conditions of peace and stability, both domestically and internationally in the surrounding region." This was to be
achieved by developing "the capacity to live with a minimum
degree of internal disturbance and external interference, so
as to enable the establishment of relative peace and stability
without which national development becomes practically
impossible." Malik concluded therefore that: "Whether
consciously or unconsciously, considerations of national and
regional security have also figured largely in the minds of
the founders of the ASEAN." 47. Although he may have
exaggerated the extent of convergence in the political outlook
of ASEAN members, Malik confirmed that from the beginning
ASEAN's objectives went beyond the purely economic sphere into
the fields of politics and security. ASEAN was, after all, the
creation of a meeting of foreign ministers, not economic
ministers. Their interest in the political and security
aspects of the Association was evident from their public
remarks at the inaugural meeting and subsequently. Thanat
Khoman, for example, stated in October 1968 that Thailand's
motives in supporting regional groupings were "not only
economic, social, the motivations are certainly - and I do not
shy from saying that - are certainly political." 48.

(a) Intra-regional conflict

It is particularly notable when evaluating ASEAN's
initial objectives that the environment that gave rise to
the Association was one in which the most pressing need was
for the reconciliation of political differences amongst its
members. The minimal and most immediate objective might
reasonably have been to provide a framework for the avoidance
or regulation of disputes amongst themselves. ASEAN's
formation brought to a close a turbulent period during the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s when the prospective members of ASEAN had been mutually engaged in a number of highly acrimonious and destabilizing disputes. In the case of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore these disputes were for much of this period the dominant preoccupations of their respective foreign policies. In June 1966 Tun Ismail stated his view that "no other region of the world can match Southeast Asia in its turbulence." He continued: "It is a region still fraught with danger and tension. Twenty years after World War II, Southeast Asia has not learned to live at peace within itself. Intra-regional conflict and confrontation has set nation against nation and balkanisation has remained an ever-present threat." 49.

Even if they were not actually in conflict, many of ASEAN's members had only very recently developed regular bilateral contacts. One observer noted at the time of ASEAN's formation that: "The Malaysian elite still tends to know more about Britain, the Filipinos about America and the Thais about Europe in general than they know about one another. Even the Indonesians really think more often with nostalgia of the joys of fighting the Dutch rather than living and struggling with their immediate neighbours." 50. The ASEAN countries were set apart from each other by a variety of factors including their different historical and ideological experiences, their differing political, social, economic and ethnic make-ups and their particular geographical and geopolitical circumstances. This diversity was frequently noted by ASEAN members. In its early days it was therefore to be expected that regional
cooperation within ASEAN would concentrate on the improvement of political communication between members, as well as on the settlement of bilateral disputes, before more ambitious political goals were attempted.

Of the several bilateral disputes during this period Indonesia's Confrontation policy and the Philippine claim to Sabah have already been mentioned. After the formation of Malaysia, Malayan and Singaporean leaders fell out over their different approaches to the management of communal and economic policies in the new Federation. These differences led to Singapore's separation from Malaysia in August 1965 and to continued friction between the two countries in subsequent years. Thailand, which was more preoccupied with developments in countries to its north and east, had generally good relations during this period with its future fellow-members of ASEAN, although in the case of Malaysia frictions surfaced occasionally due to Malaysian feelings that Thailand was giving insufficient support to joint efforts against Malayan Communist Party insurgents in the common border area, and due to Thai feelings that Malaysia was turning a blind eye to support and encouragement being given by Malaysian citizens to Muslim dissidents in southern Thailand.

The resolution of most of these disputes by the end of 1966 offered the opportunity to put earlier attempts at regional cooperation in Southeast Asia on a much sounder basis through the establishment of a new and more broadly-based grouping. ASEAN was seen as having inherited from ASA and Maphilindo the role that these organizations had played in
facilitating the resolution of disputes between members. Discussing in June 1966 the role of the proposed new regional grouping that was to later be named ASEAN, Tun Ismail called attention to the way in which "undisciplined nationalism" in Western Europe had "torn and bled that region for about four centuries, despite its common Christian heritage." He noted that it was "only after two world wars, both of which started in Western Europe, that the countries in the region decided to form a community, a Common Market." He observed, however, that regional cooperation in Western Europe had "come to stay", and asked: "Is there any reason why we, Southeast Asians, should not make a similar attempt? Is there any good reason why we should not succeed?" That ASEAN arose directly out of a desire to avoid the recurrence of debilitating intra-regional disputes is further attested in remarks made in November 1978 by Malaysia's Minister of Home Affairs Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, which also provide an interesting insight into the events which led to ASEAN's formation. Ghazali acknowledged that he might "be accused of immodesty if I claimed a little credit for the idea of ASEAN", but explained that he had "always believed that no economic and social progress could ever be achieved by any country without peace and stability which in turn could not be built alone without the help of neighbours." ASA, he said, had been "the fruit of such an idea", but Confrontation frustrated its growth. It was, however, during Confrontation, he recalled, that secret contacts had been made by Malaysia with the Suharto regime. During these meetings they had discussed "the proposal for a post confrontation programme of a regional cooperation." Ghazali said that he remembered quite distinctly
"squatting on the floor in a room of a Japanese restaurant in Bangkok. Ali Moertopo and I together with a few friends including Benny Moerdani and Jabid seriously discussed the ways and means of ensuring that the confrontation when it ended should never be allowed to repeat itself. And we hit upon the idea of a very close cooperation between Indonesia and Malaysia as the base bringing Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore into a strong economic and cultural organization."53.

(b) Anti-communism

Clearly, however, ASEAN's political objectives went beyond merely the settlement of intra-regional disputes. The suggestion is frequently encountered that at least a partial reason for ASEAN's formation was that it should serve as an anti-communist grouping and in particular that ASEAN was designed primarily to counter, even if only indirectly, the allegedly expansionist ambitions of the People's Republic of China. It would be difficult to dispute that at the time of ASEAN's formation all prospective member-countries would to a greater or lesser degree have had in mind the existence of actual or potential threats from communist forces. The governments of all five were actively engaged in the suppression of communist movements in their own countries. Most were also giving active encouragement to United States military involvement in Indochina, which was then near its peak. Thailand and the Philippines were members of SEATO and had sent contingents to Vietnam. At the time of ASEAN's formation the Cultural Revolution in China was also in full
swing, accompanied by heightened hostility towards non-communist Asian countries.

Several other contemporary developments would have contributed to concern about communist activity in the region and could be construed to provide an anti-communist rationale for ASEAN. July 1967 had seen an announcement by Britain of its intention to withdraw from most of its defence commitments "East of Suez" by the mid-1970s, much to the consternation of Malaysia and Singapore. June 1966 had seen the formation in Seoul of the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), which included as members Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand - along with Australia, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and South Vietnam. The joint communique of ASPAC's inaugural meeting had endorsed President Park's call for "greater cooperation and solidarity among the free Asian and Pacific countries in their efforts to safeguard their national independence and integrity against any Communist aggression or infiltration."

Given all these developments it is not surprising that some observers saw the emergence of a clearly perceived external threat, principally from China, as the major impetus behind ASEAN's formation. Some support can be found for such views; certainly the "domino theory" found ready support at this time. For example, in August 1967 Lee Kuan Yew reportedly stated that if South Vietnam were to fall it would be "only a matter of time before the same process of emasculation by military and political techniques will overtake neighbouring countries." Although the source of threat is not specified in the following remarks made at
ASEAN's inaugural meeting, it is not difficult to read an anti-communist interpretation into them. Narciso Ramos declared that "the time has come for a truly concerted struggle against the forces which are arrayed against our very survival in these uncertain and critical times." Thanat Khoman asserted that the people of the region "want to remain forever, free men and free women, unchained by the shackles of bondage."

China and the USSR concurred in the accusation that ASEAN was an anti-communist grouping. Peoples Daily on 12 August 1967 declared that ASEAN was "an out-and-out counter-revolutionary alliance against China, communism and the people." Radio Moscow on 7 August 1967 observed: "it is clear to us that it was Washington that gave the orders and promoted the new organization."

(c) Non-alignment

While it is clear that anti-communism was an important element in the formation of ASEAN, and possibly even the deciding element in the case of some individuals, it is difficult to sustain the contention that ASEAN, as a grouping, was specifically and purposefully anti-communist. The fact that one searches in vain in the official statements of ASEAN for explicitly anti-communist views seems not so much due to an excess of discretion as to an apparent consensus amongst ASEAN's members that the Association, if not its individual member-countries would be best advised to espouse the
principles of non-alignment and self-reliance. Rajaratnam's statement at the inaugural meeting is typical: "I would like to stress that those who are outside the grouping should not regard this as a grouping against anything, against anybody. We have approached ASEAN as standing for something, not against anything."

Indonesia played a particularly important role in encouraging the espousal of non-alignment within ASEAN and in giving credibility to ASEAN's non-aligned image. Not only in Indonesia but in all ASEAN member-countries the principles of non-alignment were, to a greater or lesser extent, exercising an increasing allure by the time of ASEAN's formation. A foreign policy posture that was less subservient to the interests of the major Western powers was emerging to some degree in each of them. In addition to considerations of national pride, which made dependence on foreign powers seem degrading, the conclusion was being reached by many ASEAN leaders that in view of the strife and uncertainty that had almost invariably followed major power involvement in regional affairs, the interests of the region would be best suited, ideally, by minimal involvement of such powers in the region. Even though ASEAN members were staunchly anti-communist in their domestic policies and were unwilling to give up existing security alignments with Western countries, they saw value in seeking to avoid ASEAN becoming embroiled in Cold War entanglements.

The experience of ASPAC also probably illustrated to ASEAN members the shortcomings of a grouping that was overtly
anti-communist and that moreover included a number of extraregional members. ASPAC's anti-communist stance seems to have been chiefly responsible for its lack of substantive progress.

(d) Self-reliance

Having rejected an explicitly anti-communist role, ASEAN provided a vehicle through which members could more readily explore new structures for the international relations of the region as alternatives to continued dependence on major power support. Tun Razak stated at the inaugural meeting that the time had come for "a new perspective and a new framework for our region." Many of those involved in ASEAN's formation appeared to believe that national and regional self-reliance were essential features of such a new framework.

Self-reliance was not a new concept in indigenous discussions on the subject of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. The colonial legacy was blamed for the relative lack of progress towards regional cooperation and self-reliance in the early post-war period. The ASEAN countries' reactions to their colonial heritage combined with their negative views about the benefits that had arisen from subsequent major power involvement in the region to produce frequent expressions of a desire to manage their own affairs without the interference of any outside powers, no matter what their political complexion. In a speech in 1963 Dr Jose D. Ingles, then Philippine Ambassador to Thailand, declared that: "Emerging from their isolation, the newly independent nations
of Southeast Asia have become more keenly aware that the destiny of the region rests in their own hands, for them to shape and to build in their own fashion, without dictation and coercion from elsewhere."56. Disillusionment with Cold War politics and the concommitant involvement of the great powers in the region was eloquently expressed by Thanat Khoman in a speech in October 1969. He commented: "The cold war, together with the resultant polarization of the world into two opposing camps, came into being without, so to speak, the advice and consent of the smaller powers, but carried with it the unprecedented danger of massive destruction for one and all. The Asian countries, no less than others, were caught in the maelstrom which has oftentimes, threatened to suck them into its vortex."57. As early as July 1961 Thanat had questioned the reliability of external guarantors. This led him to suggest that: "It was perhaps a mistake to cast our glance too far away; the immediate neighbours should receive greater attention and be more closely cultivated. Even though they share our weakness and our want, there is a heartening feeling that their fate and ours are unmistakably linked together."58.

That such thinking was operative in the formation of ASEAN can easily be illustrated. Rajaratnam declared at the inaugural meeting that ASEAN countries had "learnt the lessons and have decided that small nations are not going to be balkanized so that they can be manipulated, set against one another, kept perpetually weak, divided and ineffective by outside forces." As might have been expected, such views were put with special vigour by Indonesia. Adam Malik, explaining
in an address to a student group in Jakarta in December 1966 why he had initiated moves towards a new regional grouping, reportedly stressed the need for "a strong bulwark against imperialist manipulations as well as a decisive stabilizing factor in this part of the world ... ending once and for all foreign influence, domination, and intervention ... stemming the 'yellow' as well as the 'white' imperialism in Southeast Asia." At the inaugural meeting Malik stated that Indonesia wanted to see Southeast Asia develop into a region that could "stand on its own feet, strong enough to defend itself against any negative influence from outside the region."

Several of ASEAN's founders regarded the task of promoting national and regional self-reliance as a matter of some urgency in view of the perceived danger of a "power vacuum" might develop in the region. They drew attention to the necessity for such a vacuum to be filled by indigenous countries in order to forestall major power intervention with its attendant problems. Tun Razak warned at the inaugural meeting that "unless we take decisive and collective action to prevent the growth of intra-regional conflicts, our nations will continue to be manipulated one against the other. The vacuum left by the retreat of colonial rule must be filled by the growth and consolidation of indigenous powers." He noted that ASEAN represented "the collective will of our respective peoples to stand on our own feet and firmly determined to shape our future and our destiny by our own efforts. Razak's views were echoed by Indonesia's Soedjatmoko, who stated that in Indonesia the collapse of Sukarno's foreign policy had
brought home sharply a realization that decolonization had resulted in a "serious power vacuum" in Southeast Asia which if it continued would be filled by the major powers. He cited the Vietnam war as evidence of the "serious consequences" that this would have. He asserted that the general direction of political thought on this subject in Indonesia was "towards a strategy that would lead to the earliest possible creation of enough power by the nations indigenous to the region to fill the vacuum and thereby obviate the need for external powers to play a direct role in the maintenance of security in the region." He urged that Southeast Asian countries should "build up their own military capacities in coping with insurgencies, as well as gradually to fill up the regional power vacuum with their own joint military strength."60.

It may well be argued that many of those who referred at this time to the danger of a regional power vacuum were concerned primarily about the possibility of that vacuum being filled by communist powers, particularly the People's Republic of China. When Tun Ismail expressed concern in June 1966 about the "grave threat" posed by the "power-vacuum left over from the retreat of western colonial rule" he had indeed accused China of taking advantage of this vacuum.61. The significant point, however, is that Tun Ismail and others who later spoke of such a power vacuum believed it would be best filled by the growth of indigenous power, rather than as in the past by primary emphasis on alliances with external powers. This is indicated in some candid remarks made by Rajaratnam in a speech in 1977. He suggested that the best way to understand ASEAN was "for us to see how and why it was formed, as
perceived by those who participated in its formation". He claimed that by 1967 it had become clear to Singapore that the war in Vietnam could only end with the withdrawal of American forces from that country, which in turn would mark the end of the Western presence in Southeast Asia. He continued: "For the first time then, the non-Communist ASEAN States had to contemplate seriously the reality of having to co-exist and live in close proximity with States theoretically committed to converting the rest of Southeast Asia through their ideological kith and kin in non-Communist countries to the Communist cause. On our own and as isolated political entities, we were well aware, we could not long withstand a concerted pressure by so massive a concentration of Communist States operating from Asia itself." Moreover, support from friendly external countries could not be assumed. Therefore, he concluded, the ASEAN states realized that they had to learn to look after themselves and that this "could be best achieved through collective strength. At that time, speaking frankly, we had no clear idea of how regional strength and solidarity were to be forged."62. These remarks were probably of course made a little wiser by hindsight. Many ASEAN leaders, particularly in Thailand and the Philippines, undoubtedly considered at the time of the Association's formation that it would be necessary to continue to rely on Western military support and security guarantees for some considerable time. But few appeared to regard that support as sufficiently durable and effective that it would be inappropriate to emphasize the development of indigenous strength and solidarity, at least as a long-term objective.
(e) International prestige

It was recognized by ASEAN's founders that, even collectively, member-countries were not a formidable economic or military bloc. There appeared, nevertheless, to be a widespread conviction that unity through ASEAN would result in greater international standing and prestige for its individual members. This consideration was highlighted on several occasions, including in remarks by Adam Malik after the inaugural meeting. He reportedly stated that if Southeast Asian nations cooperated effectively they would not become "a mediocre power" but "a force which could convince the world". Thanat Khoman, in 1975, assigned central importance to this objective. Describing his own motivations in supporting ASEAN he confessed that these motivations "were less lofty and idealistic [than those outlined in the ASEAN Declaration] but stemmed from more practical and realistic considerations, among them the fact that Southeast Asian nations are comparatively weak and small .... Separately, they represent little, if any, significance in world affairs. Politically they are 'balkanized' by prolonged diverse colonial rule." Thanat noted the need for colonial isolation to be overcome by the development of regional cohesiveness and collaboration. If this could be achieved ASEAN members' individual weakness and impotence would be "gradually replaced by a greater combined strength and their voice will be heard and their weight noted on the international forum." These, he claimed, were the aims that the founders of ASA and ASEAN set for themselves. Similarly, in an article published in 1968 Thanat had argued that through regional cooperation in
Southeast Asia a new power base could be established which would "help our group to become respectable in the eyes of our foes and at the same time serve as an entity for our friends to cooperate with .... Alone, each nation in Southeast Asia is a tiny speck on the global landscape, but, united, they will become a viable entity of more than 200 million people with an abundance of resources."65.

(f) Regionalism

Growing support amongst prospective members of ASEAN for greater efforts towards regional cooperation was thus grounded in the pragmatic expectation of certain positive political benefits stemming from greater international influence. Such cooperation increasingly took the form, however, of deliberate efforts to promote the more abstract goal of "regionalism". This was reflected, firstly, in a critical evaluation of the consequences of excessive nationalism. In June 1966 Tun Ismail declared: "We, Southeast Asians, have had our fill of the 'heroic' phase of nationalism. It was a phase in which regrettably, progress toward regionalism was set back by conflicting national impulses and rivalries born of mutual suspicion. It was a phase in which, by and large, nationalism failed to come to grips with the problems of economic development and raising living standards of the people."66. This theme was to become a particular favourite for Rajaratnam. At ASEAN's inaugural meeting he recalled that for the past twenty years ASEAN members had acted "on the basis of nationalist fervour". This approach had proved insufficient, however, and he claimed that the realization had grown that it
was necessary "to marry national thinking with regional thinking". Where conflict occurred between the two, "painful adjustments" would have to be made if regionalism was not to remain a utopia. At ASEAN's Second Ministerial Meeting Rajaratnam called for a new definition of national interest in view of the fact that "the conditions of life transcend the boundaries of nation-states." He suggested that just as during the struggle for independence the leaders of Southeast Asia developed inspiring nationalist philosophies to mobilize their peoples, so would it now be necessary for leaders to contribute equal inspiration to the cause of "interdependence" between nations, which in Europe and other areas of the world had been recognized as a necessity in a rapidly shrinking and increasingly technological world. The growth of global interdependence had been cited by other Southeast Asian leaders as reason for greater efforts towards regional cooperation and the encouragement of a spirit of regionalism. The preamble to the ASEAN Declaration itself contained the observation that regional cooperation was particularly appropriate in "an increasingly interdependent world".

The notion of regional cooperation as an imperative for survival is illustrated by Tun Ismail's exhortation in 1966 that: "We must create a deep, collective awareness that we cannot survive for long as independent peoples - as Burmese, Cambodians, Indonesians, Laotians, Malaysians, Filipinos, Singaporeans, Thais and Vietnamese - unless we also think and act as Southeast Asians. Unless we prove, by deed, that we belong to a family of Southeast Asian nations, with its own character, its own identity and its own destiny."67. Less
eloquently but with greater brevity, Rajaratnam suggested in March 1968 that a helpful incentive for ASEAN would be the crude slogan: "Either we hang together or we hang separately."68.

A Military Role?

It has already been demonstrated that security considerations were of major importance to ASEAN's founders. They clearly were very mindful of the beneficial spin-offs for national and regional security that were to be anticipated from cooperation in the economic and political spheres. Moreover, both before and after the inaugural meeting in Bangkok it was on occasion remarked that security cooperation might become a more important part of ASEAN's activities in the future. Shortly after the inaugural meeting of ASEAN both Adam Malik and Tun Razak were reported to have commented that security would be discussed by ASEAN members at future meetings. Razak is reported to have said that it was possible for ASEAN to have defence arrangements "once we have become good friends with a common interest and destiny. It is difficult to say whether there will be a defence arrangement now." He added: "Naturally if another friend is in trouble, we will of course help."69. Similarly, Adam Malik reportedly compared ASEAN to a house with five doors. "If a burglar comes in one door, it's a problem for everyone in the house."70.

Speculation that ASEAN was actively contemplating specific forms of security cooperation was fueled by reports of statements by ASEAN leaders in the early months of
1968. During a visit to Indonesia President Marcos reportedly discussed the threat to the region from China and remarked that it might be necessary to develop "arrangements for collective security on the basis of ASEAN principles and purposes." In an interview in Tokyo, President Suharto was reported to have said that ASEAN was aimed at, amongst other things, establishing peace and stability in Southeast Asia, and to have observed: "From this standpoint, there is a possibility that ASEAN may arrive at establishing military cooperation." Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister, General Praphas, was reported to have supported a military role for ASEAN during a visit to Manila, and Razak is alleged to have also endorsed an ASEAN role in defence cooperation. Attention was drawn by commentators to earlier statements by Indonesian generals which were said to indicate support for such cooperation, especially to statements by General Panggabean who in 1966 was reported to have said in an address to the Army Command and Staff College in Bandung that there was "a need for a joint defence organization among countries in Southeast Asia in view of the fact that People's China is now strongly engaged in strengthening its influence in this part of the world." 

Despite numerous reports of this kind, however, there is very little evidence of any firm support for early moves towards military cooperation within ASEAN itself. On the contrary, such reports led to a rash of "clarifications" and of denials that ASEAN's militarization was imminent. Indonesians drew attention to a July 1966 resolution of the Indonesian parliament that prohibited Indonesia's membership
in any military pact directed against another country. Close examination indicates that the majority of press reports at this time alleging that various individuals were in favour of a military role for ASEAN were unwarranted amplifications of remarks that merely acknowledged the security significance of ASEAN's activities in other fields, or that speculated that defence cooperation could become part of ASEAN's activities at some distant time in the future. Those few who appeared to advocate seriously a military role for ASEAN, such as Praphas, did not exercise decisive influence on national policy.

The publicity generated by suggestions that ASEAN would acquire a military role led to further statements reemphasizing ASEAN's primary role in promoting economic, social and cultural cooperation. For example, in March 1968 Tunku Abdul Rahman stated that ASEAN should first be made to work "in its present role". He was not personally averse to defence arrangements within ASEAN but thought that "it might drive others away if we do it too quickly."76. Tun Razak added: "Our main concern is not so much defence, but security. The idea is to ensure security with as little expense as possible."77. Adam Malik commented that Indonesia did not want ASEAN to become a military organization because it should first achieve its basic aim of economic, social and cultural cooperation.78. Rajaratnam urged that ASEAN should not be overloaded with too many problems because economic development would need all available resources. He expressed agreement with Malik that: "ASEAN should not be made a vehicle for resolving our defence problems. It could be made outside of ASEAN in such a way and manner as members find convenient and
suitable."79.

Other ASEAN spokesmen rejected a military role for ASEAN on the pragmatic grounds that its members were militarily too weak, either individually or collectively, to form a credible military alliance.80. The belief was often stated that the primary threat to security stemmed from internal rather than external factors. Moreover, it was on occasion acknowledged that if an external threat were to arise it would be necessary to continue to rely on major power support, particularly from the U.S.81. Thailand and the Philippines accordingly showed no tendency to see an ASEAN military alliance as an alternative to their defence links with the U.S. Bilateral agreements were evidently considered to be the most appropriate form for military cooperation between ASEAN members. By the time of ASEAN's formation such agreements existed between Indonesia and Malaysia and between Malaysia and Thailand. Formal agreements were supplemented by other more limited forms of cooperation, such as attendance by the military personnel of other ASEAN countries at Indonesian staff colleges.82.

ASEAN members' objections to a military role for the Association were also rationalized by the argument encountered earlier that political and security objectives were best pursued by concentration on economic development. For example, in 1966 Tun Ismail, in dismissing the notion that any new regional grouping should take the form of a military alliance, had stated that he did not believe that military alliances, by themselves, could provide "a lasting solution to the problem
of communist expansionism." He argued: "The communist challenge, centred in Peking, is a total challenge that poses a total threat to Southeast Asia. Although force must be matched by force, in the interests of self-defence, as when North Vietnam seeks to annex South Vietnam, we Southeast Asians must first prove our capacity to provide more food, more jobs for our people." 83. Shortly before the formation of ASEAN Adam Malik employed a similar argument in rejecting the feasibility of a regional defence organization. He also emphasized the financial constraints, noting: "If you talk about defence arrangements, you must talk about weapons, air planes, military equipment, etc. You create the need for more expenditure for weapons. But this is not the problem for us now. The problem is food for the stomachs of our people. The greatest danger lies in this direction." He concluded: "This doesn't mean we must forget the defence problem. But we don't give it priority now." 84.

Probably the strongest proponent of the view that economic development was the most important requirement for the security of the region, and therefore the most appropriate focus for ASEAN, was Rajaratnam. Speaking to Singapore's parliament in September 1967 he stressed that ASEAN "as such" was not concerned with the military problems of the region. He explained: "This is not to say that member countries are disinterested in defence matters. In fact economic and social progress in the region would become well-nigh impossible if these countries cannot safeguard their national integrity and security. However one of the consequences of the successful realization of the aims and objects of ASEAN would be to bring
economic stability and thereby enhance prospects for peace and
ing the region." Only in this sense was he prepared to
concede that ASEAN was an organization for promoting peace and
security in the region.85. At the Second ASEAN Ministerial
Meeting Rajaratnam observed, according to a paraphrase by a
Singapore Government publication, that "one significant
clarification that had emerged as a result of discussions at
meetings of the standing committee was that ASEAN was an
organisation to promote economic, social and cultural
cooperation between the member countries." Rajaratnam thought
that this would dispose of "early misunderstandings that ASEAN
had military implications". He clarified that this was "not to
minimise the importance of security problems in the region,
but the Singapore Government believed that, for a variety of
reasons, this should not and could not be secured through
ASEAN. The security and integrity of the countries of
Southeast Asia were more likely to be jeopardised through
economic stagnation and collapse within the region than from
overt military threat from the outside."86.

Integration

ASEAN's subsequent record of achievement has often been
judged by the Association's success, or lack of it, in
achieving progress towards "integration" amongst its members.
ASEAN's founders saw important limits to the process of
integration, however. In particular, they believed that
political integration should not be pursued to the extent that
it might compromise the sovereignty of member-countries.
Indonesia, for example, had followed the example of Maphilindo
in suggesting in its draft declaration prepared prior to ASEAN's formation that it should be stipulated that members of ASEAN would pursue their objectives "without surrendering any part of their sovereignty."87.

This suggests that on whatever other grounds ASEAN's subsequent performance might be criticized, it should not be on the basis of their lack of progress in developing forms of political cooperation that would make substantial inroads on national sovereignty. Even in the economic sphere integration was seen at most as a very long-term objective.

FOOTNOTES

1. Accounts of cooperative efforts during this period can be found in William Henderson, "The Development of Regionalism in Southeast Asia", in International Organization, November 1955; Russell H. Fifield, The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia, 1945-1958, Harpers, New York, 1958, especially Ch. 10; Werner Levi, The Challenge of World Politics in South and Southeast Asia, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1968, especially Ch. 3; and Somsakdi Xuto, Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia: Problems, Possibilities and Prospects, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 1973, especially Ch. 2.


4. *Asian Almanac*, p.2096. A proposal was made by a Western scholar to combine aspects of Maphilindo with ASA. Bernard Gordon suggested that such a new group might be called "ASANEOFOS - the Association of Southeast Asian New Emerging Forces" - in his article "A Formula for Southeast Asian Stability", in *Solidarity*, January-March 1966, p.9.


10 ibid., 4 May 1967.

12. Although the Declaration founding ASEAN is often referred to as the "Bangkok Declaration", I have followed the practice of reserving this title for the Declaration marking the establishment of ASA.

13. The Philippine draft is reproduced in Abell, op cit., Appendix IV, pp.427-8. The same source contains an Indonesian draft that appears to closely resemble the original draft circulated by Thanat: Appendix V, pp.429-431. Estrella Solidum states that three drafts were discussed at the inaugural meeting - an Indonesian-Thai, a Philippine and a Malaysian.


17. From the Indonesian draft, Abell, op cit., p.429.


20. *ibid*.


22. *ibid.*, 7 and 8 August 1967.


33. See for example, Gordon, *Toward Disengagement* ...., op cit., pp.85-87.

34. *Asian Almanac*, p.2415.

35. ibid., p.2576.


38. *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 1, Nos. 7 and 8, p.81.


44. Cited in Solidum, op cit., p.56 and 60, from *Antara*
Review, 29 July 1967. In July 1973 Malik asserted: "the founders of ASEAN rightly saw that, given the historical determinants and the geo-political conditions in which the ASEAN countries found themselves at that stage, cooperation in economic and socio-cultural fields had to be nurtured first in order to provide for the necessary infrastructure on which to develop regional cooperation in other fields", cited in "The Making of Foreign Policy in Regional Cooperation – the Asian Model", p.56. in The World of Strategy and the Foreign Policy of Nations, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1973.


51. For a comprehensive study of Confrontation see J.A.C. Mackie, Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute


54. See, for example, The Challenge of World Politics in South and Southeast Asia, op cit., p.50 and 73; also Gordon, Toward Disengagement ...., op cit., p.83.

55. The Age (Melbourne), 2 August 1967.


60. Soedjatmoko, op cit., pp.298 and 301.


62. Speech to the Asia Society Conference on ASEAN, New York,
4-5 October 1977.


67. ibid., p.68.

68. Asian Almanac, p.2809.


70. The Age (Melbourne), 19 August 1967.

71. For example, Gordon, Toward Disengagement ...., op cit., pp.121-122 and 131-132, and Levi, op cit., p.70.


73. UPI, Tokyo, 5 March 1968.


77. *ibid.*, 12 March 1968.


85. *Asian Almanac*, p.2415.

87. Abell, op cit., p.430.
Although politics was generally disavowed by ASEAN's founders as the principal focus of the organization's activities, in the years immediately after ASEAN's formation political influences, at first on a bilateral basis, had a notable effect on its development. At ASEAN's inaugural meeting Singapore's Foreign Minister Rajaratnam had cautioned that the new organization was a mere skeleton and that the really difficult task would be to give it flesh and blood. He stated his belief that the Association would "run into more rocks than calm waters." It must have been a severe disappointment to ASEAN's founders that the events of the next few years amply supported Rajaratnam's prediction. Even Rajaratnam may not have anticipated, however, that ASEAN's initial difficulties would stem mainly from bilateral political disputes.

The Sabah Dispute

The first seven months of ASEAN's existence were relatively untroubled. Difficulties began when on 21 March 1968 the Philippine press carried reports about a secret "special forces" training camp on Corregidor Island in Manila Bay. Filipino Muslim recruits had allegedly been receiving training for infiltration into Sabah. The issue might have
dissipated had it not become entangled with scheduled discussions in Bangkok in June 1968 between Malaysia and the Philippines concerning the latter's claim to Sabah. The Bangkok talks, which lasted for one month, were disastrous in their effect upon relations between the two countries.

These events made it inevitable that ASEAN's activities would be affected, especially since from the time of the Second Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta in August 1968 the Standing Committee had been based in Kuala Lumpur. During that month the Philippines issued a circular instructing all Philippine delegates at the United Nations and at other intergovernmental conferences "to enter appropriate reservation against the authority or competence of Malaysia to represent North Borneo or Sabah."2. Malaysia's reaction was to announce that it would refuse to send any delegates to ASEAN meetings until the Philippines retracted its reservation.3.

The problem was not finally resolved until a meeting on 15 December 1969 between Tunku Abdul Rahman and the new Philippine Foreign Secretary Carlos Romulo, on the eve of the third ASEAN Ministerial Meeting which commenced the following day at the Cameron Highlands north of Kuala Lumpur. The Tunku announced the normalization of relations with the Philippines in his opening address. Romulo noted that the normalization agreement had been reached "without preconditions". But if Malaysia was unsuccessful in persuading the Philippines to abandon the claim, the Philippines had also made concessions in agreeing not to continue to announce its reservation.
concerning Malaysia's authority over Sabah, and, even more importantly, by putting its claim to one side so that it could for most practical purposes be ignored.

That the Sabah dispute had a seriously damaging effect upon ASEAN's development is obvious. It impeded ASEAN's activities for a substantial period. Many observers, particularly from outside the region, believed that even the future of the Association had at times been in grave doubt. It is of considerable significance, however, that for the most part these doubts did not appear to be shared by ASEAN's participants. They consistently professed to see the concept of regional cooperation, as embodied in ASEAN, as an objective that transcended bilateral conflict. Both Malaysia and the Philippines shared this view. Although their practical commitment was at times questionable, both countries appealed to the ideal of regional cooperation in attempting to modify the behaviour of the other; the essential difference being that Malaysia saw the Sabah claim as disruptive and therefore in conflict with efforts towards regional cooperation whereas the Philippines asserted that it was possible and desirable to separate such bilateral disputes from regional endeavours. Thus Ghazali Shafie commented of the Sabah dispute that: "we weep to see the tragedy that this has brought to the prospect of regional cooperation which has painfully been cultivated over so many years." 4 Romulo, on the other hand, stressed that the Philippines "will not destroy ASEAN. The Sabah dispute is not necessarily an obstacle to regional cooperation." 5 There was, moreover, some willingness on both sides to concede that flexibility was desirable in
relation to the dispute in the interests of regional cooperation.

The fact that ASEAN itself played no direct role in mediating the Sabah dispute could be interpreted as a failing. Unlike a number of other regional organizations, ASEAN had no formally assigned role in the settlement of disputes between its members. However, ASEAN's failure to intervene should perhaps be seen in the light of the belief which apparently was held by those members not involved in the dispute, that such intervention could be counter-productive. This was probably a prudent judgement, especially considering that the dispute did not extend to military conflict. Moreover, despite the absence of formal dispute settling procedures, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore exerted considerable suasion in appealing privately and publicly to both Malaysia and the Philippines to consider the effect of the dispute on the prospects for ASEAN. Adam Malik argued that "we should be able to separate ASEAN cooperation from other problems not pertaining to it." Rajaratnam urged: "whatever differences we may have, we must to the best of our ability not jeopardise ASEAN."7

ASEAN can thus take some credit for the putting aside of the Sabah dispute. That the incentive for compromise was in large part derived from the desire of the two parties not to undermine the Association is implied, at least on Malaysia's part, by remarks made by Tunku Abdul Rahman when announcing the normalization of relations with the Philippines. He stated: "This shows the great value we place on ASEAN and what
we think it can do for the good of our countries and peoples. It is my earnest hope that we have now permanently succeeded in overcoming whatever problem we may have so that we can now embark on a fresh start and forge ahead with our various plans and programmes in regional cooperation." He added that "without genuine goodwill among us, the edifice of ASEAN which we are attempting to build will have a foundation of shifting sand." The Tunku was even inclined to see some benefit in the interruption of ASEAN's activities by the Sabah dispute because it had driven home these lessons. Subsequent developments appeared to bear out at least partially the Tunku's belief that ASEAN had learnt something from its recent travails, which Tun Razak referred to at the Third Ministerial Meeting as the organization's "teething troubles". The Philippines showed thereafter little enthusiasm for the Sabah claim.

The Sabah claim was not the only source of tension in bilateral relations between ASEAN members during the Association's early years. The deterioration in Indonesia-Singapore relations following the hanging of two Indonesian marines in October 1968 was perhaps second only to the Sabah dispute in its potential effect upon ASEAN, coming as it did at the height of the crisis in Malaysia-Philippines relations. A commentator described it at the time as "one more nail in the ASEAN coffin which many feel has already been polished to a fine finish by Filipino-Malaysian antagonism over Sabah." ASEAN, he observed, looked to be merely "a boiling stew of incompatible nationalisms."8 A number of other bilateral tensions, both temporary and enduring,
undoubtedly hampered ASEAN's progress during this period. However, they did not seriously disrupt ASEAN's development.

External Stimuli

By the end of the 1960s, ASEAN appeared to have sufficiently overcome its early political difficulties stemming from bilateral disputes for the pendulum to swing to the other extreme and for members to begin to explore new and ambitious political goals for the region that contained a strong element of idealism. For some ASEAN spokesmen these goals came to concentrate increasingly on the concept of neutralization. In the process, ASEAN took a step closer, even if tentatively, towards politicization. Although the political and security preoccupations of ASEAN's members continued to be suppressed in favour of formal concentration upon economic, social and cultural cooperation, ASEAN had in fact served from its inception as a forum for "informal" discussion of political and security developments affecting member-countries."

The search for new political strategies within ASEAN was stimulated by a number of major developments affecting the international and regional environment. In the early part of 1968 there were two important developments that added urgency to ASEAN members' efforts to formulate a new approach to the management of the region's affairs. The first of these was Britain's announcement on 16 January of an accelerated timetable for the withdrawal of its forces from east of Suez. The second was the Tet offensive staged by North Vietnam and
the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, which was clearly a major setback for the United States and South Vietnamese forces and marked a turn-about in U.S. attitudes towards involvement in the war. These developments seemed to portend for ASEAN members the not-too-far-distant prospect of withdrawal from the region of their two most important external guarantors. There was some evidence of an ASEAN response during the Second Ministerial Meeting in August 1968. It was reported that at the end of the meeting the ministers met "informally" to discuss security and other problems, including the Vietnam peace talks in Paris, the U.S. presence in the area, the pending British withdrawal and the failure of some countries to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Further developments in the region during 1969 appeared to strengthen ASEAN members' views about the utility of the Association in coping with these changes, even while most of them continued to cling to their traditional alliances. Foremost amongst these developments was the continued decline in U.S. enthusiasm for the war in Vietnam and the enunciation by President Nixon in July 1969 of the "Guam Doctrine" in which he advocated that "the nations of Asia can and must increasingly shoulder the responsibility for achieving peace and progress in the area ... with whatever cooperation we can provide." Although this doctrine aroused fears of a precipitate U.S. withdrawal, it was not entirely unanticipated or unwelcomed by ASEAN members. It was in fact quite consistent with the aspiration which they had expressed from the time of ASEAN's formation for reduced involvement of the major powers in the region and greater self-reliance.
Other elements of a new structure of major power relationships affecting the region were also beginning to be dimly perceived by some ASEAN observers in 1969. The Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in April 1969 marked the drawing to a close of the Cultural Revolution and raised the prospect of China playing a more positive and less revolutionary role in international affairs. The announcement in June 1969 by Secretary-General Brezhnev of the Soviet proposal for an Asian collective security system drew attention to the growing interest of the USSR in the region. Diplomatic relations between the USSR and Malaysia had been established in March 1967 and with Singapore in June 1968. The first deployment of Soviet naval vessels in the Indian Ocean had occurred in March 1968. Japan was also having a greater impact on the region as a consequence of its rapidly-expanding economic presence. These developments caused Soedjatmoko, then Indonesia's ambassador to the United States, to comment that in viewing the future of Southeast Asia one observation inescapably emerged, namely "the multipolarity of the new constellation of forces in the post-Vietnam era." 10.

The changing regional environment was the occasion for some comment at the Third ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in December 1969. Adam Malik commented that the British withdrawal and U.S. disengagement from the region "may well induce us to jointly consider policies in our effort to cope with the new emerging situation." He advocated that Southeast Asian nations themselves should find the means to cope with these new circumstances rather than rely on external powers.
Carlos Romulo saw in the developing regional situation an opportunity for the implementation of President Marcos' long-standing proposal for an "Asian forum".

During 1970 the regional development of most serious concern to ASEAN's members appeared to be the deteriorating situation in Indochina, especially the extension of the war to Cambodia following the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk. At ASEAN's Fourth Ministerial Meeting in March 1971 Adam Malik expressed his support for greater political cooperation within ASEAN with his assertion of the need for ASEAN's members to "engender and develop an understanding among ourselves so as to present a united front, to the fullest extent possible, for our undertakings in the many regional and international forums. In this respect, truly based upon ASEAN spirit, I suggest to this Meeting to instruct their respective representatives to cooperate closely and to act jointly." The joint communique noted that the ministers had "reiterated the necessity of close consultation and cooperation amongst their representatives at regional and international forums so that the members of ASEAN would always present a united stand to advance their common interests." Perhaps in an attempt to illustrate such a united stand, member-countries announced at the conclusion of the meeting their joint support for Malik's candidacy as the next president of the U.N. General Assembly.

Even more unsettling regional developments were to follow in 1971. China launched its exercise in "ping-pong diplomacy" which served as an effective symbol of its new-found moderation and desire for improved relations with
the non-communist world. In July 1971 it was revealed that President Nixon's national security advisor, Dr Henry Kissinger, had made a secret visit to Peking and it was announced that the President himself would soon be paying a visit to China. Except in the case of Malaysia, ASEAN members' contacts with China had not been of much substance. By the time of the crucial vote on China's admittance to the United Nations in October 1971 there still remained a good deal of uncertainty and distrust in ASEAN countries' attitudes towards China and ASEAN members failed conspicuously to coordinate their voting positions.

But despite this disarray the rapid pace of international and regional developments during this period had served at least to encourage the consideration of new approaches and new responses. ASEAN members met in Kuala Lumpur in November 1971 to consider, amongst other matters, Malaysia's proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia, which was the most ambitious and well-defined of these new approaches. While international developments had caught ASEAN members by surprise, they did not catch them completely unprepared.

Malaysia's Neutralization Proposal

The Malaysian proposal was first articulated by Tun Ismail during the course of a debate in the Malaysian parliament on 23 January 1968. Referring to Britain's announcement one week earlier of plans for an accelerated withdrawal of its military forces from the region, and to
apprehension about a "vacuum" if effective defence arrangements could not be substituted. Tun Ismail suggested that the time was "ripe for the countries in the region to declare collectively the neutralization of Southeast Asia. To be effective, this must be guaranteed by the big powers, including Communist China." He further suggested that Southeast Asian countries should sign non-aggression treaties with each other and that they should declare a policy of peaceful coexistence which would involve undertaking not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and accepting whatever form of government they chose to elect or adopt.11.

Little apparent headway was made with the neutralization proposal, however, until April 1970 when it was raised by Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie in his capacity as Malaysia's delegate to the Dar es Salaam preparatory meeting for the non-aligned summit held later that year. Ghazali expressed Malaysia's hope that non-aligned countries would endorse the neutralization of the whole of Southeast Asia to be guaranteed by China, the USSR and the U.S. When Tunku Abdul Rahman resigned in September 1970 and Tun Razak succeeded him as Prime Minister with Tun Ismail as his deputy, the Malaysian government commenced a serious effort to promote the neutralization proposal.

Malaysia did not at any time present publicly a complete and detailed official explanation of its proposal. It appeared to crystallize over a period of time and as such can only be deduced from a series of speeches and articles by several
Malaysian spokesmen commencing in October 1970. The initial stress was on the fact that there were several preconditions for the realization of the proposal. Razak told a political rally that the main aim was firstly to consolidate regional cooperative efforts by organizations such as ASEAN, secondly to obtain acceptance within the region that Southeast Asia should no longer be the arena of the power struggle of the big nations and, thirdly, to get the big powers—China, the USSR and the U.S.—to guarantee that Southeast Asia remained peaceful and prosperous. During his visit to Indonesia in December 1970 Tun Razak pointed to favourable developments in the international environment, such as the decline of the Cold War, and to evidence of "a new approach and new thinking" amongst the big powers, in order to support his view that the time had come for Southeast Asian countries to "chart a new common strategy". To assist this strategy he particularly argued that efforts should be made to draw China into the international community. By April 1971 Tun Razak seemed to believe that the prospects for neutralization had further improved. He asserted that the "era of confrontation between the major powers has given way, if not exactly to one of conciliation, at least to a period of adjustment of particular points of differences or conflict".

Tun Razak's optimism appeared to increase still further following the July 1971 announcement of Nixon's forthcoming visit to Peking. He commented to Malaysia's parliament that "we are living in a world very different from that which obtained up to only a few years ago—even, in some ways, up to only a few months ago." He recalled that when Malaysia's
neutralization proposal was first made there was "a general attitude of scepticism" and that it was regarded as "unrealistic, idealistic or even worse". But he claimed that as a result of the latest exchanges between China and the U.S. there had been a "growing appreciation that this policy far from being idealistic is in fact a very realistic one".15.

Probably the most detailed explanation available of Malaysia's neutralization proposal is that contained in an article published in October 1971 by Ghazali Shafie, who had been made Minister with Special Functions and Minister of Information in Tun Razak's cabinet.16. Ghazali sought to dispel the notion that the neutralization proposal was "premised upon a euphoric view of the world or of the natural tendencies of states in the international arena." Pointing to Malaysia's experience during its 1948-1960 struggle against communist insurgency and during Confrontation he asserted that Malaysia "does not need any lesson from anyone about the realities of the power-struggle" of which in any case the "holocaust in Vietnam" was "a sufficiently grim reminder". Rather, he argued, the proposal was "based on the long view of the developing mood on the regional as well as the international stage", a mood which "must be used to positive purpose or it may go wrong."

Ghazali detailed the steps that Malaysia envisaged for the implementation of its neutralization proposal, which he said might be viewed on two levels:

On the first level the countries of Southeast Asia
should get together and clearly view their present situations and agree upon the following:

- individual countries in the region must respect one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and not participate in activities likely to directly or indirectly threaten the security of another. This is an essential requirement. Non-interference and non-aggression are basic principles which Southeast Asian countries must unequivocally accept before any further steps can be taken.

- all foreign powers should be excluded from the region.

- the region should not be allowed to be used as a theatre of conflict in the international power struggle.

- they should devise ways and means of, and undertake the responsibility for, ensuring peace among member states.

- they should present a collective view before the major powers on vital issues of security.

- they should promote regional cooperation.

On the next level, the major powers (the U.S., the USSR and China) must agree on the following:

- Southeast Asia should be an area of neutrality.

- the powers undertake to exclude countries in the region from the power struggle among themselves.

- the powers should devise the supervisory means of guaranteeing Southeast Asia's neutrality in the
international power struggle.

He summarized by explaining that "just as the Southeast Asian countries will be responsible, under the Neutralization Plan, for maintaining peace among themselves, so will the responsibility of preventing externally-inspired conflict in the region rest upon the three guaranteeing powers." With regard to the major powers, he also emphasized that each must be given assurances that its withdrawal or non-involvement in the area would not benefit the others. He stressed the need for the three major powers to agree upon an effective supervisory method capable of enforcing the neutralization arrangement.

It is evident that Malaysia's neutralization proposal was based upon broad principles that were acceptable to the majority of ASEAN's participants. These included the principles that regional problems should increasingly be met by regional solutions; that traditional dependence on the support of outside powers should ideally be replaced by greater self-reliance and the promotion of regional cooperation; that major power interference in the affairs of the region should be halted; and that all countries in the region, regardless of ideology, should be given the opportunity to participate in regional cooperative schemes. The difficulties and disagreements that arose between Malaysia and the other ASEAN member-countries over the neutralization proposal stemmed mainly from the fact that the proposal represented an attempt to formalize and institutionalize these principles.
On 2 October 1971 the five ASEAN foreign ministers attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York met in Tun Razak's hotel suite and agreed to a further meeting in November in Kuala Lumpur to discuss recent international developments as they affected Southeast Asia, as well as President Marcos's proposal for an Asian summit meeting.17 (Marcos had revived this proposal soon after President Nixon's announcement of his visit to Peking.) The chief advocate of the Kuala Lumpur meeting had been Carlos Romulo.

During the course of a preparatory meeting in early-November, Malaysian officials confirmed that the neutralization proposal would be discussed at the foreign ministers meeting.18 One week later they told reporters that four ASEAN countries supported a zone of peace and neutrality proposal.19 The matter proved to be not so simple, however. The Philippines, in particular, opposed the endorsement of a neutralization proposal at this time.20 Marcos observed that neutralization was "by no means a settled concept and the idea of neutralizing a collection of sovereign states with vital interests that inevitably differ, must be unprecedented in history."21 Two days prior to the Kuala Lumpur meeting Tun Razak and Romulo had a 45 minute meeting in an unsuccessful attempt to resolve their differences. Romulo issued a statement referring to "possible other alternatives" to neutralization being discussed at the meeting of foreign ministers.22.
Other ASEAN countries were less vocal in expressing opposition to Malaysia's proposal prior to the Kuala Lumpur meeting, but "diplomatic sources" reported strong reservations in all of the other four capitals.\textsuperscript{23} Rajaratnam commented on arrival in Kuala Lumpur that neutralization was "a good concept but we must discuss with our colleagues how practical or feasible it is and whether it is a long-term objective." He warned of "many difficulties", although he thought they could be surmounted. Two such difficulties were whether the big powers would support the proposal and how it could be reconciled with membership of SEATO and the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Rajaratnam said Singapore had submitted a paper for the conference giving a general review of items that had been suggested by Malaysia.\textsuperscript{24} Adam Malik was reported to have commented regarding the neutralization proposal that: "If it means to free the region from outside interference, in principle we shall have no objection." He raised, however, the problem of "policing" neutralization - what would happen if a nuclear-weapons carrying ship approached the Straits of Malacca?\textsuperscript{25}

The Kuala Lumpur meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers was held on 25-27 November 1971. Although there were several other items on the agenda, the neutralization issue dominated the meeting. The discussions at both the official and ministerial level were reported to be difficult with an impasse being reached at one point when the Philippines insisted that the neutralization proposal could only be decided upon at a meeting of Asia's leaders.\textsuperscript{26} The declaration that was
finally agreed upon shows evidence of dilution and compromise.

The operative paragraph of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration merely states:

(1) that Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of, and respect for, Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from any form or manner of interference by outside Powers;

(2) that Southeast Asian countries should make concerted efforts to broaden the areas of cooperation which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship.

In the preambular passages it was agreed "that the neutralization of Southeast Asia is a desirable objective and that we should explore ways and means of bringing about its realization." It was also noted that the signatories were "Cognizant of the significant trend towards establishing nuclear-free zones", and that they reiterated their commitment to the portion of the 1967 ASEAN Declaration that stated the primary responsibility of Southeast Asian countries for the affairs of the region and their determination to resist external interference.

An accompanying joint communique stated that the ministers had agreed that they would "bring the contents of
their Declaration to the attention of other countries of Southeast Asia and would encourage them to associate themselves with the aspirations and objectives expressed in the Declaration." It was also agreed to "establish a Committee of Senior Officials initially of the ASEAN countries to study and consider what further steps should be taken to bring about their objectives." The Committee was to be convened in Malaysia. Regarding the proposed summit meeting favoured by the Philippines, the ministers agreed to recommend that a summit of ASEAN Heads of State be held in Manila at a date to be announced later.

Following the signing of the Declaration Tun Razak stated that three major steps were required to make neutralization a reality; namely, a clear determination by the ASEAN states to resist external interference, an approach to the other Southeast Asian countries to commit themselves to the principle of neutrality, and an approach to the big powers to guarantee that neutrality. He clarified that an approach to the big powers could only be made after Southeast Asian countries had been approached. He also clarified that once neutralization was accepted, bases and treaties with external powers would be phased out. At the conclusion of the meeting Razak described the Declaration as "an important and vital step in our efforts to ensure a new era of peace and stability in Southeast Asia". Some of his disappointment at the response from Malaysia's ASEAN partners to its neutralization proposal is suggested, however, by his warning that: "Whether we succeed in the further steps ahead depends on our ability to work together. We cannot expect others to
respect us as independent and sovereign countries unless we are ourselves prepared to work to maintain our independence and our sovereignty and unless we show our determination to look after ourselves so as to be free from any form of external interference."

But Razak's remarks also showed a willingness to make some concessions to the views of other ASEAN member-countries. He acknowledged that a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality could only be attained "if all countries show that they will scrupulously respect our independence and integrity and that they will not interfere in any manner in our internal affairs, either overtly or covertly." Razak stated that he had "no illusion about the long and difficult road ahead of us." He suggested that ASEAN members should proceed "with caution as well as with imagination." He assured that Malaysia would "always be in step with all our friends in Southeast Asia as we proceed on the path which this Declaration sets out."

**Slow Progress**

Despite mixed reactions to the Declaration, including continued scepticism amongst other ASEAN members and adverse comment from North Vietnam and the Soviet Union, Malaysian spokesmen continued to extoll the virtues of neutralization and to express optimism about its prospects. In the wake of the Kuala Lumpur meeting Tun Ismail exhorted that "in these times of flux in the world power balance, Southeast Asia may be in the rare position of being able to get out from under, breathe the free air and grasp the opportunity to decide its
own destiny." Opportunities such as these, he declared, "do not present themselves more than once in several decades or in a century or may never ever appear again." Malaysia had comparatively little to say, however, about arrangements for the implementation of neutralization. This is understandable since little had been decided at the Kuala Lumpur meeting and the Committee of Senior Officials set up to undertake this task made slow progress during subsequent years.

Matters were further complicated when Philippine Foreign Secretary Carlos Romulo announced on departure from Manila for ASEAN's Seventh Ministerial Meeting in May 1974 that he would propose "the establishment of effective machinery to resolve disputes which may arise between member states". He believed that such an organ was necessary "to preserve unity and lend credibility to the association, no less than to the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality proposed to be established in Southeast Asia."28. It was reported that in deference to Malaysian sensitivities Romulo agreed to refer to dispute-settling "procedures" rather than "machinery".29. Malaysia's delegate, Hussein Onn, stated that any ASEAN agreement on conciliation procedures for intra-regional disputes was not meant to apply to the Philippine claim to Sabah and the southern Philippines problem. The press statement issued by the ministerial meeting recorded that the ministers had "unanimously endorsed in principle the establishment of effective procedures for the pacific settlement of intra-regional disputes". They considered that the adoption of such procedures would be "a positive step towards the strengthening of ASEAN and towards the
establishment of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia".

Consideration of steps towards a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality was hastened by developments in Indochina during the first half of 1975. Senior officials met in Bangkok in January and a "working group" met again in Bangkok in April. Another senior officials meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur just prior to ASEAN's Eighth Ministerial Meeting held on 13-15 May 1975. During this second senior officials meeting "conference sources", presumably Malaysian, were reported to have stated that officials hoped to finalize the blueprint for the zone for submission to the foreign ministers. Blueprint clauses reportedly covered guidelines for members of the zone, expectations governing relations of outside nations with the zone, means to declare its existence and procedures on violations. After the foreign ministers had adopted the final blueprint it was hoped that they would proceed to decide on how to approach the communist nations of Indochina to join the zone and discuss steps to implement it. The sources also stated, however, that there were major differences over timing of the approach to the Indochina countries to join the zone, over the method by which the international community should be required to announce recognition of the zone and on the issue of procedures for settlement of bilateral disputes among zone members. On the latter, the Philippines reportedly had proposed a strict, legal arbitration system while Malaysia wanted a mediation council of officials.30.

In his opening speech to the Eighth Ministerial Meeting
Tun Razak strongly asserted his view that the time was appropriate for the objectives of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration to be pursued with greater vigour. Other ASEAN ministers were evidently more sceptical, however. Malaysia's efforts to move towards implementation of the zone appeared to founder. It was reported that the meeting had decided to shelve the blueprint, partly from fear of rejection by the countries of Indochina but probably more importantly because of several major remaining areas of disagreement. The joint communique noted rather lamely that ministers "reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to the objectives of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration" and agreed "that its relevance for the region was now more evident".

Instead of finalizing the blueprint, the ministers evidently hoped to initial a draft "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation" that had been completed during the senior officials meeting - presumably as a fallback from the zone of peace, freedom and neutrality proposal. The treaty was intended to provide a structural framework for the pacific settlement of disputes between ASEAN members and was open for signature by other Southeast Asian countries. In the event, the ministers decided to endorse only the broad terms even of this draft treaty and to direct it back to their respective governments for further study and approval, probably in hope of overcoming the differences already mentioned between the Philippines and Malaysia over the means to be adopted in settling intra-regional disputes.31.

Other Political Issues
Although the Kuala Lumpur Declaration was a transparently political document, ASEAN members sought to promote the fiction that it was not an official ASEAN initiative in order to preserve the formal position that ASEAN was not a political organization. In Adam Malik's words, the Kuala Lumpur meeting was not a formal session of ASEAN but "a meeting of countries which happen to be members of ASEAN." In reality, this was a somewhat ingenious distinction, and one that was frequently overlooked. For example, in his closing speech at the Kuala Lumpur meeting Thanat Khoman referred to "this highly significant ASEAN ministerial meeting". And a Straits Times editorial observed a few days after its signing that the Declaration was a regional initiative "inspired by ASEAN" and "conforming to ASEAN desires for the solution of ASEAN objectives". The Kuala Lumpur Declaration was in fact merely the most prominent manifestation of the increasing politicization of ASEAN. Though other ASEAN members did not share to the same degree Malaysia's enthusiasm for the concept of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, they concurred that there was a need for a collective political response to new developments in the international relations of the region. ASEAN came increasingly to be seen as the most appropriate vehicle for that response, and to take into its agenda a number of other international political issues.

At the Kuala Lumpur meeting Thanat had pointed to the "many momentous changes" occurring on the international scene, and urged a common approach. Shortly thereafter Carlos Romulo advocated that ASEAN countries should get together to make "a
common assessment" of the international situation. He asserted that ASEAN had finally begun to realize the value of "an integrated regional approach" to its members dealings with the outside world.34.

The first concrete recommendation that ASEAN should elevate the status of the "informal" political cooperation amongst its members came from Singapore. In his address to the Fifth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore on 13-14 April 1972, Rajaratnam noted that although ASEAN ministerial meetings had officially been concerned with economic problems, "unofficially" members had taken the opportunity to discuss political matters. "Quite correctly", he said, observers had not believed that ASEAN foreign ministers spent two or three days together discussing only economic projects. Rajaratnam proposed that the time had come for ASEAN countries "to regularize their extra-curricular activities". He considered that: "Since relations between the major powers are changing in ways which they themselves may not be sure of, there is a need now for ASEAN Foreign Ministers to meet to assess not only the intentions of the great powers but also to get to know our individual reactions to new developments and rapid changes in our area." Rajaratnam observed that a start in this direction had been made at the Kuala Lumpur meeting which he said was "on the whole a useful meeting in which we had greater understanding of not only our agreements but even our disagreements". He added, however, that he put his proposal for more regular political consultations "not as part of our official agenda but as part of our extra-curricular activities". The fiction, though increasingly tenous, was to
be maintained.

Comments made by other delegates at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting were supportive. Adam Malik urged that "calculated, well-planned and coordinated actions" should be agreed upon by ASEAN countries to reassert their position in the new emerging pattern of power relations. For Indonesia's part, he asserted that it had always recognized ASEAN as "the nucleus of our independent and active foreign policy". Tun Ismail noted that although political developments were "outside the framework of ASEAN", the Association would have to take account of these developments because they affected the general climate within which ASEAN had to operate. He felt that ASEAN provided "a firm basis for close consultation and joint action". He saw the November 1971 Kuala Lumpur meeting as proof of "the single-minded approach ASEAN members have to problems affecting them" and as testimony to the achievements of "a truly ASEAN identity". Thailand and the Philippines were also reported to have supported Rajaratnam's proposal. Thanat agreed that ASEAN should add political exchanges to its consultations on economic and social matters. The Philippines' Jose Ingles offered Manila as a site for a political meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers to pave the way for a five-nation summit.

At the conclusion of "unofficial" political consultations following the Fifth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting the ministers issued, for the first time, a press statement which recorded that during these consultations they had agreed that "a Ministerial meeting should be convened at least once a
year to discuss international developments of concern to the region". These meetings would be "outside the purview of ASEAN" and "informal" in character. Also for the first time, the official joint communique of the Fifth Ministerial Meeting noted that ministers had engaged in political discussions, in which they had reviewed significant world events and developments in relations amongst the major powers. They recognized "the necessity for cooperating even more closely" in view of these developments.

The first "informal" ASEAN foreign ministers meeting was eventually held in Manila on 13-14 July 1972. A second was held in Kuala Lumpur on 15 February 1973. By the time of the Sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting at Pattaya, Thailand, in April 1973 the idea of an "informal" political role for ASEAN had become well established. The press statement issued at the conclusion of the ministers' political discussions at this meeting was a lengthy one covering a large number of issues. This set the pattern for later years.

The major issue which preoccupied ASEAN members during this period was Vietnam. Consideration of the possible membership of South Vietnam in ASEAN became an issue at the Cameron Highlands meeting. The possibility of serious consideration of South Vietnam's membership in ASEAN was foreclosed, however, by Rajaratnam's statement at a press conference just prior to the ASEAN meeting that Singapore felt that until ASEAN "really got itself going" its membership should not be enlarged.36.
Growing concern amongst ASEAN members about developments in Indochina was suggested by Tun Ismail's comment at ASEAN's Fourth Ministerial Meeting in Manila in March 1971 that the Paris peace talks which had once been "a chink of light that brought a glimmer of hope for peace in the area", now looked more and more "like a flash in the pan that never fails to disappoint". The Vietnam issue received little attention in the public remarks of ASEAN ministers at the Fifth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. That Vietnam was discussed by the ministers at greater length in private is suggested by the fact that it was at this meeting that the first informal meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers was decided upon and that the meeting, when held, concentrated chiefly on the Vietnam issue. At the conclusion of the July 1972 informal meeting in Manila, a press statement was issued which noted that the meeting had reviewed "with grave concern" the continuing conflicts in Indochina and had decided "to urge the parties concerned to intensify their efforts to achieve a just settlement". The view was further expressed that the ASEAN countries should "explore the possibility of making a concrete contribution towards the final settlement of the Indochina question". No other details of the meeting's deliberations were revealed until the end of the month when Adam Malik disclosed that a proposal worked out by the foreign ministers in Manila to end the fighting in Indochina had been submitted to all parties to the conflict. According to press reports, the ASEAN peace plan called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire by both North and South Vietnam; withdrawal of U.S. troops within four months simultaneously with the release of U.S. prisoners-of-war; the setting up of a team of
"custodians" comprising members from Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan; leaving North and South Vietnam to decide all issues without interference; and free general elections. Malik reportedly claimed on 20 August in Bangkok that a "five-point" ASEAN proposal had been accepted by the U.S., South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. By that stage, however, North Vietnam's foreign ministry had officially informed the Indonesian mission in Hanoi of its rejection of the proposal on the grounds that it favoured the U.S. and South Vietnam. To their credit, ASEAN members were not easily discouraged by the rejection of their diplomatic efforts. Publicity about progress in the Paris peace talks during the following months led them to agree to Indonesia's proposal for another informal meeting to discuss the Vietnam issue further. In the event, the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam was signed in Paris on 27 January 1973 and the ASEAN foreign ministers did not meet until 15 February 1973.

The February 1973 meeting gave the impression overall that ASEAN members had found considerable difficulty in formulating a joint approach on future policy towards Indochina. Subsequent events did little to dispel that impression, although members continued, on most occasions, to strike compromises that papered over their differences. On 30 March 1973 Malaysia established diplomatic relations with North Vietnam. Singapore followed soon after in May 1973, but it was not until 1976 that the Philippines and Thailand also established relations. The first meeting of the ASEAN Coordinating Committee for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation
of Indochina States was held in Kuala Lumpur in April 1973. The press statement noted only that the meeting had drawn up "an action programme" as a recommendation back to the Standing Committee. The ASEAN officials reportedly decided to call on the major powers to provide aid on an untied basis and agreed to prepare a report on what aid each of the ASEAN countries could offer.

At the end of the Sixth Ministerial Meeting in April 1973, it was announced that ASEAN foreign ministers had made "a thorough review" of recent developments in Indochina. The press statement noted that ministers had expressed "particular concern" about the "grave situation" in Laos and Cambodia. In spite of their evident concern, ASEAN members made an effort to put on a brave face and expressed high hopes that the future would hold better things. Malaysia adopted a conciliatory stance. Tun Ismail expressed the view that an expansion of ASEAN's membership would be sure to engender "a high degree of strength, solidarity and close relationship amongst the nations of the region and lead to a situation whereby no country in the region need feel that it is in a hostile environment". Thailand and the Philippines concentrated much of their attention at the meeting on the promotion of Thailand's proposal for a 10 nation conference of Southeast Asian countries on the Indochina issue. The press statement noted that ministers had reaffirmed the desirability of convening such a conference "at an appropriate time".

Perhaps discouraged by the lack of success of its earlier initiatives, ASEAN gave little attention to the
Vietnam problem until the time came for Indonesia to host the Seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, which was held in Jakarta on 7-9 May 1974. Exercising its prerogative as host, Indonesia went out of its way to be accommodating to Hanoi by issuing an invitation to North Vietnam to send an observer delegation without issuing a similar invitation to South Vietnam. North Vietnam declined, however.

Public comments made by the foreign ministers about the Vietnam issue during the Seventh Ministerial Meeting were mainly pessimistic in tone. ASEAN's leaders must have watched the deteriorating fortunes of non-communist forces in Indochina during the following year with increasing dismay. They evidently saw little scope for the Association to influence the course of events. ASEAN ambassadors reportedly met in Bangkok on 2 May following the fall of Saigon to discuss recognition of the new government there - but no joint statement was issued.41.

Another important foreign policy issue for ASEAN countries in this period was the development of their respective relationships with China. Relations with China were discussed at the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November 1971. The communique noted that the ministers had agreed to continue to consult each other "with a view to fostering an integrated approach on all matters and developments which affect the Southeast Asian region". It later became clear that this was intended to apply particularly to the normalization of relations with China. Rajaratnam told Singapore's parliament in March 1972 that
ASEAN members had agreed to consult each other before establishing diplomatic relations with China.42.

The agreement to consult on this issue probably was prompted by the concern of other ASEAN members at the pace of Malaysia's developing contacts with China. Despite the warmth of its early contacts with Peking, Malaysia was sensitive to these concerns. It was probably for this reason, and for the sake of ASEAN unity, that Malaysia agreed to consult its partners before establishing diplomatic relations. All ASEAN countries appeared to agree that in the longer term the normalization of relations with China was desirable, and in fact necessary, if China was to be able to participate in the establishment of the proposed zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia.

As the months went by, Malaysia appeared to become impatient with the continued opposition of other ASEAN members to any specific measures to normalize relations with Peking. In June 1973 Malaysia commenced negotiations with China in New York, leading to speculation that diplomatic relations would be only a few months away. Malaysia showed itself willing, however, to prolong the negotiations in order to obtain the most favourable terms. It also appeared conscientious in its efforts to keep its ASEAN partners informed of progress in the talks.43. The matter was again discussed at the Seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in May 1974.44. Razak met with Suharto prior to his visit to Peking at the end of the month which formalized the establishment of diplomatic relations. The other ASEAN countries appeared to accept this event with
good grace. A foreign office spokesman in Jakarta said that it was in line with a joint ASEAN policy and confirmed that all ASEAN countries had agreed in principle to establish relations with Peking.

Despite a multiplicity of trade, sporting and other contacts, particularly in the case of Thailand and the Philippines, none of Malaysia's ASEAN partners followed in its footsteps until about one year later. The catalyst appears to have been provided by the events in Indochina. The Philippines established diplomatic relations with China on 9 June 1975 and Thailand on 1 July 1975.

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By the time of ASEAN's Eighth Ministerial Meeting the politicization of the Association was becoming an accepted fact. Rajaratnam, for example, while insisting that ASEAN's primary role should continue to be as an economic organization, now acknowledged that ASEAN had also become "an organization for sorting out and harmonizing political and security policies in this region on an ad hoc basis". On occasion, ASEAN's spokesmen expressed considerable satisfaction with their achievements in this area of their endeavours. Adam Malik, for example, as early as October 1972, commended ASEAN's success in moulding "an increasing degree of political cohesion" amongst its members and "a more integrated approach towards common problems". He concluded that "within the ASEAN spirit" the nations of Southeast Asia could be seen to be assuming an increasing role towards the solution of the
At least one foreign observer, an academic, did not agree with this assessment. Writing in October 1973, he concluded that although ASEAN's members consulted with some regularity they had demonstrated "only a limited sense of common political purpose in regional matters". Critics were also to be found within the ASEAN countries. An Indonesian commentator in January 1973 detected "a feeling of uncertain commitment among the ASEAN nations as to what that regional cooperative body is for". He felt that ASEAN spokesmen displayed an "over-cautious attitude" in their reluctance to speak of political issues and suggested that ASEAN needed to strive harder in the field of political cooperation if it was to become more than a fictitious entity. A Filipino observer complained in October 1974 that "in its anxiety to avoid the sensitive and controversial, ASEAN stands the risk of neglecting areas where the need for discussion and consensus is most crucial".

These comments reflect the shortcomings of ASEAN's endeavours in the field of political cooperation. It is evident, however, that by the mid-1970s such cooperation had become recognised as an important focus of ASEAN's activities. This was not always recognised by outside observers. For example, one long-time foreign observer of ASEAN concluded, following the Eighth Ministerial Meeting, that the Association had "once again failed to live up to its rhetoric". He noted that during the meeting an intriguing melody had been played called "the ASEAN song". " Appropriately", he cracked, "it was
a tune without words". He conceded, however, that it could safely be said that the ASEAN ministers were "their own best critics", noting that they had called repeatedly for ASEAN to exert itself more strenuously in order to inject greater dynamism into the Association. This was an accurate comment. ASEAN's spokesmen frequently acknowledged that the Association's tangible accomplishments had been few. But in the area of intangibles significant progress was often claimed, especially with regard to the development of cooperation amongst its own members. Tun Razak's remarks to the Eighth Ministerial Meeting are typical. He admitted that "nothing very dramatic has hitherto been achieved at ASEAN meetings", but asserted that during the seven years of ASEAN's existence some progress had been made "in establishing among us a genuine and growing spirit and habit of thinking and working together in regional terms". He felt that the frequent meetings of ASEAN officials and foreign ministers had served to create a climate of goodwill and understanding which fostered the evolution of regional solidarity and of regional political consciousness. This he regarded as ASEAN's "most salient achievement". In fact as early as 1971 during the Fourth Ministerial Meeting, Tun Ismail had referred to the development of "a growing and genuine habit of cooperation and ... a practice of thinking and working together." In April 1972 Lee Kuan Yew remarked to the Fifth Ministerial Meeting that the greater mutual understanding of each country's problems that had arisen from ASEAN meetings was "perhaps the most valuable achievement" of these meetings. In March 1973 Ghazali Shafie also had asserted that it was "in the realm of the intangibles" that ASEAN had made the most progress. The
constant coming together of ASEAN officials had generated, he claimed, "a genuine and growing habit of cooperation". Similar remarks were frequently made by other ASEAN spokesmen and commentators. ASEAN's spokesmen also noted with satisfaction that these modest beginnings were helping the Association to become established as an organization whose views were taken into account in international forums.

FOOTNOTES


2. Noble, op cit., p.185.

3. Abell, op cit., p.368.


12. AAP, Kuala Lumpur, 10 October 1970.


15. ibid., September 1971, pp.24-29.

17. Straits Times, 4 October 1971.

18. ibid., 5 November 1971.


20. ibid., 14 and 18 November 1971.


22. ibid., 24 November 1971.

23. ibid., 26 November 1971.


27. Asian Almanac, p.4981.


42. *Asian Almanac*, p.5188.


CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC ENDEAVOURS

Despite the debilitating effects of the Sabah dispute and, to a lesser extent, of other intra-ASEAN tensions, some progress was made by ASEAN's members in the early years of the organization's existence towards the fulfilment of its stated aims and purposes in the economic sphere. These beginnings were, however, at best modest. The main theme of discussions between ASEAN's members during this period continued to focus on whether a cautious or an ambitious approach should be adopted towards economic cooperation, with advocates of the cautious approach clearly in the ascendancy. Most ASEAN members appeared to endorse a gradualist approach. For example, Rajaratnam recalled that even the European Economic Community had taken some 10 years of haggling before it got off the ground. He felt that ASEAN should therefore "be satisfied if there is a steady, even if slow, movement towards regionalism."

1. At the first meeting of Secretaries-General of the ASEAN Secretariats in the following month, an initially unambitious and practical approach was endorsed by the adoption of criteria for the implementation of ASEAN projects that emphasized "feasibility for immediate implementation; quick yielding in fruitful results; benefits accruing to all participating members; minimum financing; and furtherance of the objectives embodied in the Bangkok Declaration of August 8, 1967."
At the Second ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in August 1968 the first stocktaking was made of ASEAN's progress. Despite acknowledgment of the Association's meagre accomplishments at that stage, considerable optimism was expressed. The Philippines was the exception in favouring more ambitious proposals. As early as January 1968, during his visit to Malaysia, President Marcos had proclaimed his belief that "the time is ripe for new and masterful schemes for economic, technological and scientific, educational and cultural cooperation in our region." He suggested industrial complementation schemes and a regional plan for development. At an ASEAN Conference of Representatives of Commerce and Industry that was held in Manila in September/October 1968, the Philippines reportedly presented studies on a free trade area or common market for ASEAN. This was apparently resisted by the other four member-countries.

The joint communique of the Second Ministerial Meeting expressed members' "satisfaction that after industrious preparation, ASEAN reached the operational stage in the implementation of its projects." It agreed to set up an ad hoc committee to study financial matters connected with ASEAN projects, including the possibility of a joint fund. The meeting drew some critical press comment, however. A Straits Times editorial asserted that the conference had "produced little to stir the imagination". Of some considerable significance for the future, however, was the communique's welcoming of an offer by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) to carry out an
economic survey. The purpose of the study was to assist ASEAN member-countries in "identifying opportunities for closer economic cooperation". An ASEAN Advisory Committee was to be created and it was acknowledged that the success of the project would depend, "to a very great extent", on the degree of involvement and participation by ASEAN member-countries.

The Third ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in December 1969 was marked by a notably optimistic atmosphere, commencing as it did with the announcement of normalization of relations between Malaysia and the Philippines. Adam Malik asserted in his opening statement that: "Whereas since its inception there was pronounced cynicism on ASEAN's potentiality to survive, today there is much acclaim of ASEAN being an effective regional forum .... ASEAN has now embarked from the road of programming into that of realization." Thanat Khoman found it deeply gratifying that "after what looked ominously like a storm which threatened to sweep away all that has been painstakingly achieved in the field of regional cooperation, brighter atmosphere has returned to prevail in the Southeast Asian skies." At the same time he cautioned that: "Our responsibility ... is not discharged by an announcement of unanimous agreements and recommendations. We may make speeches but our performance will speak far more eloquently than our words." Other ministers stressed the need for realism in assessing new proposals. Rajaratnam thought it would be better if ASEAN's projects and policies were designed "not with a view to impressing the world but directed single-mindedly towards solving pressing problems of social and economic development .... This approach may not be very exciting but
this may be a good thing for a region where for long politics and economics were used primarily as ingredients for composing exciting political melodramas."

The joint communique of the Third Ministerial Meeting gave approval to 98 recommendations contained in the Report of the Standing Committee, covering proposals for cooperation in the fields of commerce and industry, tourism, shipping, civil aviation, air traffic services and meteorology, transportation and communications, food supply and production including fisheries, mass media and cultural activities and finance. A close study of the recommendations reveals, however, that many did not involve substantive joint projects.\(^5\). Besides approving these recommendations the ministers also signed two agreements at the conclusion of their meeting - one for the establishment of an ASEAN Fund and another for the promotion of mass media and cultural activities. Despite these modest accomplishments, the media appeared to share the optimism of ASEAN members following the Cameron Highlands meeting. The Far Eastern Economic Review concluded that "there is no question that those participating in ASEAN activities are beginning to think more in regional terms", and that "it seems more likely that ASEAN has a modest but constructive future as the first effective organization for promoting regional economic cooperation in Asia."\(^6\).

The Third Ministerial Meeting also endorsed the commencement of the United Nations economic study by ECAFE. The ASEAN Advisory Committee met in March 1970 to approve the guidelines for the study, and in November 1970 to discuss the
first progress report submitted by the study team entitled "A Preliminary Assessment of Cooperation Possibilities and Policy Instruments for ASEAN". This 300 page report apparently provoked considerable discussion. It focussed especially on "cooperation possibilities on suggested major industries" and "the scope and possible techniques for ASEAN trade expansion".

At the Fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in March 1971 Tun Ismail observed that the projects that had been or were being implemented represented cooperation based on "the lowest common factor" and were "not likely to startle the senses nor stir the imagination". Thanat Khoman also acknowledged at this time that ASEAN's activities might not look very impressive to outside observers. He cited a judgement in a study made by the Research Analysis Corporation in the United States that: "In spite of well designed efforts, there has been little progress in the realm of joint development.".

Such expressions of dissatisfaction with ASEAN's progress were generally counterbalanced, however, by more positive comments. Rajaratnam assailed the "professional pessimists" who he claimed had been proven wrong not only by ASEAN's survival but by its achieving "far more in the way of mutual cooperation than earlier efforts." He observed that ASEAN had "quite correctly" chosen to move forward through a series of small steps. This was no doubt "a tedious way of moving forward" but it would eventually be "a surer and more reliable way of promoting regional cooperation." Consistent with this view, Rajaratnam said that he saw "nothing wrong if
at this juncture of ASEAN's evolution, it is used as an instrument to assist national consolidation and the transformation of ASEAN states into thriving and vigorous entities", rather than concentrating more directly on the promotion of regional interests. Thanat Khoman drew comfort from the more complimentary references in the Research Analysis Corporation study, including the comment that: "ASEAN should be recognized for what it is - a new effort, indeed a first-time effort among nations that feel strongly that cooperation with neighbours is essential for their own development .... Nor should one expect too much from ASEAN in terms of immediate and tangible projects in its early stages and overlook its real if immeasurable, potential and value."

The joint communique of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting stated that the ministers had approved a Report from the Standing Committee containing 121 recommendations. The communique also noted that the ministers had reviewed the preliminary report of the UN Study Team on ASEAN Economic Cooperation and directed that sectoral studies be pursued, and that they had signed a Multilateral Agreement on Commercial Rights of Non-Scheduled Air Services Among the ASEAN Nations. Media reaction was more subdued than it had been at the previous ministerial meeting. A Straits Times editorial commented: "There has been progress, of course, but it is less than spectacular, being mostly preparatory .... ASEAN has tremendous potentiality, but the job has barely begun." The Fourth Ministerial Meeting typified the broad acceptance up to this time by ASEAN's members, except perhaps the Philippines, of a cautious and realistic approach to the
Association's development. Members showed themselves willing to devote increasing time and energy to cooperative efforts, but they remained realistically aware of the many constraints and obstacles facing more ambitious proposals. This was especially true of Singapore. Finance Minister Goh Keng Swee likened himself to "an archbishop in medieval Europe who publicly questioned the doctrine of immaculate conception" when he asserted that regional economic cooperation would face increasing rather than diminishing obstacles. Given the importance to ASEAN countries of trade with the developed countries, he believed that this should be the focus of concern rather than intra-regional trade.  

Reappraisal

Although many of ASEAN's official spokesmen continued to advocate a step-by-step approach, by the early 1970s there were an increasing number who began to challenge this view. At the same time as ASEAN was beginning to play a useful role in encouraging political cooperation between its members, the failure of the organization to acquire momentum in its allegedly primary role as an association for economic, social and cultural cooperation was becoming a matter of growing embarrassment and concern.

A Thai academic, Dr Somsakdi Xuto, produced at this time an important study of regionalism in Southeast Asia which is notable for its insightful and constructive observations about ASEAN's goals and activities. He noted that a serious drawback of Southeast Asian regionalism was its "apparent
inability to produce concrete results", which he thought were badly needed if regionalism was not to deteriorate into "a mere good idea of no practical consequence". He asserted that Southeast Asian regionalism was a crossroads. Its critics, he noted, "raised doubt about the practicality of the whole movement", while its supporters tended to be over-optimistic and to exaggerate its significance and achievement. Somsakdi suggested that the widely-held belief that regionalism was inevitable had led to regionalism being practiced "for its own sake without proper regard being paid to devising a realistic and appropriate goal and strategy for ensuring its effectiveness". The result was "a kind of directionless drift".

On the positive side, Somsakdi pointed to the increasing number of "regional cooperation practitioners" in Southeast Asia who were committed to the idea of regional cooperation and had established friendly relations with their counterparts in other countries. Results had also been achieved in the area of planning and preparation and other "behind the scenes" activities. Yet he considered that these positive elements were insufficient to convince any but a minority group of dedicated and convinced elites. The general impression of interested outsiders was of "a great deal of movement without actually moving". Somsakdi emphasized that over-optimism and lack of realism had to be avoided. He counselled ASEAN against pursuing grandiose schemes involving unacceptably large resources and outlay. He recommended instead the pursuit of low-risk, low-cost projects that would produce an accumulation of various small and seemingly insignificant results rather
than a few outstanding ones.

Another non-government commentator, a Malaysian economist writing in January 1972, expressed rather similar views. He noted that almost all leaders of ASEAN countries were aware of the theoretical advantages of regional economic cooperation and that they were "at the fore in extolling the virtues of regionalism and in making pious pronouncements". But when it came to implementation some of these leaders tended to adopt "a short-sighted parochial view based mainly on national and political considerations".

Such views reflected a growing feeling amongst those Southeast Asians who took an interest in ASEAN that something needed to be done to stimulate the Association's progress, particularly in the economic sphere. Remarks made by ASEAN foreign ministers at their Fifth Ministerial Meeting in Singapore in April 1972 indicated that they were becoming increasingly aware of this problem. There was a corresponding decline in the former emphasis on the merits of gradualism. The tone was set by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in his opening address. He pointed out that in ASEAN's first year it had produced a total of 102 recommendations none of which were implemented; in its second year 161 recommendations, of which 10 were implemented; in its third year, 207 recommendations, of which 22 were implemented; and in its fourth year 215 recommendations of which 48 were implemented. He said that he mentioned these figures "not to denigrate what has been achieved, but rather to remind us of what more needs to be done".
Another vocal advocate of a reappraisal of ASEAN's future activities was Tun Ismail. He felt that it was an appropriate time for ASEAN to take stock of its successes and failures. Adam Malik also spoke of the "urgent necessity" for an overall review in order to impart an "accelerated impetus" to ASEAN's activities. The outcome of such remarks by delegates was a statement in the joint communiqué that "in view of the anticipated increase in the cooperation among the ASEAN countries", the ministers had agreed to "an overall review of ASEAN's organizational and procedural framework" and the formulation of "new guidelines and criteria of priorities". Delegates to the Sixth Ministerial Meeting in April 1973 also urged greater commitment to the achievement of ASEAN's objectives.

The reasons which lay behind the growing feeling amongst ASEAN spokesmen that the Association urgently needed to reappraise its role and to place more emphasis on the achievement of tangible results were usually not identified specifically, but there appeared to be several contributing factors. Developments in the political sphere, especially the need to respond to the changing nature of major power involvement in the region and events in Indochina, were probably foremost in their minds. Some outside commentators wrote favourably of ASEAN's modest accomplishments and apparent durability, but without continued momentum regional supporters of ASEAN probably feared that the Association's stature and credibility would begin to suffer. The international economic environment was also evidently a
factor.

The UN Study

ASEAN's reappraisal of its economic role coincided with, and was probably in part stimulated by, the economic study being conducted by ECAFE. The ASEAN Advisory Committee held its fifth meeting in Denpasar, Bali, in July 1972 and reportedly considered the final report of the Study Team. To encourage industrial development, the Report recommended three "separate but inter-related" techniques. Firstly, it advocated selective trade liberalization, negotiated on an item-by-item basis and applied on a progressively wider scale. Secondly, a system of industrial complementarity agreements was recommended which would allow individual ASEAN countries to specialize on different products or components within a particular industry. The third and most ambitious technique recommended was a system of "package deal" agreements negotiated between ASEAN governments for the establishment of large-scale industrial projects and their allocation to particular ASEAN countries, together with agreements to provide their products with the necessary tariff or other assistance to make them viable. This technique was deemed most suited to industries not hitherto established in ASEAN and which could only be efficiently established if provided with a regional market.

The Report observed that the agricultural sectors of all ASEAN economies except Singapore were of great importance, but the problems were considered to be mainly national problems.
Nevertheless, ASEAN cooperation was recommended in several areas. Cooperation was also suggested in shipping, marketing and forest management. Other forms of cooperation were recommended to pool resources, avoid unnecessary duplication, establish common standards, exchange information and generally to coordinate and harmonize policies. The need for improved intra-ASEAN transport services was highlighted. The expansion of ASEAN economic cooperation was considered likely to create needs and opportunities for ASEAN cooperation in the provision of financial, monetary and insurance services that would meet joint requirements.

Mixed Response

Given the very ambitious scope of the UN Team's recommendations, it is perhaps not surprising that they met with a mixed response from ASEAN's members. Even though members favoured a reappraisal of their cooperative activities, and renewed vigour in their implementation, they appeared for the most part to be unready to go as far as the UN Study had recommended. The communique of the Fifth Ministerial Meeting urged ASEAN governments to study the team's recommendations "with a view to identifying those areas in which ASEAN could cooperate more fruitfully." The Sixth Ministerial Meeting recommended that "appropriate steps should now be taken by ASEAN to implement those recommendations of the UN Study Team which can be agreed upon". It appeared, however, that few of these recommendations could at that stage be agreed upon. The only specific step towards greater regional economic cooperation agreed at the meeting was the
endorsement of the drawing up of "appropriate strategies for the ASEAN development decade". Nevertheless, at the conclusion of the meeting delegates expressed satisfaction with the progress of ASEAN up to that point. Rajaratnam recalled that when it was formed six years previously ASEAN had been "nebulous and we were confused about objectives", but now it was a going concern. Romulo felt that ASEAN had demonstrated "that unity and cohesiveness which are essential to any regional cooperation worthy of the name" and that the Association bristled with new confidence and new hope "if not a new purpose".

External observers found these signs of apparent complacency amongst ASEAN leaders disappointing. One commentator noted that the Sixth Ministerial Meeting had been "typical of this oft-meeting group" in that "a great deal of bonhomie" had been mixed with "considerable vagueness on issues", leaving ASEAN-watchers uncertain as to whether the Association was going ahead or staying still. He noted also that there had been the "almost traditional" references to greater efforts and to doing better, but too little had been done "to bridge the gap between platitudinous speeches, bland communiques and the ongoing ASEAN reality". Another observer referred to "red faces" in ASEAN over the UN Report since no-one knew what to do with it. The Report had been greeted with "approving generalities but a nervous absence of commitment".

Outside Influences
It was not long, however, before external political and economic developments began again to force the pace of ASEAN's development. In a speech in January 1974, Lee Kuan Yew forecast that "it may well be that the changes which have taken place in East and Southeast Asia will give added impetus to ASEAN's search for more substantial economic progress". Such sentiments found fuller expression at the Seventh Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta in May 1974. In his opening address President Suharto observed that despite its achievements ASEAN was still "a very fragile reality". In the meantime, "time may be running out on us in facing the new tremendously complex and far-reaching problems with which the world, and especially developing countries, are being confronted at present". He saw ASEAN as entering the second stage of cooperation in which the time had come for more efforts to be devoted to "the actual realization of economic cooperation". He referred in particular to cooperation in the industrial field and the setting up of ASEAN industrial projects. Adam Malik told the meeting that although ASEAN was gaining in international stature it must not lapse into complacency. Despite the emergence of detente, he perceived "an alarming chain-reaction of new crises enveloping the world". He referred specifically to the adverse trend of events in Indochina.

The Indonesian delegation's views received strong backing from Rajaratnam. The initial thrust of his remarks was complimentary about ASEAN's achievements to date. He was convinced that ASEAN was "an established organization" that had gone "past the point of no return". It could not be
dismantled "without each of us getting into very serious economic and political difficulties". In spite of these positive aspects, however, he emphasized the challenges that lay ahead. He declared that "new troubles and new fears, whose nature and causes leave the experts baffled, avalanche upon us". He suggested that ASEAN should give more serious consideration than it had previously to the report of the UN Study Team, which he described as "the blueprint" for economic cooperation in ASEAN. Although ASEAN Permanent Committees had been studying the report he felt their work would remain "sterile and confused" unless the various governments indicated "in a positive way" that they were prepared to venture into the more difficult areas of economic cooperation. Rajaratnam asserted that the three main techniques for economic cooperation recommended by the UN Team were the "basic ingredients of regionalism" without which it would remain "a shadow without substance". If ASEAN did not progress in economic cooperation it would be "difficult for others to regard ASEAN seriously".

The communique noted that the ministers had agreed that ASEAN should embark on "a more substantial and meaningful cooperation". It appeared, however, that Rajaratnam's enthusiasm had swayed them only a little, since they confined themselves to observing that the techniques of cooperation which he advocated "might be useful techniques for ASEAN cooperation".

During the following year little further progress was made towards adoption of any of the major recommendations of
the UN Report. One interesting development, though it produced few immediate results, was an unprecedented joint meeting of the ASEAN Standing Committee, the ASEAN Secretaries-General and the ASEAN Permanent Committee Chairmen in Kuala Lumpur in October 1974 to consider proposals for increased organizational efficiency. In his opening address Tun Razak noted that it was "all very well" to have so many committees covering ostensibly so many forms of cooperation, to be meeting one committee after another almost continually throughout the year and to be submitting hundreds of recommendations to the annual ministerial meeting - but he warned of the danger that ASEAN might become the special preoccupation and concern of only the officials in the respective National Secretariats and others who were directly involved in the day-to-day running of ASEAN.

At officials level, some modest progress was made during the year in considering the new techniques for economic cooperation recommended by the UN Report. The Working Group on Selective Trade Liberalization held its second meeting. The Working Group on Industrial Complementation held its first two meetings. The meeting of the Permanent Committee on Commerce and Industry in December 1974 reportedly endorsed a program of trade liberalization and industrial complementation.\textsuperscript{19} Proposals for ASEAN industrial projects were also discussed during this period. Another interesting development was the revelation by Indonesia's ASEAN National Secretariat of details of Indonesia's proposal for an ASEAN Development Strategy. The Secretariat stated that Indonesia had provided a "working concept" of the Strategy which it said was meant to
complement and give content to President Marcos's proposal for an ASEAN Development Decade.20.

On the eve of ASEAN's Eighth Ministerial Meeting in May 1975 a Western journalist commented that the UN Report had been "gathering dust amid lackadaisical bureaucratic discussion".21. In the aftermath of the fall of Saigon, the meeting appeared preoccupied with political matters. Adam Malik was the only head of delegation to comment publicly at any length on ASEAN's economic progress. He urged no further delay in taking a decision on the recommendations of the UN Report and in coordinating development plans. That Malik's views had some support is indicated by the more determined tone of those portions of the joint communiqué that dealt with economic cooperation. The ministers endorsed the establishment of an "ASEAN Trade Negotiation Body" to set up an ASEAN system of trade preferences and urged that trade negotiations be intensified and expanded to cover all possible products. The meeting adopted "guidelines" for ASEAN industrial complementation and also urged "an early study" on the possibility of adopting the package deal approach for the allocation of joint industrial projects to member-countries.

Though the connection was not drawn publicly, it is highly likely that the incentive behind this new determination to promote economic cooperation lay in the belief that it was politically necessary, following the fall of South Vietnam, to bolster ASEAN's credibility by demonstrating its ability to make tangible progress in this area. Rajaratnam reportedly expressed the hope that out of the current sense of crisis
would come the "water" capable of laying the "dust" that continued to gather on ASEAN schemes for cooperation in industry and trade.22.

Other Areas of Cooperation

Although ASEAN was slow to respond to the major recommendations of the UN Report concerning cooperation in the fields of trade and industry, the Association could point to modest achievements and progress in several other areas of economic cooperation by the time of the Eighth Ministerial Meeting. One proposal of long standing, which had been endorsed by the UN Report, was for the creation of an ASEAN secretariat. The joint communique of the Fifth Ministerial Meeting agreed that there should be "consideration of the need and desirability of a central secretariat". The joint communique of the Sixth Ministerial Meeting recorded that ministers had decided that "the time had come" for establishment of such a secretariat.

The question of the location of the secretariat produced some delicate diplomacy amongst ASEAN's members. Both Indonesia and the Philippines evidently wished to host it. The Philippines reportedly was unwilling to give up its offer that the secretariat be located in Manila and offered very generous financial inducements, including construction of a 14-storey building.23. But the Philippines was obliged to give way. Romulo recommended withdrawal of the Philippines' offer given the strength of Indonesian feelings that Jakarta should be the site, and noted that President Marcos had agreed.24. Little
progress was made, however, in deciding the structure of the secretariat. A draft agreement on the establishment of a secretariat was reportedly prepared.

In other areas of cooperation progress was modest, but ASEAN's activities in these areas covered an increasingly wide field and, in aggregate, began to have a significant impact in member-countries. In such areas as finance, shipping and tourism some useful progress was made. Achievements in other fields included: the signing at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of an Agreement for the Facilitation of Search for Aircraft in Distress and Rescue of Survivors of Aircraft Accidents; the conclusion of an Agreement for the Promotion of Cooperation in Mass Media and Cultural Activities; publication of an ASEAN Journal; establishment of an ASEAN products display centre in Bangkok; and the signing at the Eighth Ministerial Meeting of an Agreement for the Facilitation of Search for Ships in Distress and Rescue of Survivors of Ships Accidents. An increasing number of special interest groups were also established including the Confederation of ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (established in 1972), the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists, the ASEAN Motion Picture Producers Association, and the Association of ASEAN Museum Experts. In some areas tangible achievements were not spectacular but ASEAN's cooperative activities became increasingly diversified. Personal contacts were established and information exchanged amongst a wide variety of groups, from artists to drug enforcers. A meeting of ASEAN parliamentarians in Jakarta in January 1975 set up a Working Committee to discuss the formation of an ASEAN Parliamentary Union. 25.
The first meeting of ASEAN Labour Ministers was held in Jakarta in April 1975 and according to the communique of the Eighth Ministerial Meeting "consultations" were held amongst Ministers of Trade. Some progress was thus beginning to be made towards what Indonesia's Ali Moertopo referred to as the "socialization" of ASEAN.26.

* * *

Whether ASEAN's record of economic achievement as described above is considered impressive or disappointing is a matter of perspective, but it is clear that while progress may often have seemed leisurely, and the results meagre, a great deal of spadework was done during this period without which the accomplishments of the following few years, which drew much greater international acclaim, would have been impossible. This record also gives support to those who, like Rajaratnam, argued that ASEAN had become more than just a political convenience. Rajaratnam acknowledged that ASEAN was more involved in political questions than it had been, but he drew attention to the fact that if ASEAN's official documents were examined it would be seen that ASEAN committee meetings were held at the rate of two or three a month and none of them were concerned with political questions. "Naturally", he observed, "the foreign ministers meeting for three days tend to discuss politics as well as economics. But in between I think most of the activities, 95 percent of the activities of ASEAN, are not political."
FOOTNOTES

1. Straits Times. 9 September 1967.


4. Straits Times. 10 April 1968.

5. These recommendations were not usually circulated publicly. However, a list of the recommendations submitted to the Third Ministerial Meeting is contained in Pace, op cit., pp.62-83.


8. Pace, op cit.


17. ibid., 18 June 1973, p.50.


23. Indonesian Times, 7 May 1974; Hans H. Indorf, ASEAN;


CHAPTER 4

SECURITY CONCERNS

The rapid pace of events in Indochina, leading to the fall of Saigon in April 1975, provided a major stimulus to ASEAN's development. In the political sphere, it required new foreign policy responses; and in the economic sphere, added urgency to ASEAN's endeavours. The demise of the non-communist regimes in Indochina also gave rise to questions concerning the relevance of ASEAN to the defence and security interests of its members.

Security issues had been considered at the time of ASEAN's formation, with the consensus view, as already noted, being in favour of a low profile for the organisation in this area. These issues had continued to be discussed intermittently during ASEAN's early years. In particular, the utility of military alliances with external powers continued to be debated.

One particular argument against military alliances with external powers was heard with increasing frequency; namely, that the major threat to the security of ASEAN countries was in any case from internal insurgency and subversion and that external support was not useful against such a threat (as the experience of the Vietnam war was believed to have shown), and was likely in fact to be detrimental. Adam Malik, for
example, asserted that the main threat to the region was from subversion and insurgency, against which he believed the most effective defence was the development of national resilience.¹ Not all ASEAN leaders were convinced by such arguments, however, or by the view that military alliances should be dismantled to make way for neutralization. Few policy-makers in Thailand and the Philippines seriously advocated the dismantling of their alliances with the U.S. Even Malaysia acknowledged that "in the face of external encroachment the support and assistance of friendly powers should be useful - and indeed often crucial".²

But while they may have differed about the merits of traditional military alliances, it is especially noteworthy that during the Association's early years ASEAN's leaders, with very few exceptions, continued to reject a possible alternative means to seek to ensure their security, namely by placing primary reliance on the formation of a military alliance amongst themselves - either within ASEAN or outside its auspices. There seemed to be a widespread feeling that ASEAN itself was best suited to quite different purposes. Allegations to the contrary were often made. Commentators frequently asserted that Indonesian military leaders, especially, were in favour of a regional military alliance. However there was, in most cases, little convincing evidence of this. As at the time of ASEAN's formation, speculation was fed by exaggerated press reporting. ASEAN spokesmen would occasionally acknowledge that the Association had a role to play in the security field, meaning more often than not simply that by encouraging economic development and political
cooperation ASEAN helped to promote regional stability. These comments were very likely to be interpreted, however, as suggestions that ASEAN was contemplating the formation of a military alliance or pact between its members. In January 1971, General Panggabean was reported to have told Indonesia's national defence institute: "More than just agreeing to it. I will arrange for a joint defence of ASEAN countries". But he proceeded to refer only to exchanges of visits and students, and possibly of arms.\textsuperscript{3} Tun Ismail explained that the security that ASEAN gave the region was "in the form of stability which is created by good neighbourly relations and in the form of economic and social progress".\textsuperscript{4} Rajaratnam argued that ASEAN should remain "an organization solely to promote economic cooperation in the region" because the problems of economic cooperation would "strain ASEAN to its fullest for many years to come. To burden it with ideological and security problems is to invite its breakdown."

On more pragmatic grounds, Somsakdi Xuto also concluded that there were many reasons against the introduction of a Southeast Asian regional security arrangement. He believed that the type of security cooperation that was "practical and relevant" was bilateral cooperation.\textsuperscript{5} This view, prevalent from the time of ASEAN's formation, apparently continued to be accepted by most of ASEAN's participants. Tun Razak instanced Malaysia's border cooperation with Thailand and Indonesia, and its cooperation with Singapore in the Five Power arrangements, as examples of a "criss-crossing network of bilateral links" that would when extended contribute to "an atmosphere of regional understanding and harmony".\textsuperscript{6}
While the general tenor of remarks by the majority of ASEAN's leaders during this period was thus firmly against multilateral security cooperation amongst the non-communist countries of the region, there were occasional exceptions to this rule. These exceptions mostly still fell short of advocacy of a military alliance. Nevertheless, in some instances some ASEAN participants did appear to have had in mind a somewhat more substantial role for ASEAN in military affairs. A few individuals appeared to keep an open mind about the possibility of formal multilateral security arrangements, at least for the future. Thanat Khoman commented that instead of having a regional military alliance the tendency seemed to be towards "separate interlocked security arrangements". But he added: "They may ultimately be integrated. We don't know. It may be three, five or ten years". In 1972 Jose Ingles, then Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, reportedly stated that the Philippines would propose military cooperation amongst ASEAN members, and that this would be "better than SEATO" because it would exclude outside powers. Ingles said that the proposal would be made at the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in Manila in July 1972 and that the initial stage would consist of joint patrols and training and intelligence exchanges. Thailand's Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn also seemed to favour security cooperation in ASEAN. In his opening address to the Sixth Ministerial Meeting Thanom urged ASEAN members to "collectively tackle the problems of security" in the region. Reports such as these suggest that proposals for an ASEAN role in security cooperation were discussed privately at ASEAN meetings during the Association's
early years, although it also seems clear that opposition to ASEAN acquiring a role in this area continued to prevail.

Nevertheless, commentators in ASEAN countries and elsewhere fuelled continuing speculation about the prospects for multilateral military cooperation within ASEAN. Singapore's Lau Teik Soon thought that the Association could become "the core of a regional security organization in the future". He claimed that Indonesia had already considered ASEAN in this light. While a formal military pact might not emerge, Lau claimed that ASEAN members had "tacitly agreed on the need for closer cooperation in defence matters" and that "an ASEAN role in the defence of the area may no longer be questioned in future." 10. Indonesia's Sutomo Roesnadi alleged that it could not be denied that "certain groups exist in every ASEAN member country which want to convert ASEAN into a military alliance." 11. Within the region there were some advocates of quite ambitious schemes for military cooperation. K.K.Nair argued that since most Southeast Asian countries had the military capability "to engage only in very limited wars, regionally centred arrangements with greater resources to fall back upon become all the more imperative." Lieutenant-Colonel Syed Abdul Aziz favoured the creation of "a combined force" amongst ASEAN countries for the maintenance of the stability of the region. 12. Amongst outside academic commentators, Justus van der Kroef alleged that there remained "considerable interest in ASEAN military circles in moving toward a common defence 'framework'". He claimed that the term "regional resilience" was increasingly serving Indonesian officials as "a code for some form of non-threatening, low-profile
collective security and defense". Bernard Gordon claimed that "some in Djakarta" hoped to see defence included, "even formally", as an ASEAN subject. He thought that Indonesia, with some support from Malaysia and Singapore, was likely to initiate formal defence cooperation in areas such as training, intelligence and agreements on equipment commonality.

Leftist academics in the West asserted that the groundwork for the "militarization" of ASEAN was being carefully and surreptitiously laid.

The subject of ASEAN's potential role in security cooperation was dealt with at some length in a conference paper presented in March 1975 by Ghazali Shafie. Ghazali began by stressing that ASEAN was "merely an economic-cultural grouping" that was "never intended by its founders to be a security or even security-oriented grouping." He asserted that "the security bonus that ASEAN derives through the collective economic advancement of its members, it must be borne in mind, constitutes a peripheral, not the central concern of the Organization." While ASEAN had a role to play in encouraging "regional resilience", Ghazali insisted that ASEAN members must "remain mindful of the pitfall of transforming the Organization into a collective security alliance." Its strength lay in its "non-ideological, non-military and non-antagonistic character". If this changed, he argued, its "acceptability quotient" regionally and internationally would decrease substantially.

Vietnam
After the fall of Saigon, security issues acquired renewed prominence for ASEAN's members, leading them to re-evaluate the primary objectives of the Association. A range of views on Indochina issues was reflected amongst ASEAN delegates to the Eighth Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 13-15 May 1975. Attention focussed initially on the question of the most appropriate diplomatic response and on the possibility, now opened at least theoretically, of expanding ASEAN's membership.

The most enthusiastic advocate of closer ties between ASEAN and the countries of Indochina was Malaysia's Tun Razak, now Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Following the communist victories in Cambodia and South Vietnam a short time before the meeting, Razak was reported to favour a formal invitation to the Indochina countries and Burma to join ASEAN. He noted that at the time of its birth ASEAN had envisaged "the creation of a family of nations in Southeast Asia which would embrace the whole region" and that ASEAN's growth had been nurtured with care to maintain its non-military character. With the end of the war in Indochina, Razak saw "the opportunity to extend the scope of regional cooperation throughout Southeast Asia". He acknowledged that the way ahead to "an expanded ASEAN" would be difficult, but expressed the "confident hope" that the "sense of history" of ASEAN members would guide them to the right choices so that the dream of a "Community of Southeast Asia" could at last be fulfilled. The new Thai government of Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj also appeared to favour a conciliatory ASEAN policy towards Vietnam. Prior to his departure from Bangkok for the
ministerial meeting. Foreign Minister Chatichai reportedly stated that it was time for ASEAN to include North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos and Burma in the Association now that peace had come to the region.18.

The chief advocate of a more restrained response to events in Indochina appeared to be Singapore. Rajaratnam urged that: "ASEAN should not give the impression that it is disconcerted by the emergence of communist or communist-influenced regimes in Indochina. Nor should we give the impression that we are prepared at any cost to readjust ourselves to win the favour of the Indochina states." He believed that: "We should not be the only one wooing the new regimes in Indochina; they should be wooing us too. They must feel that we are as important to their well-being as we think they could be to our well-being." He added later that if ASEAN was made "a going concern", it would not need to "go around touting" for new members. It was reported at the time that these remarks by Rajaratnam were commended by "ASEAN political circles" in Kuala Lumpur, because he had been bold enough to say what some others had wanted to say but did not. There may also have been some sympathy for Rajaratnam's views amongst the Indonesian delegation. In his remarks to the meeting Malik advised that for ASEAN's relationship with the rest of Southeast Asia to be genuinely equal it must be based on strength - "not the strength of arms or of armed alliances, but that of ASEAN's identity and common purpose, of its internal cohesion and functional efficiency". Like Rajaratnam, Malik appeared to believe that the first goal should be to strengthen ASEAN within its existing membership.
The press statement of the Eighth Ministerial Meeting indicated a victory for those in ASEAN who favoured a wait-and-see attitude towards Vietnam. ASEAN members professed their readiness to enter into friendly and harmonious relations with the countries of Indochina and reiterated their willingness to cooperate with them in "the common task" of national development on the basis of adherence to the five Bandung principles of peaceful coexistence. Along with such general expressions of goodwill, however, the statement emphasized that ASEAN members were "convinced" that the Association would "continue to offer the logical framework for establishing peace, progress and stability in the region". They reaffirmed their determination to further strengthen ASEAN by intensifying and broadening cooperation amongst existing member-states. Despite Malaysia's advocacy, no mention was made of a desire to expand ASEAN's membership.

The concerns of ASEAN's members extended beyond the need to consider the most appropriate overt response to Vietnam's victories in Indochina, however. There can be no doubt, whatever their public statements, that they feared that the end of the Indochina war could lead to an increased threat to their security. Commentators spoke of an atmosphere of considerable nervousness in ASEAN capitals following the communist victories. Rajaratnam later remarked that: "Overnight the assumptions on which their confidence and political vision were based melted away. There was confusion and uncertainty as to how they should react." Prior to the end of the war Singaporean leaders had been the most
outspoken about the dangerous consequences that might follow an American defeat. Lee Kuan Yew told the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Ottawa in 1973 that: "A collapse in Indochina will bring a threat of guerilla insurgency to our doorstep by way of Thailand and West Malaysia."20. Such fears were more widely expressed after Vietnam ousted the United States. An Indonesian commentator asserted that: "Given the amount of military equipment now in the hands of the Vietnamese communists, and their unparalleled experience in guerilla warfare, the possibility of Vietnam providing military assistance, in the form of both training and materiel, to communist groups outside its borders must be given serious consideration."21. President Suharto agreed that the Indochinese communists had acquired so much modern weaponry surplus to their own needs "it is only likely that they will pass them on."22. Malaysian concerns were more than academic since they coincided with a conspicuous upsurge in communist insurgent activity, including the spectacular blowing up on 26 August 1975 of the war memorial to those killed in the Malayan Emergency. Tun Razak reportedly told his military commanders that it was necessary to review Malaysia's defences in view of the communist successes in Indochina.23. Thailand publicized evidence of what it claimed to be large-scale Vietnamese support for communist insurgents in Thailand.24. Romulo speculated that the partial withdrawal of the United States from Asia was "bound to create a vacuum which, as in nature which abhors a void, others will doubtless try to fill".

At the Eighth Ministerial Meeting delegates reportedly
had private talks about the captured or abandoned U.S. weapons in South Vietnam and Cambodia, variously estimated to be worth between two and five billion U.S. dollars and including over 1.5 million rifles and enormous amounts of ammunition.²⁵.

What is more significant, however, is that as early as this meeting ASEAN spokesmen began, whatever their fears about the dramatic developments in Indochina, to caution concurrently against an over-reaction, and to stress the need for a carefully considered response on the part of ASEAN. At a more fundamental level, it was apparently concluded that the time had come for a re-examination of ASEAN's overall objectives and purposes, and of its long-term approach towards its relations with the new communist regimes in Indochina. Romulo counselled ASEAN against a reaction that would "cause demoralization of the kind which could lead to panic solutions .... We must move, though with prudence and caution, to take stock of ourselves and be absolutely clear in our minds what we want ASEAN to be".

Such sentiments, combined with an optimistic appraisal of Vietnam's intentions and of the internal strengths of ASEAN countries, led some ASEAN leaders to play down the threat from Indochina. For example, Rajaratnam said that he had been "reading the United States' comments suggesting that the ASEAN countries are alarmed, confused and in disarray over the emergence of the new regimes in Indochina; that it is only a matter of time before this revolutionary wave sweeps over the rest of Southeast Asia, especially the ASEAN countries." He thought this was "a melodrama because Indochina is not all of Southeast Asia. The ASEAN countries collectively are more
populous than the rest of Indochina. The ASEAN countries are economically more dynamic than the rest of Indochina. The ASEAN countries, because we have been working together for eight years, are more integrated as a regional unit than the Indochinese states". Hence he thought that ASEAN should not "give the impression that we are alarmed, that we are weak .... As an ASEAN group, we are definitely a strong group. So, I for one, do not believe that ASEAN will fall victim to an aggressive Indochina." Tun Razak also noted that in the wake of developments in Indochina "some people have expressed apprehension and pessimism concerning the future of Southeast Asia." But he asserted that most of this had come from outside the region. While he thought it natural that there would be "anxiety and uncertainty", and acknowledged that there could be "pitfalls", he saw the end of the Indochina conflict as bringing the opportunity for "establishing real and durable peace in Southeast Asia".26. Razak was supported by Ghazali Shafie, who asserted that: "In theoretical as well as in practical/empirical terms, the domino theory has little relevance to the states of Southeast Asia. The collapse of American policy in Indochina does not determine the internal order of these states, unless their internal order happens to be a function of American support".27.

This latter comment re-introduces the viewpoint that found continuing support amongst ASEAN spokesmen and other commentators, namely the notion encountered earlier that the primary threat to the security of ASEAN countries was internal. After the fall of Saigon, ASEAN spokesmen stressed this viewpoint repeatedly. It is fair to say that it came to
represent an ASEAN consensus or dogma. One week after the fall of Saigon Lee Kuan Yew remarked that to counter the threat from communist insurgency "each ASEAN country has to ensure sufficient economic progress and social justice that will make insurgency unattractive and unlikely to succeed. Military defence against externally-aided insurgency is only worth the effort and the cost if economic and social development take place." In his address to the Eighth Ministerial Meeting Romulo stated the Philippines' view that the greatest danger facing Southeast Asia was not overt aggression but subversion and infiltration which required a strengthening of ASEAN societies. Rajaratnam concurred asserting that: "If there is any adverse consequence as a result of what is happening in Indochina, it will not be external aggression by Hanoi or Khmer Rouge or the Pathet Lao but by our inability to contain our domestic communists. So the threat is not external but internal ... the way to fight indigenous communists is through appropriate economic, political and social policies within our own countries." Another unspoken factor that seems likely to have influenced ASEAN members, and their assessment of possible external threats, is the assessment that evolved amongst them in the weeks and months following the fall of Saigon that despite its humiliating defeat and domestic disillusionment, the United States was nevertheless likely to remain an important influence on the security of Southeast Asia, and to continue to play the role of ultimate guarantor against external aggression.

Consistent with their expressions of confidence that there was little danger of external aggression, ASEAN members
continued, after the Eighth Ministerial Meeting, to lay primary emphasis in their public statements on their desire for improved relations with the states of Indochina. ASEAN's friendly stance seemed initially to be reciprocated by Vietnam. An article released on 12 June 1975, although describing ASEAN as having been formed as a disguised military alliance, noted that the organization had recently talked about peace, cooperation and neutrality in the region and pointed to "positive signs indicating the intention by Southeast Asian nations at this historic turning point to embark on a path consistent with their aspiration and interests and with the world peoples' struggle against aggressive U.S. imperialism for the defence of peace." However, Vietnam's disappointment with developments in its bilateral relations with Thailand apparently led to a hardening of its views. Vietnamese media attacks on Thailand and other ASEAN countries became frequent. In spite of this, ASEAN's leaders continued to hold to a conciliatory stance. Tun Razak, in October, thought Vietnam should be given more time. Admitting that it was "perhaps too early to talk of the Indochina countries participating in ASEAN", Razak thought that it was "essential that the door be left open". In November 1975 Lee Kuan Yew was able to comment, accurately, that all ASEAN countries, "with varying degrees of speed, warmth and intensity", had made it clear that they wanted constructive and non-antagonistic relations with the countries of Indochina. In light of Vietnam's increasingly critical attitude, however, many ASEAN leaders probably were drawn towards the point of view expressed earlier by Singapore, namely that ASEAN should move with circumspection until
Vietnam showed an inclination to match ASEAN's efforts to strengthen regional cooperation. From this time ASEAN's members focussed on the development of the Association within its existing membership. Those who had hoped earlier for the inclusion of Vietnam adjusted realistically to the majority opinion that this was not achievable in the foreseeable future.

**Vietnam and Security**

The disappointment of ASEAN's members over Vietnam's response to its diplomatic overtures may have led some of them to examine once more the possibility of a role for the Association as a military alliance or collective security organization. At about the time of the fall of Saigon there appeared to be tentative indications on the part of Indonesia and the Philippines of a revived interest in acknowledging at least some forms of security cooperation as a legitimate part of ASEAN's concerns. Suharto reportedly expressed the view that in the long term ASEAN cooperation should not be confined only to the economic, social and cultural fields, but should take a "still wider form". In his address to the Eighth Ministerial Meeting, Romulo remarked that with regard to ASEAN the Philippines would like to see "expanded cooperation in the promotion of our security." He thought that the time had come to examine "all the options open to us" and to review "in the light of recent developments" if previous steps to protect the well-being and security of members had not been "rendered academic by events". Marcos and Kukrit agreed in July 1975 that cooperation between ASEAN members should be widened to
cover fields "which in the past we have not considered". This was reported to include security.\textsuperscript{34} A meeting between Suharto and Lee Kuan Yew in September 1975 was also accompanied by press speculation about ASEAN security cooperation.\textsuperscript{35} The most dramatic allegations were made in a report by Michael Richardson in which he stated that according to "informed sources" Indonesia had proposed, with the authority of Suharto, that ASEAN governments should "contribute land, air and sea forces for periodic five-nation exercises; work towards greater standardization of their weapons, equipment and logistic procedures; and establish an ASEAN military staff college for training officers". The "sources" said that these proposals were an "amicable compromise" of several put forward by members to boost ASEAN's cooperation in security and defence.\textsuperscript{36} There were further reports in December 1975 that an ASEAN senior officials meeting was studying an Indonesian working paper which envisaged the extension of existing bilateral security cooperation to multilateral cooperation and the coordination of this cooperation by a joint security council. The sources were reportedly pessimistic about the chances of these proposals being adopted.\textsuperscript{37}

Just how much substance there was in these reports cannot be assessed with confidence. It seems credible, however, that they had some substance, even if possibly exaggerated. Certainly Malaysia seemed to find it necessary to place on the public record its opposition to military cooperation within ASEAN and its preference instead for the neutralization proposal. Ghazali Shafie asserted that the key
to national and regional security in Southeast Asia lay "in new political-economic arrangements, not in out-dated and irrelevant cold-war alignments and military pacts."38. Tun Razak again stressed that ASEAN was "non-military, non-ideological and non-antagonistic" in character.39. Malaysia's view was eventually to prevail. Instead of relying on increased security cooperation, ASEAN's leaders sought to bolster ASEAN's collective strength in other ways.

FOOTNOTES


2. Tun Razak in Foreign Affairs Malaysia, June 1971, p.15.


8. Djakarta Times. 22 April 1972; Straits Times. 25 April


17. Straits Times, 3 May 1975.

18. ibid., 13 May 1975.


22. The Age, 10 September 1975.


24. ibid., pp.382-384.


Faced with the new challenge presented by a communist Indochina, a consensus emerged that the principal focus of ASEAN's efforts should be to strengthen the Association itself. Lee Kuan Yew told a press conference in April 1975 that the long-term solution to the region's problems was to increase solidarity within ASEAN "ensuring continuing stability in the area and uninterrupted economic development."¹ This theme was taken up by all delegates to the Eighth Ministerial Meeting. Malaysia's Minister with Special Functions for Foreign Affairs, Tengku Rithauddeen, asserted that "against the new setting and background" the need had become "more pressing for us in ASEAN to continuously give our thought to the structure and efficacy of our organization with the purpose of constructing a well-equipped machinery to implement our objectives". Rajaratnam, with his customary oratory, announced that: "more than ever before I, for one, am thankful that eight years ago we decided to form ASEAN. More than ever before ASEAN is today our shield." He hoped that ASEAN members would regard the events in Indochina "not as a tragedy, not as something terrible which is a threat to us, but as a stimulus to pay more serious and more loyal attention to ASEAN and its objectives."

Behind this rhetoric, a crucial goal that ASEAN leaders
evidently had in mind was to give the Association sufficient international credibility that its views would be considered and respected by other countries both inside and outside the region. Lee Kuan Yew commented in January 1976 that "the strengthening of ties between ASEAN countries would make for more constructive relations with the big powers, and with the other countries in the region." An Indonesian commentator stressed that greater cohesion and cooperation was "a sine qua non if the ASEAN voice on regional affairs affecting their own geographic surroundings, is to be listened to and respected by the interested big and super powers."2.

Given this background, it is understandable that ASEAN's leaders became increasingly receptive to suggestions that an ASEAN summit meeting should be convened, both to stimulate ASEAN's development and to increase its international profile and prestige.

The Road to Bali

It was not until April 1975, just a few weeks before the fall of Saigon to North Vietnamese forces, that the idea of holding a summit meeting attracted real interest. On 14 April Adam Malik is reported to have commented after a meeting with President Suharto that ASEAN was expected to hold a summit meeting to discuss the situation in Indochina. He said that the summit could be held following the ministerial meeting to be held the next month. On 17 April, the day that Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, Marcos called for an ASEAN summit "as early as possible" to discuss the implications of events in
Indochina and other Asian developments. In fact, however, ASEAN moved slowly and cautiously towards holding its first meeting of heads of government, perhaps because some ASEAN leaders wished to avoid an early summit which would be seen as a panic reaction to Vietnam's victory. The least enthusiastic member appeared to be Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew commented later in April that it was "too premature at the moment to hold an emergency ASEAN Summit in connection with the developments in Indochina." At the ministerial meeting in May, however, Malik said he felt a summit would be important because there were "problems vitally affecting all five nations which require discussion at the highest level." Malik added that the ASEAN foreign ministers had agreed to the summit proposal and that the heads of government would decide on the date.

The subject came up again in June and July during visits by Thai Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj to Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore. Kukrit's round of visits appeared to remove any remaining opposition to the holding of a summit, but timing and venue were still uncertain. An additional reason for the continued air of indecision appeared to be that ASEAN members, especially Singapore, were concerned that if a summit was to be held it should be seen clearly to have been successful. Rajaratnam stated publicly that from Singapore's viewpoint ASEAN's first summit "should result in something significant and important emerging" and that it should be preceded by intensive preparations. Singapore would "rather wait three, four, five or six months to achieve
something than just meet for the sake of having the summit." Only this, he said, would show to the world that ASEAN had reached maturity and was prepared to move forward seriously to implement its declared aims and objectives. Similar views were attributed to Malaysia. On 15 September, in Singapore, ASEAN officials commenced the first of many preparatory meetings for the summit. Press reports during the meeting stated that the summit would be held "early next year" and that there was a "strong possibility" that it would be in Bali, or perhaps in Bangkok.

The First Meeting of ASEAN Economic Ministers took place in Jakarta on 26-27 November 1975. In a speech delivered in Singapore on 21 November which was probably intended as an exhortation to the economic ministers, Rajaratnam described ASEAN as an organization with the potentialities of a Rolls Royce, but which so far had achieved no more than a Mini Minor performance. The press release said that ministers had identified various areas (unspeciﬁed) for economic cooperation and had agreed on various speciﬁc recommendations (also unspeciﬁed) for consideration by governments and eventually also by the summit.

Some uncertainty about the summit arose following the death in mid-January 1976 of Tun Razak and the dissolving of the Thai parliament in preparation for elections in March, but after contacts between ASEAN leaders during and following the Razak funeral it was agreed that a postponement was not necessary. Marcos appeared to take a lead in seeking agreement on the summit agenda. After Razak's funeral he visited
Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore. At the end of January the Philippines revealed that the main items on the Bali agenda would be:

- Formation of a permanent ASEAN headquarters and secretariat;
- Formalization of a formula for the peaceful settlement of border disputes among ASEAN members;
- Liberalization of trade and the possibility of making the development of agriculture and industry in the ASEAN countries more complementary;
- Cooperation with respect not only to trade, but also to the imposition of duties and tariffs and to balance of payments problems; and
- Establishment of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality.12.

Marcos claimed that differences over the summit agenda had been settled and that the heads of government had approved the agenda.13. This new mood of decisiveness met with favourable comment. One journalist observed that ASEAN had "energised itself" and had acquired "a long-desired but little seen sense of urgency".14.

ASEAN senior officials continued work on the drafting of documents for the summit until the commencement on 9 February of the "First Pre-ASEAN Summit Ministerial Meeting" in Pattaya.15. The press release at the conclusion of the meeting stated that the ministers had agreed upon the agenda for the summit, which was set for 23-25 February. A second
pre-summit ministerial meeting was set for 21 February in Bali, and it was also agreed to hold two more senior officials meetings - on 18-19 February in Jakarta and on 21 February in Bali - to discuss some remaining areas of difference and disagreement. These meetings were held as scheduled. In addition, the foreign ministers and their senior officials met informally on the evening of 20 February and again on 22 February, on the eve of the summit. The economic ministers also met on 22 February.

The Bali Summit

Little effort was spared by Indonesia to provide a suitable ceremonial welcome and other amenities for the ASEAN heads of government attending the Bali summit, which was held at the Pertamina Cottages near the airport at Kuta Beach. Almost 1,000 policemen and soldiers reportedly were sent from Java to provide security, including some 200 crack troops from the Silivangi Division. Some 300 journalists assembled to cover the proceedings. President Marcos, Malaysia's new Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and Prime Minister Kukrit stepped from their planes onto a red carpet to be garlanded with chempaka flowers by Balinese maidens, who danced to the accompaniment of a gamelan orchestra while they crossed the tarmac. The route to the summit venue was lined by flag-waving children and decorated with bunting and the flags of the five nations. The two-hour opening ceremony in the opulent Puri Bunga conference hall on the morning of 23 February was televised live to the region. Journalists found the tight security rather restrictive. An
Indonesian warship patrolled offshore. The atmosphere nevertheless was described as "cheerful" and "confident".\footnote{19.}

The holding of ASEAN's first summit had aroused high expectations in the region. To cite one example, a Singaporean columnist in January 1976 saw it as "a foregone conclusion" that the summit would be "more than an exercise in empty posturing" and that it would reflect "a genuine appreciation by ASEAN leaders of the benefits of economic integration" and the acceptance by them of "the awesome responsibility of taking ASEAN across a watershed."\footnote{20.} Such expectations were not discouraged by the heads of government in their speeches during the summit's opening ceremony. Suharto asserted that ASEAN leaders were "strongly determined to consolidate common approaches and to unify joint actions in translating the objectives of ASEAN into reality." Hussein Onn saw ASEAN as about to enter a phase of "greater and more intense cooperation". He believed that the possibilities for higher levels of cooperation, particularly in the economic field, were real. Marcos was optimistic that the summit would prove to be an historic occasion, a "monument" to the wisdom of the leaders of the five member-states. Lee Kuan Yew's initial remarks were non-committal. He commented that ASEAN was "at a crossroad". But he went on to urge that ASEAN countries should "seize our opportunities for cooperation, for continued security and stability as a more cohesive group, pursuing more coherent policies." He believed that the meeting would be memorable for "consolidating ASEAN as a regional force in the international community."
Adam Malik described the final summit agenda as being like "a dinner which is ready but not yet served." It appears that all important matters were decided upon before the heads of government met. This explains why their first private meeting on the afternoon of 23 February which was scheduled for two hours lasted just 35 minutes. Conference sources said the first session went smoothly and swiftly "like an express train". At its conclusion Marcos and Lee played a round of golf while the other leaders went sightseeing.

Another private meeting was held on 24 February during which the leaders reportedly reviewed international issues, and this was followed by the closing session that afternoon. The main work of the heads of government had been the approval and signature of three major documents; namely, a Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, a Declaration of ASEAN Concord, and an Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Secretariat.

The preamble to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation noted that the "High Contracting Parties" were "convinced that the settlement of differences or disputes between their countries should be regulated by rational, effective and sufficiently flexible procedures". To deal with such disputes the Parties were to "constitute, as a continuing body, a High Council comprising a Representative at ministerial level from each of the High Contracting Parties". In the event that no solution to a dispute was reached through "direct negotiations", the High Council would "take cognizance of the dispute or the situation" and "recommend to the parties in
dispute appropriate means of settlement such as good offices, mediation, inquiry or conciliation."

The Declaration of ASEAN Concord attempted to set out a framework for future cooperation. Its preamble stated that the five countries would endeavour to expand ASEAN cooperation "in the economic, social, cultural and political fields". The formal affirmation of political cooperation as one of the central objectives of ASEAN was one of the key features of the summit even though this did little more than legitimize a development that had already occurred. The Declaration proper commenced by specifying certain objectives and principles to be followed in the pursuit of "political stability". The remainder of the Declaration elaborated a "programme of action" for ASEAN cooperation, including the following activities in the economic sphere:

- cooperation on basic commodities, particularly food and energy;
- industrial cooperation;
- cooperation in trade; and
- a joint approach to international commodity problems.

In the security area, the Declaration endorsed: "Continuation of cooperation on a non-ASEAN basis between the member states in security matters in accordance with their mutual needs and interests."

The preamble to the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Secretariat noted that members were mindful of the
rapidly growing activities of ASEAN and that they recognized that this growth had increased the need for "a central administrative organ to provide for greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities". The location of the Secretariat was to be Jakarta. The Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat was to be appointed by the foreign ministers upon nomination by a member-country on a rotational basis in alphabetical order, and for a tenure of two years. The Secretary-General was to be responsible to the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting when it was in session and to the Standing Committee at other times.

Behind The Scenes

Such were the achievements that ASEAN spokesmen hoped would serve to mark the success of the Bali summit. Behind the scenes, however, and at times more publicly, things did not go so smoothly as it might have seemed. In fact, on almost all major issues, close examination reveals that there were strong differences of approach and that the decisions taken by the summit and reflected in the summit documents were mostly the result of compromise.

These differences were already evident at the First Meeting of ASEAN Economic Ministers in November 1975 and, more prominently, at the Pre-Summit Ministerial Meeting in February 1976. Senior officials had to work long and hard in preparation for the latter meeting. Official sources reportedly commented that all major proposals had been opposed
by one or more of the delegations. Although they met until 2.00 a.m. of the day that the ministerial meeting commenced, the officials apparently still failed to reach agreement on many substantive issues.  

These disagreements were not resolved by the ministerial meeting. Rajaratnam acknowledged that it was "no secret that differences of view exist within ASEAN about the pace of economic cooperation. Some of us feel the Bali Declaration should contain very concrete proposals as to how far and in what direction ASEAN cooperation will move." 

The Far Eastern Economic Review commented that the failure of ASEAN ministers during their meeting at Pattaya to reach agreement on several issues underlined for some observers that ASEAN was "still little more than a weak association of anti-communist regimes whose mutual differences and conflicts of interest outweigh any impetus towards real cooperation and unity." A new regional weekly, ASEAN Review, predicted that it seemed "quite unlikely that the Bali summit meeting of this five-nation grouping will achieve anything tangible. Observers note that attitudes among the five on major issues have been so much at variance with one another that consensus - the unwritten rule of ASEAN - is doubtful to be arrived at." 

Differences were not resolved during the subsequent officials meeting in Jakarta on 18-19 February. Observers reported that negotiations were at a "difficult and tense stage" and that there had been some "very frank exchanges" which had at one stage necessitated a half-hour adjournment to
"cool things down". Some sources reported that the differences were vital and of a "make-or-break" nature.\textsuperscript{29}. After the conclusion of the Bali heads of government meeting an Indonesian official acknowledged that some complicated problems had only been resolved on the evening prior to the summit. In fact it appears that negotiations continued into the following morning until just prior to the opening session. Journalists commented that at the conclusion of these negotiations ASEAN officials were smiling broadly for the first time since their arrival at the summit venue.\textsuperscript{30}.

Two of the heads of government, Suharto and Lee, referred during the opening session to disagreements between members prior to the summit. Both played down the significance of these disagreements. Suharto did not see why differences of view should be noted as "disappointing". He claimed that they merely indicated "that our minds remain active and our conceptions are developing prior to reaching a common consensus." Lee Kuan Yew discussed the difficulties encountered in pre-summit negotiations at greater length. He noted that: "Extensive, at times intense, discussions have preceded this meeting. Agreements have not come easily. Though we are all agreed on ultimate objectives, it has been difficult to get agreements on the next few steps. Many domestic economic interests, and several different ideas of how to get constructive relations with new governments in the region, have temporarily clouded fundamental issues." He claimed that healthy argument on ways and means to achieve agreed goals was "a sign of vigorous life in the ASEAN organization." He had been surprised that "on the eve of the
meeting, full accord had not been reached", because he had believed "that the salubrious air in Bali would have a soothing effect on harassed officials and ruffled Ministers." He reportedly drew applause when he stated that on his arrival in Bali he had discovered that it was the "calm and wise counsel" that had been infused by President Suharto that had resolved outstanding differences before the heads of government arrived at the summit venue. Commenting after the summit, Marcos admitted that he had been fearful that it "would result in a debacle in view of the irreconcilable positions on a number of issues". Hussein Onn acknowledged that it was "no secret" that there had been "marked frankness and even controversy" prior to the summit, but considered this a good thing because ASEAN could only progress by facing up to realities.

An examination of each of the issues on which ASEAN members disagreed will assist to form a more objective appreciation of the achievements of the summit and of the degree to which it satisfied the aspirations of each country.

Economic Issues

As noted earlier, ASEAN leaders had realized long before the Bali summit that in order for the Association to be taken seriously in the international arena it would be necessary for credible progress to be made towards the economic goals which ostensibly were its primary rationale. As Rajaratnam put it at the Seventh Ministerial Meeting: "I am aware that economics is not all that matters. But unless we are economically viable
other countries will listen to us with great politeness but with very little else.”33. Others lamented that there was not a sufficiently strong political will in the ASEAN countries to initiate movement towards economic integration.34. This soon became a familiar theme.

From the moment, however, that ASEAN officials began to look seriously at measures that could potentially lead to major progress in the scope of ASEAN economic cooperation, the obstacles to such cooperation began also to come to the fore. The competing pressures arising from national versus regional economic objectives, and the problems stemming from the priority usually given to the former, were stressed by President Suharto at the First Meeting of ASEAN Economic Ministers in November 1975. He enjoined ASEAN members to adopt "pragmatic approaches" to economic cooperation that would take account of the differences in their stages of development. He thought that such cooperation should facilitate "national as well as regional resilience" and that ministers should not "come forward with expectations which are difficult or not feasible to be carried out within a relatively short period."

It was apparent, on reflection, that in the process of moving towards economic development on a genuinely regional basis, some ASEAN members would benefit more than others. Thanat Khoman noted that the "traditional thinking" of ASEAN members had been "to balance the net gain" so as to distribute the benefit equally amongst members, and that this had hampered the negotiating process. He noted that without
flexibility, in which it was accepted that losses in one area would be compensated by gains in another, the task would be impossible. Singapore was the ASEAN member that had potentially most to gain from regional economic development, as it had achieved the fastest rate of growth in the region. Thanat questioned whether other ASEAN members would open up their markets merely to serve Singapore's aspiration to become the supplier of manufactured goods to its neighbours while using their raw materials.35.

Most ASEAN economic analysts appeared to agree with the opinion expressed by Malaysia's Lin See-yan that to date ASEAN's achievements in economic cooperation had involved "relatively quite unimportant matters", and been "limited in the issues that matter to lots of consultation and approaches but little else in concrete results". Lin drew attention to other obstacles to economic cooperation such as the fact that most ASEAN countries were competitors in the export of primary commodities, that their domestic markets were often highly protected, and that they looked primarily to other countries, especially the United States, Europe and Japan, for their export markets. For these reasons there was a widespread distrust of "regionalism". In spite of all these obstacles, however, Lin, and many other ASEAN analysts, believed that economic cooperation, if properly approached, had a positive role to play.36.

Singapore and the Philippines were the most vocal in their enthusiasm for more ambitious steps towards economic cooperation. In recognition of the caution displayed by other
ASEAN members, particularly Indonesia, they conceded that progress would necessarily be incremental. Lee Kuan Yew stated that the extension of economic cooperation had be "gradual" and "step by step". "There can be no waving of the magic wand and together we are in the common market." Nevertheless, both Singapore and the Philippines frequently called for a maximum effort to achieve agreement on new cooperative measures in the economic field. Rajaratnam expressed the hope that at Bali the ASEAN countries would "come forward with very realistic, convincing and rational proposals to enable ASEAN to take an important step toward development of a vigorous regional economy."

Press reports identified Indonesia as the biggest stumbling block to agreement on economic cooperation. Harvey Stockwin spoke of "growing disappointment that Jakarta is dragging its feet" on economic cooperation. He attributed Indonesia's caution to its problems with its own economy. Malaysia and Thailand may have had reservations about the scope and pace of ASEAN economic cooperation advocated by Singapore and the Philippines, but they nevertheless favoured major new initiatives. In his opening address to the Bali summit, Hussein Onn described economic cooperation as "the most vital area of ASEAN endeavour" and as the factor that had led to ASEAN's formation. He argued that national and regional economic activities were not "mutually exclusive", but that they "complement and reinforce each other". Kukrit stated that Thailand would be willing to consider and endorse any measures which would "raise the level and widen the area of economic cooperation".
The meagre progress that was achieved at the Bali summit in the field of economic cooperation was reflected in the tired phraseology of the joint press communique issued at the summit's conclusion which noted that the meeting had discussed ways and means of strengthening cooperation among member states. They believed it was "essential" for them to move to "higher levels of cooperation", including in the economic field. The communique further noted that "in pursuance of their determination to forge closer economic cooperation" they had agreed that a meeting of economic ministers be convened in the following month "to consider measures to be taken towards implementing the decisions of the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government on matters of economic cooperation". The following analysis indicates the difficulties that arose in each of the areas where major new measures for economic cooperation had been proposed.

(a) Trade

Measures to promote the development of intra-ASEAN trade had been one of the major recommendations of the U.N. Report. Although estimates varied widely, intra-ASEAN trade was believed to comprise only 15 percent or less of total ASEAN trade, and the proportion was believed to be declining. Some ASEAN declining. Some ASEAN members saw great scope in this area. The Philippines had on several occasions mooted the idea of an ASEAN free trade zone or common market. At the ASEAN senior officials meeting in mid-September 1975, the Philippines was expected to submit a paper advocating a common market and free trade areas within ASEAN. It was also
reported, perhaps optimistically, that officials were understood to have agreed on draft proposals to establish a free trade zone, starting with mutual cuts of about 10 percent and with the ultimate aim of setting up a common market.\textsuperscript{40}.

Lee Kuan Yew acknowledged that a common market, implying immediate free mobility of capital and labour within ASEAN, was not feasible. But he thought that ASEAN could move towards adoption of a free trade zone. He believed that such a zone was a "distinct possibility" within seven to ten years because it would be a prerequisite for the achievement of economies of scale.\textsuperscript{41}.

The free trade zone proposal was considered by the ASEAN economic ministers at their first meeting in November 1975. In an article prior to the meeting, Harvey Stockwin saw a "distinct likelihood" that ASEAN heads of government would agree at the forthcoming summit to the formation of an ASEAN free trade area. He cited "authoritive sources" in three of the five ASEAN countries who said that considerable progress had been made towards this end.\textsuperscript{42} Stockwin acknowledged that there were problems confronting ASEAN trade liberalization, such as "the actual and perceived position of Singapore, the inhibitions of Indonesia, the whole question of regional `relative advantage'", but he thought there was "an ASEAN political will to move forward".\textsuperscript{43}.

ASEAN academic economists played an important part in stimulating public debate about the potential for trade liberalization. Most were in favour of relatively ambitious measures, though starting on a small scale. An item-by-item
approach was thought to be the most realistic, but a target date for achievement of a free trade zone was supported.\textsuperscript{44.} ASEAN economists generally argued also that the differences in the tariff structures and rates of development of the ASEAN countries need not be a barrier to trade liberalization.\textsuperscript{45.} An Indonesian economist, J. Panglaykim, argued that tariff reductions need not be detrimental to any one ASEAN member if implemented on a selective basis and within a reasonable time-frame.\textsuperscript{46.}

Despite such positive appraisals, it soon became apparent to most insiders and informed observers that Indonesia's strong reservations about any rapid movement towards trade liberalization were a major obstacle. In another lengthy article in January 1976, titled "Indonesia: Frustrating ASEAN Ambitions", Harvey Stockwin concluded that although momentum towards economic cooperation had been built up late in 1975, 1976 now looked like being a disappointing year for ASEAN.\textsuperscript{47.} He asserted that at Indonesian insistence progress towards an ASEAN free trade zone had come "to a grinding halt", creating "deep-seated doubts in some influential minds" about ASEAN's future. "Several sources", according to Stockwin, reported that one Indonesian official had asserted that Indonesia would not be interested in an ASEAN free trade zone "in 100 years". A technocrat reportedly had stated that Indonesia's industries needed more protection, not less.\textsuperscript{48.} Despite suggestions that Indonesia could be compensated for its expected disadvantage in an ASEAN free trade zone, its opposition did not soften.\textsuperscript{49.} Adam Malik claimed that a consensus had been reached at the meeting of
economic ministers "that free trade will be the last objective for the progress of ASEAN." Lee Kuan Yew, he observed, was "a salesman" who wanted a free trade zone "so that all his goods can enter Indonesia with its population of 130 million people, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines".

Singapore was not so daunted by Indonesia's opposition to the free trade zone proposal as to cease expressing its own support for it. On his arrival in Pattaya for the February 1976 foreign ministers meeting, Rajaratnam told the press that he thought ASEAN should be integrated as a free trade area, following the example of the European common market. He claimed that ASEAN would have to move quickly to keep ahead of the likely pace of economic integration in Indochina. The meeting appeared to result only in an ill-defined understanding that a compromise of some sort had to be found in the area of trade cooperation. General agreement was reportedly reached on a vague resolution favouring gradual lowering of tariffs, beginning on a selective basis. At the end of the meeting Rajaratnam told reporters that Singapore and the Philippines had agreed that the "basic foundation" of a genuine ASEAN regional community would be the setting up of a free trade area. Singapore, he said, was prepared to "go all the way". He conceded that a free trade area was "not immediately feasible" due to Indonesia's opposition, but urged that "steps, small but not insignificant, should be taken to move towards eventual regional economic entity." Marcos reportedly stated at this time that the idea of preferential trade agreements in place of a free trade zone had been put forward by Malaysia.
probably at Indonesia's behest.53.

Speaking to reporters at Singapore airport before leaving for Bali Rajaratnam said he was sure "some sort of working agreement" could be reached on the question of preferential trade, "providing everybody agrees not to have things all his own way". If officials could not agree the foreign ministers would have to "have a go".54. On his arrival in Bali, Rajaratnam said that Singapore had agreed not to raise the free trade proposal in exchange for Indonesia's support for cooperation in the industrial area, including the concept of joint industrial projects.55. A Straits Times editorial commented that Singapore and the Philippines had given a practical demonstration of the "ASEAN spirit" by giving way on the free trade issue and by their willingness to look into other areas of economic and industrial cooperation. Pre-summit discussions, the editorial stated, "seem to have sketched in a compromise formula, which includes preferential tariff cuts on certain products".56. Malaysia supported Indonesia's opposition to a free trade zone. Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Hamzah said that such a zone would be suicidal for Indonesia - it would kill its growing domestic industry.57.

It is not surprising, in view of the discord caused by disagreement on the future direction of trade cooperation, that Suharto in his opening address to the Bali summit emphasized the need for harmony, especially "harmony between mutual benefit and that of each individual member state". In developing economic cooperation he felt that ASEAN should
"select areas and methods which are mutually beneficial. And certainly not the contrary. The levels of our economic growth are not the same." Lee Kuan Yew for his part observed that: "Many domestic economic interests" had "temporarily clouded fundamental issues". Other ASEAN heads of government avoided mention of this contentious subject. On his departure from Bali, however, Marcos told journalists that the inability to agree on a free trade area had been the principal area of disagreement at the summit.58.

The major outcome of the Bali summit in the area of trade cooperation was a direction that the economic ministers would discuss the matter further at their next meeting. The joint press communique stated that the economic ministers would discuss the "instruments to be employed in preferential trading arrangements to facilitate the expansion of trade among ASEAN member states in basic commodities, particularly in food and energy and the products of ASEAN industrial projects." At the conclusion of the summit a New Straits Times editorial praised the outcome of deliberations about the desirability of a free trade zone as a vindication of the soundness of ASEAN's emphasis on consensus. To have agreed at that time to a free trade zone would, it was argued, have been premature given the disparities between ASEAN members.59.

Lee Kuan Yew noted that realism had caused Singapore to withdraw its free trade proposal in favour of the Indonesian proposal for preferential trading agreements, but he wondered whether he would ever witness the implementation of an ASEAN free trade zone because he would not live to be one hundred years.60.
In summary, the free trade issue was a deeply divisive one. Progress in reaching agreement on new initiatives in this area was minimal. Instead, lingering suspicions were created. Indonesians and others suspected that Singapore was prepared to use ASEAN to push aggressively for its own economic self-interest regardless of the consequences for other members, while Singaporeans, Filipinos and others suspected that Indonesia, with the support of Malaysia, lacked sufficient commitment to regional economic cooperation to put aside narrowly-conceived notions of national interest. However, efforts to promote regional economic cooperation continued thereafter. Many ASEAN leaders, officials and businessmen continued to believe that a regional economic community was a worthwhile goal; others saw at least the appearance of progress in economic cooperation as a political necessity. But after the Bali summit ASEAN planners had a much more realistic and modest estimation of what was likely to be achievable. This realism was based not only on a more pragmatic assessment of the enduring importance of national versus regional interests, but also on a more sophisticated realization by ASEAN economists that "quick fixes" such as a free trade zone were too disruptive and unpredictable in their effects to be acceptable to member-countries. Efforts came to be focussed instead on measures where the distribution of benefits was likely to be more easy to calculate and where vested interests were less likely to be upset. At first sight the second major recommendation of the U.N. Report, the setting up of joint industrial projects, probably seemed more likely to fit these requirements.
(b) **Joint Industrial Projects**

The U.N. Report's recommendation that ASEAN should support the establishment of joint industrial projects whose products would be marketed on a privileged basis in all five countries, initially received little public mention in pre-summit deliberations. Lee Kuan Yew was one of the first to endorse this approach in remarks to visiting financial journalists at the end of October 1975. He mentioned the recommendation of the U.N. team for projects in areas such as steel and petrochemicals where different sectors of these industries were allocated to different countries. Lee thought that this was "a distinct possibility" because economies of scale were necessary for such enterprises to be successful. Suharto gave some prominence to the concept in his speech to the economic ministers meeting. He noted that intensive study would be required as to the type, size, location and raw material supply of such projects. ASEAN businessmen also displayed interest in regionally-based industries. ASEAN economists, however, showed mixed enthusiasm for regional industrial projects. Potential problems as well as benefits were anticipated, especially difficulties in deciding the allocation of projects and in ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits. The economic feasibility of such projects was also questioned.

Agreement to pursue the implementation of joint industrial projects appeared to gain momentum following the talks between ASEAN heads of government attending the Razak
funeral. Projects mooted were a petrochemical plant in Singapore, a newsprint mill in Indonesia, and a fertilizer plant in Malaysia or the Philippines. Interest in such projects increased further, as already noted, following the deadlock on the free trade proposal. Indonesia became publicly identified as the chief proponent of cooperation in this area, but other reports suggest that it may have presented this option without great enthusiasm. Singapore reportedly nominated a major new petrochemical project under negotiation with Sumitomo of Japan as its ASEAN industry.

Joint industrial projects were endorsed in principle in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord. The joint press communique issued following the summit also agreed that the economic ministers should discuss the "formulation of appropriate measures for initiating cooperative action towards establishing ASEAN large-scale industrial projects. Examples of some of the ASEAN industrial projects that could be considered by the Meeting of ASEAN Economic Ministers are urea, superphosphates, potash, petrochemicals, steel, soda ash, newsprint and rubber products."

One commentator noted after the summit that the decision to proceed with joint industrial projects was taken "rather hurriedly for the purpose of showing that something solid was achieved at the summit" and with very little preliminary study. This observation may well have been accurate. ASEAN's leaders probably did not anticipate the full range of difficulties inherent in establishing such projects. Given that vested interests had obstructed progress in the area of
trade liberalization, it probably became almost imperative to endorse this second major recommendation of the U.N. Report. Nevertheless, the commitment to joint industrial projects deserves recognition as one of the major achievements of the summit. It showed at least a willingness on the part of ASEAN's leaders to pursue economic cooperation in a major new area, even though it was later to prove difficult to translate those good intentions into reality.

(c) Other economic issues

In a proposal closely related to the joint industrial projects, the U.N. Report had also suggested ASEAN cooperation in the negotiation of industrial complementation agreements. Under this concept ASEAN countries would agree to the distribution between themselves of exclusive rights to manufacture particular industrial components, in a complementary way. The Philippines sought to encourage industrial complementation agreements in the steel industry, and also proposed complementation in the metal, machine tool, chemicals, automotive and footwear industries. Modest progress was made in this area during the period leading up to the Bali summit, but it did not receive much emphasis, perhaps because it was recognised that in this area the initiative lay primarily with the private sector, and also because achievements would in most cases inevitably be modest.

An aspect of economic cooperation which did receive emphasis was the proposal that ASEAN should cooperate in the areas of food and energy. Suharto suggested that in view of
the world economic crisis in food, cooperation in the supply and production of staple food products should be accelerated in order to promote self-sufficiency. He added that the energy crisis illustrated the need for similar cooperation in the supply and production of energy. Suharto hoped that the economic ministers would formulate "concrete measures" that could be undertaken "immediately". Romulo claimed after the Pattaya foreign ministers meeting that agreement would be reached that ASEAN members would receive "priority attention in times of scarcity from the ASEAN countries with abundant energy and food supplies." However, this proposal did not in fact receive much more support on this occasion than it did when it had been put forward earlier. Indonesia warned that it would have difficulty in selling petroleum at preferential prices. Although cooperation in food and energy was highlighted in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, this was in the context of exhortation and general principle rather than specific measures.

Political Issues

As planning for the Bali summit progressed, ASEAN's leaders appeared to recognize that the organization's political role could no longer be realistically ignored. With the enhancement of Vietnam's political prestige following its victories in Indochina, ASEAN leaders perceived that the Association could play a valuable role in counteracting Vietnam's political influence in Southeast Asia and in enhancing ASEAN's international standing generally. Such considerations were undoubtedly a major, if not the major,
motivation behind the proposal to hold a summit. The decision to formally acknowledge ASEAN's political role therefore attracted none of the controversy amongst ASEAN's members that surrounded proposals to involve the Association in security matters, even thought for presentational purposes some ASEAN leaders still preferred to emphasize ASEAN's primary orientation towards economic cooperation. It is significant that amongst the several areas of cooperation listed in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord the political area was listed first.

(a) Treaty of Amity and Cooperation

The most evident political achievement of the Bali summit was the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. When Suharto and Kukrit met in June 1975 they expressed the view that a "speedy conclusion" of the Treaty would provide "the basic guidelines governing the relationship among countries in the region of Southeast Asia."70. Details of the draft Treaty were reportedly "refined" at the Pattaya foreign ministers meeting. This process of refinement was apparently impeded, however, by continued Malaysian uneasiness that the dispute settlement machinery in the Treaty would be used by the Philippines, the main architect of the Treaty, to revive its claim to Sabah. Rajaratnam noted that "clarification" of the Treaty would still be required. The issue was "complicated", he said.71.

The issue was apparently so complicated that an impasse was reached which had not been resolved when officials and
ministers arrived in Bali to make final preparations for the summit. It proved to be the most intractable and time-consuming issue to be dealt with at the summit. When Romulo was asked after his arrival about the Treaty, he replied that his chief "would sack him" if he disclosed the details. Rithauddeen commented that ASEAN should continue to work on the basis of consensus. Other reports suggested that this was a reference to Malaysia's objection to the absence in the Treaty of a reference which would make it clear that before proceeding to the arbitration of disputes, it would be necessary that all parties involved should consent to such arbitration. Arbitration would not be automatic. Malaysia also wanted the Treaty to apply only to future disputes, not existing or past disputes. Malaysia's concern evidently had arisen from a press conference by Marcos during which he said the Philippine claim to Sabah was "completely at a standstill", but he immediately went on to add that he hoped that ASEAN would arrive at a mechanism for the settlement of border disputes. According to Michael Richardson, the Malaysian cabinet reacted by instructing its officials to seek safeguards in the Treaty.72.

Two days of officials talks on the Treaty issue on 18 and 19 February reportedly ended without a solution. Several commentators observed that the Treaty might not be concluded at the summit and that the disagreement threatened the success of the summit.73. Officials were said to have worked late into the night on 20 February to resolve the differences but still without success.74. It was reported that Romulo telephoned Marcos during the foreign ministers meeting on 21
February for further instructions. New instructions from Marcos led to "major progress". The Philippines apparently dropped its insistence on automatic arbitration of all disputes. However, Malaysia insisted that the consensus principle had to be spelt out. Discussions again continued into the evening, concluding at 1.00 am. A compromise solution was reached in which the Philippines accepted the principle of consensus for the settlement of disputes. This was apparently not the end of the matter, however. Marcos told a press conference that "only one or two difficult passages" remained to be settled. "Whatever is not settled, we (heads of government) will settle them. I have no doubt we will sign the treaty." The foreign ministers spent a further two hours on 22 February trying unsuccessfully to settle this controversial matter. It was reportedly not until the morning of 23 February, "virtually with minutes to spare" before the opening session of the summit that the issue was finally resolved, with Rajaratnam as intermediary. Rajaratnam, looking "tired but relieved", told the press that the problem was solved by a last minute change of heart and by compromise on both sides. The crucial compromise involved Article 16 of the Treaty which stipulated that the provisions of the Treaty regarding the settlement of disputes would not apply "unless all parties to the dispute agree to their application to that dispute". This satisfied the Malaysian requirement. The remainder of Article 16 softened the blow for the Philippines by stating that this would not preclude the other High Contracting Parties from offering "all possible assistance" to settle the dispute and that the parties to the dispute should be "well disposed" to such offers of assistance. There was
still some substance, however, to claims that the "teeth" of the dispute settlement provisions had been removed.  

It is difficult to assess what impact the prolonged and no doubt frustrating negotiations over the Treaty had on the participants. The Treaty was regarded by ASEAN members as a significant achievement in spite of its difficult birth and the fact that in most areas it said little that was really new, with the exception of course of its watered-down dispute settlement provisions. Even Rithauddeen remarked that the fact that ASEAN members were prepared to enter into "an agreement of such long-range impact and significance" augured well for the future. But while the end result may have been commendable, it seems likely that the controversy deepened existing suspicions and tensions between Malaysia and the Philippines. It demonstrated the fragility of ASEAN unity and solidarity.

(b) Neutralization

Romulo commented that the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation was a first step towards attainment of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, since such a zone was "self-contradicting unless we can first set our own house in order". Nevertheless, Malaysia was probably piqued by the fact that progress on a "blueprint" for the neutralization of Southeast Asia stalled after the Eighth Ministerial Meeting in favour of progress on the Philippines-sponsored Treaty. When the summit proposal was first mooted, Tun Razak was reported to feel that a summit would only be justified if it included
the finalization of the neutralization plan. Ghazali Shafie observed that if the dynamics of national and regional resilience could be made operative, a "Zonal Neutrality System" or a "PAX ASEANA" could be brought into being. He added optimistically that the blueprint worked out by ASEAN officials was "almost complete" and that he had no doubt that ASEAN members would give "expeditious consideration" to its recommendations. Razak stated his belief that the latest developments in Indochina had made the zone of peace proposal "more relevant that before" and that the lessons of the Vietnam War would give "additional impetus to the speedy realization of the neutralization of Southeast Asia." Ghazali asserted that a neutrality system was already taking shape in a de facto sense and that the only question was whether it would "eventuate spontaneously, or be institutionalized by collective agreement."

The neutralization proposal was reportedly discussed at the September 1975 senior officials meeting and again at a further such meeting in Kuala Lumpur in mid-November. The latter meeting considered a "progress report" on the neutralization concept. At the end of the meeting Malaysia's Foreign Secretary, Zaiton Ibrahim, who chaired the meeting, told journalists that officials had cleared outstanding aspects of a conceptual framework for the proposal. "Conference sources" claimed that the key portion on implementation had been tackled successfully. This appeared to be an exaggeration, however. Singapore was clearly still unenthusiastic. In an interview at this time Lee Kuan Yew said that it was "an exercise in futility" to say: "Big
powers, all go away." He acknowledged that the zone of peace, freedom and neutrality concept as a "long-term hope" had a "positive psychological effect", but he added: "we are all more exercised by the immediate and intermediate problems which must be solved before we reach that happy state of peace and tranquility." Rajaratnam described the Kuala Lumpur Declaration as "like the Ten Commandments for ASEAN". He explained: "as you know, the ten commandments have been with the Christians for thousands of years and their intent still has not been completely fulfilled."

Just prior to the Bali summit, some optimistic reports appeared about the prospects for the summit to give impetus to the neutralization proposal. It was anticipated that the summit would call on the major powers to respect the zone and provide guarantees. Drafting of the proposal was said to have reached "an advanced stage". Even Singapore was reported to have made a reassessment. These reports proved again to be exaggerated. Lee was apparently angered by media reports that he had endorsed the neutralization proposal. The proposal in fact received only limited encouragement from the summit. The joint communique stated that the heads of government had "expressed their satisfaction with the progress made in the efforts to draw up initially necessary steps to secure the recognition of and respect for the Zone." They directed that these efforts "should be continued in order to realize its early establishment."

Despite the absence of any tangible achievement in this area, ASEAN leaders expressed their satisfaction during the
public sessions of the summit with the progress that had been made. Progress on the proposal at the time of the Bali summit and thereafter was impeded less by lack of support from other ASEAN members, although this was certainly still a factor, than by the fact that the acceptance and support of other countries was required before implementation could proceed. The summit was significant for the neutralization proposal in that at long last overall agreement appeared to have been reached on the essential details of the proposal, but this was a hollow accomplishment in view of the fact that international realities made it impossible, for the foreseeable future, to put the proposal into effect or even to disclose the details of the final "blueprint" publicly.86.

Security

During the period before the Bali summit it appeared that some ASEAN continued to entertain the notion that the Association might adopt a direct role in promoting security cooperation between its members. Speculation continued about differences between the ASEAN countries on the question of ASEAN military cooperation. According to some journalists, there was a "growing impression" that security was becoming the major issue in preparations for the summit. As noted previously, Indonesia allegedly favoured such cooperation, with support from the Philippines. If so, however, they evidently encountered considerable opposition. The other ASEAN countries were reportedly "cagey" and unwilling to offend Vietnam by such a move.87. Kukrit reportedly told the press on one occasion that military cooperation would not be
discussed at Bali because ASEAN was not a military organization. On another occasion he voiced opposition to ASEAN becoming a military organization, "either bilateral or otherwise". So far as Singapore was concerned, Lee Kuan Yew remarked on several occasions that economic cooperation had to come first, followed by political and diplomatic coordination, and then cooperation was possible in "other fields". Even the Philippines appeared to develop reservations. Asked if ASEAN would form a military bloc, Romulo described this as a "complete misconception". "We did not phase out SEATO in order to set up another one." Marcos told an interviewer that he did not believe in military pacts and thought it "best for everyone for all the leaders right now to talk about economic cooperation" since there could be no security without economic development and he did not foresee any external aggression. Hussein Onn, continued to state Malaysia's opposition to an ASEAN military alliance, but he conceded after talks with Suharto at the end of January 1976 that this would not preclude the summit reaching "a common platform on security matters as a whole".

The security issue was raised again in coverage of the Pattaya foreign ministers meeting in early February. It was reported that the Indonesian delegation, with the support of the Singapore delegation, had pushed strongly for including security on the agenda and, moreover, that Indonesia was making a "determined bid to persuade the forthcoming ASEAN summit in Bali to agree to some sort of a defence and security cooperation among member nations." "ASEAN sources" reportedly
stated that Malik had raised the bogey of Vietnam to pressure officials to put defence and security cooperation on the top of the agenda for the foreign ministers. The large Indonesian delegation was reported to include four senior military and intelligence officers. However, the same sources stated that the Indonesian move had met with a cool response from the other ASEAN countries, who continued to emphasize publicly and privately that they did not want ASEAN to become a military pact. Thailand was particularly outspoken in its opposition. Kukrit said it was "impossible" that the summit would adopt a plan for ASEAN to become a military grouping, and that if there was aggression against an ASEAN country each country must fend for itself.

It would appear that these dissenting voices had their effect. On his arrival in Bangkok for the Pattaya meeting, Malik told the press that he saw "no urgency" for defence cooperation "and we have no intentions in this direction either." He said that the notion that Indonesia would go to the Bali summit proposing some kind of military arrangement amongst ASEAN members was erroneous. ASEAN members would discuss security problems from time to time but he expected no written defence agreement to emerge. Indonesia reportedly dropped its proposals for ASEAN security cooperation after other members pointed out that public opinion in their countries would not accept joint exercises at that stage. Romulo commented during the Pattaya meeting that military arrangements had always been "taboo" for ASEAN because it wanted peace in the region, not confrontation. After the meeting he said that complete agreement had been reached on
the desirability of continuing security cooperation between ASEAN members, but the "general view" was that "security considerations should not be institutionalized on an ASEAN basis." 94.

Very little is known publicly about discussions regarding security cooperation that may have taken place at the Bali summit. Journalists claimed that there was "broad agreement" that collaboration in security affairs would be low-profile, taking the form of an expansion of existing bilateral arrangements. 95. As noted above, the main formal outcome on this issue at the summit was the statement in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord that security cooperation between members would continue "on a non-ASEAN basis" and "in accordance with their mutual needs and interests". On his return to Jakarta from the summit Malik denied that a military pact had been discussed or that it would ever be taken up by ASEAN. He said that the idea had come from "outsiders". 96.

Although security cooperation took a low profile at the summit, the speeches by the heads of government indicated that security concerns were nonetheless an important preoccupation. All except Kukrit touched on the subject. Suharto in his opening address asserted that it was "unrealistic" to speak of the future if one overlooked the security factor. In this context he made the interesting observation that "any eventual cooperation among us should not be regarded as something to frown upon." However, he made it clear that "we have no intention of establishing a military pact" and that cooperation between ASEAN members in the realm of security was
not directed against any other parties. Hussein Onn made a strong statement opposing ASEAN's involvement in military affairs. He emphasized that "ASEAN is not, nor should be, a security organization." He acknowledged that continued bilateral security cooperation was "both necessary and desirable" and that it should be intensified and expanded when and where necessary, but he believed it was important that such initiatives should be left to individual states "outside the purview of the organization”. ASEAN should not be sidetracked from its "central purpose of promoting economic and socio-cultural cooperation in Southeast Asia". ASEAN remained, as Malaysia had asserted previously, "non-ideological, non-military, and non-antagonistic", serving the interest of "all of Southeast Asia". "Cooperation is its credo. Conflict is not its business." Marcos and Lee provided support for Malaysia's stance. Marcos said that ASEAN did not seek to become either a military alliance or a political bloc. As ASEAN could not control the military balance in Asia it should continue to concentrate on economic problems. Lee commented that with regard to regional peace and stability the basic question was how to ensure stability through economic development.

In summary, the communist victories in Indochina appeared to lead some parties in ASEAN to consider the desirability of seeking agreement during the summit for ASEAN to involve itself directly in the promotion of military cooperation. It emerged that there were apparently some ASEAN spokesmen, especially in Indonesia, who believed that short of a military pact there were a number of, as Ali Moertopo put
it, "other alternatives" that ASEAN might in future wish to encourage in the field of regional security cooperation.\textsuperscript{97} But the majority continued to be sceptical that such cooperation was warranted. The low level of external threat, the desire to avoid confrontation with Indochina, and the perception that ASEAN's traditional concentration on economic and political matters remained the most effective approach, led ASEAN's leaders to reject, at least for the time being, any move towards the overt involvement of ASEAN in this area, except perhaps in the indirect encouragement of bilateral security cooperation.\textsuperscript{98} The Bali summit was significant, however, for the fact that for the first time security cooperation was apparently raised formally for consideration as a legitimate concern for ASEAN.

Success or Failure?

The analysis above suggests that in terms of specific objectives and achievements the Bali summit was at best a very qualified success and, on a less generous assessment, a near failure. Several of its more ambitious goals — such as a free trade zone, a dispute settlement mechanism, and progress towards a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality — were either abandoned, compromised or postponed. The Declaration of ASEAN Concord was, for the most part, merely a statement of objectives or a listing of initiatives that were modest and incremental in nature. Many of the summit's accomplishments had been in preparation for a long period and were little advanced by the deliberations of the heads of government. The hard work required to implement new initiatives in the
economic field, such as limited trade liberalization measures and joint industrial projects, was postponed. In this sense the summit was less of a turning point than a modest upturn in the continued slow evolution of ASEAN. In several areas, discussions had been characterized by a high degree of disunity and even acrimony, which in one or two cases threatened to disrupt the summit. There were many who shared this negative assessment. No doubt more frustration and disappointment was expressed privately than publicly. Western commentators noted the lack of concrete progress in the area of economic cooperation and that the hard decisions had been pushed into the future. The editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review observed that if the Bali summit had "caught the tide", it was on the basis of "wordy consensus rather than deed". The "compromise package" that had been produced had been "a product of anxiety that the summit should not be seen to fail."99.

Yet considering its shortcomings, the summit received on the whole remarkably little criticism. Most of those who offered some negative comment balanced this by an equal or greater amount of praise. The Review editor, for example, went on to say that the increased controversy within ASEAN demonstrated that members were taking regional projects more seriously. Leading commentators on ASEAN developments like Michael Richardson and Harvey Stockwin gave a mixed assessment of the achievements of the Bali summit but the overall tone was positive. Immediately before the summit, Richardson felt that after eight and a half years of "significant if unspectacular achievement" ASEAN was in danger of stagnating
unless it made a greater effort to realize its potential. He thought that there had been such sharp divisions in the internal debate over economic objectives that the summit would "almost certainly fail to produce a strategy for survival based on concrete agreement rather than generalities and good intentions." After the summit, however, he concluded that the fledgling organization had acquired some sinew and that to a considerable extent ASEAN had "confounded the pessimists who thought that conflicting national interests and lingering mutual suspicions would prevent them reaching any solidly-based agreement." Last minute compromise at Bali had "saved the day", even though a lot of hard bargaining remained to put pledges of closer economic and political cooperation into practice. ASEAN had been given, he believed, "a fresh sense of purpose and direction". Stockwin described the summit as "a subtle success, not a decisive turning point." For those in distant capitals for whom ASEAN was only "a vague reality" the meeting had failed to produce "dramatic decisions and developments", but for idealists in ASEAN it had provided grounds for "cautious but renewed hope." The "curious zig-zag pattern" of progress towards economic cooperation had been sustained. Stockwin concluded that although the "dream summit" did not occur, it added up collectively to "a solidifying of the spirit of togetherness that had originally brought ASEAN together in 1967, and had sustained it over eight difficult years." Another commentator, noting the extent of disagreement amongst ASEAN members about major issues, saw this not as a shortcoming but as a virtue marking "a newly emergent candid style of decision making" in which controversial and sensitive issues were no longer put to one
side but were "exhaustively thrashed out" in an atmosphere
where ASEAN leaders were no longer afraid that controversy
would "expose the brittleness of their solidarity".102.

Within the region the summit was particularly well
received, perhaps in part because most regional observers were
confident that the instructions of the heads of government to
the economic ministers to implement additional measures in the
field of economic cooperation would, in due course, be carried
out and would give the Association new impetus. Lau Teik Soon
felt that ASEAN's leaders had demonstrated the political will
to overcome obstacles to development and had committed
themselves to economic cooperation as a priority.103.

ASEAN's new political stature also drew favourable comment.
Noting the Association's new commitment to political
cooperation the Straits Times observed: "The non-cynical will
take ASEAN seriously: the cynical can no longer afford to
ignore it. Friends will understand its objectives and deal
with it with respect: potential enemies cannot confront it
without paying a price."104. A Malaysian journalist made a
point which though valid was seldom acknowledged. He argued
that ASEAN's intangible achievements prior to the summit had
been quite satisfactory and would be apparent to the serious
observer. The gradual progress made by ASEAN in this area,
especially the growth of understanding and trust amongst
member-countries, had set the stage for the summit.105.

Though coloured by their wish to place the outcome of
the summit in the best light possible, the remarks of the
heads of government at the conclusion of their meeting are
noteworthy. As might be expected, considerable satisfaction was expressed. Suharto saw the summit as having laid down "a new milestone in the annals of ASEAN's history". Kukrit effused that the meeting had achieved "all we have set out to do, and more". More soberly, Hussein Onn felt that the agreements that had been reached in areas of joint economic action, joint political action, social cooperation, cultural cooperation, and the setting up of a permanent Secretariat were "not inconsiderable" achievements. Even Lee Kuan Yew, who might be considered to have had cause to be disappointed by the outcome of the summit, asserted that the question of whether ASEAN had a future had been laid to rest. ASEAN was now "a permanent land-mark on the political and economic landscape of Southeast Asia". The first steps had been taken towards emphasizing "the substance of regional cooperation, not the forms."

The heads of government also referred again to the strong differences of view on many issues that had characterized pre-summit discussions. Hussein Onn felt that ASEAN had been strengthened by "the fresh winds of controversy". The temptation to be content with "bland but ultimately meaningless agreements" had been resisted. Suharto noted with satisfaction that ASEAN had adhered to the realistic principle that it must operate on the basis of mutual consent. Lee commented magnanimously that "common ASEAN sense" had prevailed in the process of give and take. He accepted that the group could not insist "that one partner should give more than he can economically or politically afford, for the present, or take more than is reasonable". He
conceded that a moderate speed of progress was probably best for ASEAN.

Another theme of remarks during the closing session was that the achievements of the summit were no more than a beginning. Marcos noted that the closing ceremony of the summit merely commenced "the arduous, the difficult task of implementing the intention of unity and cooperation" which was embodied in the summit documents. Hussein Onn stressed that ASEAN had "a long way still to go", and that ahead lay "a lot of learning and mutual adjustments, a lot of discussions, a lot of hard negotiations". Such indeed proved to be the case. It has been accurately observed that the Bali summit was "long on words and short on deeds." So much so that a second summit was later to become necessary in order to give substance to the decisions made at Bali.

The Road to Kuala Lumpur

Although the heads of government left it to their ministers and officials to translate into reality the good intentions which they had expressed at Bali, they left them in little doubt that they wished a high priority to be given to the early implementation of the measures that had been agreed upon, although the details were of course negotiable. As one delegate reportedly summed it up: "The most significant achievement of the summit is that the heads of the five governments have agreed that their Economic and Planning ministers should meet as often as possible to work out the specifics of economic cooperation." 106.
The first in a long series of such meetings was the Second Meeting of ASEAN Economic and Planning Ministers held in Kuala Lumpur on 8 and 9 March, only two weeks after the conclusion of the Bali summit. After what was reported to be a marathon two-day meeting, a joint press statement announced that the ministers had successfully allocated five ASEAN industrial projects, one to each member country, as follows:

- Indonesia : Urea
- Malaysia : Urea
- Philippines : Superphosphates
- Singapore : Diesel Engines
- Thailand : Soda-Ash

An experts group was to be established to examine the feasibility of these projects.

Over the following months officials endeavoured to reach agreement on detailed guidelines for proposed cooperation in industry, trade and other areas. Little information was made available about the progress of these discussions but it was evident that the officials did not find their task an easy one.

The Ninth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, held in Manila on 24-26 June 1976, proved to be somewhat lacking in substance given that the main carraige of ASEAN's endeavours at that time was in the hands of the economic ministers. Lee Kuan Yew subsequently made a concerted effort to quicken the pace of
proposed cooperation in the trade area. He visited Jakarta in late November 1976 and after meeting with Suharto it was announced that the two countries would work for the signing of a basic agreement on trade preferences.107.

ASEAN economic ministers held their Third Ministerial Meeting in Manila on 20-22 January 1977. Marcos informed the meeting that Singapore and the Philippines had agreed to a bilateral across-the-board tariff reduction of ten percent to be applied to existing tariffs on all products traded between the two countries. The economic ministers approved a Draft Basic Agreement on the Establishment of ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangements. At the end of January, Lee visited Bangkok for talks with Prime Minister Tanin. They agreed to a ten percent tariff cut between their two countries similar to that between Singapore and the Philippines. Lee appeared intent on attempting to gain, through bilateral negotiations, the introduction of trade liberalization arrangements that Indonesia had blocked multilaterally.108.

An "informal" meeting of ASEAN economic ministers was held in Singapore on 16 February 1977. The meeting initialled the Agreement on the Establishment of ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangements and forwarded it to the foreign ministers for signature during their "informal" meeting on 24 February, held on that date to commemorate the anniversary of the Bali summit.109. The foreign ministers signed the Preferential Trading Agreement. Sceptics noted that it had been diluted to protect Indonesian interests.110. The foreign ministers also agreed to recommend the convening of their heads of government
in Kuala Lumpur in August to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the founding of ASEAN. The proposal for a second summit meeting had been discussed for several months. The Philippines was apparently keen to host the meeting, but Lee indicated that Malaysia had been chosen as the venue on the basis of alphabetical rotation.

In his opening address to the Fourth ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting on 27-29 June 1977 in Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew suggested the ministers set a timetable for the implementation of preferential trading arrangements. The joint press release indicated that trade concessions were exchanged on a list of 71 products. On 5-8 July 1977 the Tenth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting was held in Singapore, with attention focussed mainly on the summit due to be held only one month later.

The Kuala Lumpur Summit

Prior to its commencement, Hussein Onn described the second summit as being intended to demonstrate the desire of ASEAN's leaders to "eliminate, smooth out and identify any bottlenecks, obstacles, problems, doubts and fears" that might be hindering progress. During the opening session, he commented that it would be "a business summit" with its main emphasis on economic cooperation. It is evident that there were more than sufficient problems to keep the heads of government and their ministers and officials fully occupied. A Malaysian academic observed that the desire for economic cooperation was "as unexceptional as the fond hope for warm
sunny days and cool breezy nights. Specific modalities, however, are controversial and contentious." He noted that despite the general optimism about the summit there was "a nagging sense of frustration at the lack of achievement in some areas." This appeared to be especially the case for Singapore and the Philippines. Rajaratnam informed journalists just prior to the summit that four of the five ASEAN industrial projects had not yet got off the ground. (Only Indonesia's project, which would have proceeded independent of ASEAN sponsorship, was under way.) He felt it was necessary for the heads of government to retrieve the situation as the bureaucrats and ministers had "talked over these things long enough".

Reliable sources were cited as stating that apart from economic cooperation the other main preoccupation during summit preparations was the organisational restructuring of ASEAN, especially reduction of the number of committees, changes in the functions of certain committees, and enhancement of the role of the ASEAN Secretariat. Attempts, backed by Indonesia, were reported to be in progress to make the Secretariat the central coordinating body for ASEAN committees' activities and to increase its annual budget. Romulo, on his arrival in Kuala Lumpur, recalled that a review of ASEAN's organization had been considered during five senior officials meetings in 1976 and 1977 and by both the Ninth and Tenth Ministerial Meetings, resulting in "a regrouping of the various committees which would be reporting directly to their respective meetings of ministers." In apparent opposition to the Indonesian position, he noted that the ASEAN Secretariat
would merely "service" the various meetings of ministers and their committees. The Philippines would be strongly opposed to any change which undermined "the rule of consensus", which ensured that decisions were "the fruits of mutual accommodation and were arrived at without reservations."113.

Problems aside, the Kuala Lumpur summit was heralded as another major step forward for ASEAN. Asiaweek magazine proclaimed that ASEAN had "taken some giant strides" in the preceding year "and, after a decade of slowly finding its feet, appears finally ready to break into a run." With regard to specific areas of cooperation the report noted that Indonesia and Malaysia were hesitant about trade liberalization and would be likely to seek a middle-of-the-road approach, "signalling continued progress at a pace all members can afford". It was considered that the most crucial discussions would focus on the industrial projects, which it was thought had been selected with insufficient care.

Summit arrangements were equally as elaborate in Kuala Lumpur as they had been in Bali. More than one thousand people attended the opening ceremony on 4 August in the Nirwana Ballroom of the Kuala Lumpur Hilton, which was the summit venue. Five hundred foreign newsmen arrived to cover the proceedings. Fireworks displays, cultural shows and banquets were among the many events organized. The meeting of heads of government was preceded by a meeting of the foreign ministers on 1 August, which lasted only two hours instead of the
scheduled two days, and by a much longer meeting of the economic ministers on 3 August, which some observers took to be symbolic of the increasing precedence of the economic ministers over their foreign ministerial colleagues. 114.

In his opening statement to the summit, Hussein Onn noted that the meeting would examine the progress of ASEAN cooperation since the Bali summit, and it would "demonstrate the viability of ASEAN cooperation and its steadfastness towards its goals." He appeared somewhat diffident, however, about ASEAN's performance. He noted that ASEAN did not lack critics, especially on the grounds that it was slow in showing results in economic cooperation. Such criticism "may well be true", which he said was why ASEAN leaders were meeting again so soon after Bali. Suharto placed considerable emphasis on the need for consensus. He stressed that the world would again focus its attention on ASEAN during its second summit meeting and would "watch our deliberations and resolutions". Clearly consensus was to be on Indonesia's terms. Suharto asserted that ASEAN's success should not be at the cost of any country's national interest. The benefits of ASEAN's programs must be "equally shared", he argued, even though they "may appear to be insignificant and modest". It was unnecessary for ASEAN to take steps that "may look impressive and draw compliments from abroad", but which could be "damaging to one of us". He stressed the importance of cooperation in food and agriculture since "we must never forget that the life of the majority of ASEAN peoples will still be dependent on agriculture." Touching on organizational matters, Suharto supported the Indonesian view that the dynamism of ASEAN and
its increasing maturity required "an adequate compensation in the form of its organizational machinery".

Marcos appeared to take a relaxed view. With a touch of hyperbole, he remarked that the "ceremonials and beautiful women of Malaysia" had created an atmosphere "which cannot but produce success" for the summit. He felt caught up in "the euphoria of achievement". It was left to Lee Kuan Yew to take up Hussein Onn's misgivings and to voice a warning about the pace of ASEAN's progress. He addressed this task with admirable brevity and directness. "In Kuala Lumpur now", he asserted, "we have to decide whether we move forward, step sideways, or move backwards. For we cannot stand still." He noted that the economic ministers had failed to resolve the five industrial projects and had selected only 71 items for preferential trade. "Surely we can do better than this." He thought that international observers would take ASEAN "as seriously as we take ourselves" and that at the end of the summit "our success will be judged not by the speeches made, but by the agreements on concrete items, the bolts and nuts of economic cooperation."

As might be expected, the summit communique expressed the satisfaction of ASEAN leaders that member-countries had made "significant progress". They commended the economic ministers for accelerating the pace of economic cooperation and directed that this should be continued "with greater vigour". Actual achievements in the economic area included:

Agreement on a machinery for consultations and
negotiations regarding priority of supply and purchase of rice in critical circumstances, based on the principle of first refusal;

. An emergency sharing scheme for petroleum;

. Support for the establishment of a Food Security Reserve for ASEAN, especially for rice;

. Announcement that a review of the feasibility study for Indonesia's ammonia-urea project should be completed as early as possible, with a view to the project being launched by the middle of 1978, and that feasibility studies on the other ASEAN industrial projects would soon be completed;

. A decision that pre-feasibility studies would be completed expeditiously for possible additional ASEAN industrial projects, namely heavy duty rubber tyres, metal-working machine tools, newsprint, electrolytic tin plating, TV picture tubes, fisheries and potash;

. Direction that the provisions of the Agreement on ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangements should be promptly and fully implemented not later than 1 January 1978, and that trade preference negotiations should be intensified and the results implemented expeditiously; and

. Establishment of an ASEAN reciprocal currency or "swap" arrangement.

Other Issues

(a) Sabah

Another significant outcome of the Kuala Lumpur summit
was a pledge by Marcos to take steps to abandon the Philippines' claim to Sabah. As early as February 1976 during the Bali summit, Marcos was reported to have informally advised Malaysia that he intended to drop the claim. Apparently making the most of an opportunity to make a magnanimous gesture, Marcos announced his intention to drop the claim at the conclusion of his opening address to the summit, reportedly to "a thunderous ovation". He stated that as the success of ASEAN required sacrifice and each nation must contribute to that "pool of sacrifice", his government would "as an earnest to the future of ASEAN" take "definite steps to eliminate one of the burdens of ASEAN the claim of the Philippines Republic to Sabah". Marcos departed Kuala Lumpur to spend a few days in Sabah itself with his wife. He described his visit as an admission to the people of Sabah that the Philippines regarded it as part of Malaysia, and promised to "initiate the steps" to drop the claim and to prosecute the matter until this irritant in relations with Malaysia was removed. He cautioned, however, that he expected to face some "heavy artillery" on his return to the Philippines and that the legal process would take "a little time". This proved to be an understatement. At the time of writing, the Philippines still has not formally abandoned the Sabah claim.

(b) Vietnam

An area which was given relatively little public attention by ASEAN leaders in the period between the two summits was the Association's relationship with the countries
of Indochina and especially with Vietnam. During this same period, China won the approval of ASEAN members by its increasingly supportive attitude towards the Association and its defence of ASEAN against criticism from both Vietnam and the USSR. Vietnam remained, however, a very important background consideration in ASEAN's deliberations.

Following the Bali summit, Hanoi's continued criticism of ASEAN attracted some rather blunt warnings from ASEAN spokesmen. However, both sides soon began to show signs of interest in patching up their strained relations. But this warming of relations was soon interrupted once again by an altercation over a text submitted by Malaysia for inclusion in the communique of the Colombo non-aligned summit in August 1976. Malaysia wished the summit to reaffirm the 1973 Algiers summit's endorsement of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast. (Hanoi had not been represented at the Algiers summit.) Apparently at Vietnam's suggestion, Laos submitted an alternative text making no mention of the zone proposal but insisting on the dissolution of military alliances and dismantling of U.S. military bases in order to enable regional countries to become "truly independent, pacific and neutral". A Vietnamese spokesman stated that Vietnam decidedly did not tolerate "any scheme to revive a none-too-bright past of ASEAN and to sell an outmoded and bankrupt policy of this organization." 116. In a press interview in mid-1977, however, Deputy Foreign Minister Phan Hien "clarified" Vietnam's attitude towards ASEAN. He suggested that good bilateral relations would be "more reasonable and realistic" than the idea that ASEAN
should be enlarged to include other Southeast Asian states. He continued: "ASEAN has its own rules. Some of them might be acceptable to the others. Some would need to be changed; others eliminated. Basic new components would have to be introduced to meet the new situation in Southeast Asia in a new spirit." Clearly, on this appraisal, there was little or no prospect of enticing Vietnam to associate itself in any formal way with ASEAN. As time passed Vietnam's criticisms of ASEAN again increased. Speaking to journalists after the Kuala Lumpur summit, Rajaratnam probably spoke for most other ASEAN leaders when he concluded that in handling its future relations with Vietnam ASEAN must accept that: "it will be sometimes cautious optimism, sometimes clouded optimism .... We must learn to live with this kind of atmosphere." He stated that ASEAN must continue to "turn the other cheek" when Vietnam went on the offence.

Post Mortem

Closing statements by the heads of government in Kuala Lumpur indicated their acceptance that given the need for consensus, limitations on future economic cooperation had to be accepted. Although Lee noted that private discussions had been "vexatious", he thought the summit would be remembered for having provided a "realistic assessment" of ASEAN's progress and potential. "Free and informal" discussions between heads of government had elucidated why certain ASEAN objectives could not be achieved "as quickly as some of us would have wished". A pace of intra-ASEAN cooperation had to be accepted that was "more congenial to all of us, even though
It may be less than what is achievable if we all set our sights higher." He added that in the longer term it would be discovered that in order to quicken the pace of economic cooperation with industrial countries, ASEAN would need to increase the pace of intra-regional adjustments that would facilitate the inflow of capital, technology and skills. "But", he concluded, "in the spirit of ASEAN consensus, we have agreed that we shall tackle these problems when we come to them." Hussein Onn thought that the summit had shown that ASEAN was now "more concerned with achievement than with rhetoric". He was satisfied that "in political and realistic terms" members had given their best to make the summit a success. Only Marcos failed to qualify his evaluation of the summit's achievements in the area of economic cooperation. He felt that a decade in the future those who looked back to determine the "turning point" for ASEAN would conclude that it had been the Kuala Lumpur summit.

The regional press gave the Kuala Lumpur summit a mixed verdict. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* took a rather negative view. It commented that the event was "good for public relations", but "on the shop-floor" the struggle to give the organization true economic meaning proved to be still "an uphill task". Despite "fanfare, brotherly rhetoric and expressions of satisfaction", plans for practical regional cooperation were "still on the drawing board". The five industrial projects appeared to have been chosen with too little forethought, and had been hampered by selfish market considerations, but now that they had been endorsed they seemed destined to be implemented "in one form or another". So
far as trade cooperation was concerned, the Review observed that "Singaporeaphobia" continued to be a part of the Indonesian outlook. Asiaweek was more generous. Noting that some Western observers had concluded the summit was "a non-event", it claimed that such an assessment was rejected by "those more familiar with Southeast Asian thinking". A "senior diplomat" was cited as saying that ASEAN had really only started growing since the end of the Indochina war, so for a two-year old it had come quite a way. He cautioned against too fast a growth "lest we are denied the chance to consolidate as we go along." On the matter of trade preferences, Adam Malik was reported to have said: "The needs of 140 million must take precedence over those of 2 million." On the industrial projects, an "informed source" commented that with projects of this magnitude there were bound to be mistakes and there was nothing to be ashamed of if some did not get off the ground. On the organizational issue, it was stated that Indonesia wanted the Secretary-General to have some executive powers but Singapore and Malaysia feared this "would make Indonesia too powerful in the Association", due to the location of the Secretariat in Jakarta and the Secretary-General being also an Indonesian. ASEAN Review commented that those who had expected the leaders to emerge with their "briefcases bulging with solid agreements" on economic cooperation inevitably were disappointed. Though ASEAN at ten years may not have been "an occasion for vigorous self-congratulation", it had been "a watershed of some sorts", and ASEAN members had reason to look ahead "with cautious hope for the baby that practically grew up by itself against all predictions".
Many ASEAN economists appeared disappointed with the outcome of the summit. One asserted that a "golden opportunity" had been missed by the failure to opt for across-the-board tariff cuts. He added that he would approach the ASEAN industrial projects "with a great deal of caution, if not even a little apprehension", and with regard to the complementarity approach he "would shun it unless very convincing economically viable special cases can be presented." He warned that "the euphoria of regional cooperation" must not result in the spread of higher costs and prices and erode the competitive position of ASEAN countries. Another economist concluded that the summit had "failed to produce any significant breakthroughs", and that the adoption of a "lowest-common-denominator approach" had meant that the economic benefits of regional cooperation had not materialized.122.

A non-regional analyst concluded that the summit had been an historic milestone, "but for essentially commemorative reasons". Looking back to the Bali summit, which he described as "the product of sheer necessity and institutional evolution", he noted that the accomplishments of Bali had been "specific and spectacular". The attention of the world had been drawn to an apparently successful effort in regional cooperation. This, however, was difficult to duplicate. Bali had formulated guidelines for future performance which seemed "beyond the realistic reach of faithful functionaries." The idea was conceived that a second summit might restore "foundering momentum". But the sights had been set too high. It proved "illusory to achieve within one year what could not
be achieved during the entire life of ASEAN." The Kuala Lumpur summit was therefore, in the rather exacting opinion of this analyst, inevitably marred by the absence of concrete results in achieving the ultimate objectives set by the Bali summit. ASEAN leaders had attempted to deflate public expectations but few were prepared for the "subsequent substantive anticlimax". Its main success was considered to be as an exercise in image-building.123.

There were considerable grounds for the majority opinion of both ASEAN and outside observers that the Kuala Lumpur summit had been at best a limited success. The Bali summit had at least won some approval because it had displayed a new purpose and encouraged a new beginning for ASEAN. It had been left to the Kuala Lumpur summit to implement the ambitious objectives in the economic sphere which had been decided upon in Bali. This proved to be more difficult than some may have anticipated. Summitry failed to overcome the constraints of national interest. One of the most noteworthy aspects of the Kuala Lumpur summit was that it resulted in acceptance by ASEAN members of the need for realism and consensus, and the avoidance of over-ambitious goals that conflicted with the perceived national interests of some members.

FOOTNOTES


17. ibid., 24 February 1976.

18. ibid., 21 February 1976.


32. Asian Almanac, p.78; Foreign Affairs Malaysia, March 1976, p.28; Straits Times, 26 February 1976.


34. For example, Oemarjadi Njotowijono in Regionalism in Southeast Asia, op cit., p.154.


39. ibid, 16 July 1975.

40. ibid., 17 July 1975.
41. ibid, 30 October 1975.


43. ibid., pp.53 and 54.

44. For example, Lin See-yen and Lim Chong Yah in UMBC Economic Review, Vol. XII, No. 1, 1976, pp.63 and 76.


49. For example, Paul Chan in "Preconditions of Regional Economic Cooperation: The ASEAN Case", in The Economic Bulletin (Malaysia), February 1976, p.40.


64. For example, The ASEAN: Problems and Prospects in a Changing World, op cit., pp.28, 48, 116 and 121.


69. Straits Times, 12 February 1976.


73. Straits Times, 27 February 1976.


75. Bangkok Post, 22 and 23 February 1976; Japan Times, 23 February 1976; Straits Times, 23 February 1976; Far Eastern


78. Foreign Affairs Malaysia, March 1976, p.72.


81. "Malaysia and the Region", in Foreign Affairs Malaysia, December 1975, pp.72-79.

82. Straits Times, 18 September 1975; South China Morning Post, 12 November 1975; Bangkok Post, 14 November 1975; Indonesian Times, 14 November 1975.


84. Indonesian Times, 11 February 1976.

85. Indonesian Times, 23 February 1976; ASEAN Review, 23

86. A "broad outline" of the blueprint is described by Goh Cheng-Teik in "Southeast Asia: Peace Through Neutralization", in The Economic Bulletin (Malaysia), June 1976, pp.42 and 45.


90. Straits Times, 22 December 1975.

91. ibid., 29 January 1976.

92. ibid., 30 January 1976; Foreign Affairs Malaysia, March 1976, p.34.


95. The Age, 23 February 1976; Straits Times, 23 February
1976.

96. Asian Almanac, p.7886.


98. This was also the conclusion reached by Noordin Soopie in "ASEAN - A Defence Pact?", in Asian Defence Journal, January 1977, pp.44-47.


104. Straits Times. 27 February 1976.


CHAPTER 6

DIALOGUE

The most striking achievement of the Kuala Lumpur summit did not arise from the internal deliberations of ASEAN members, but from the international recognition and stature received as a consequence of the homage paid to the Association by the attendance of non-ASEAN leaders at post-summit meetings. Although the Bali summit had boosted ASEAN’s image internationally, this was the first occasion on which it received major international acclaim. ASEAN’s official dealings with other countries had commenced much earlier, however.

Early Contacts

Despite its slender record of achievement in many areas prior to the Bali summit, ASEAN drew some comfort from the fact that the early 1970s saw the beginning of its formal international contacts with several countries. Such contacts enhanced ASEAN’s previously very low profile in world affairs and provided the opportunity for it to bargain for a more advantageous economic relationship with these countries.

The first group of countries to initiate discussions with ASEAN was the European Economic Community. Following contacts in Europe and in Southeast Asia in late 1971 and
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early 1972, ASEAN decided to establish a Special Coordinating Committee of ASEAN (SCCAN) to prepare the way for an early "dialogue" between ASEAN and the EEC. An ASEAN Brussels Committee (ABC) was also established in June 1972 to coordinate relations with the EEC. It was composed of member-countries' ambassadors to the EEC.

The first formal contact between ASEAN and the EEC occurred at a meeting between an ASEAN delegation and the Commission of the European Communities in Brussels in June 1972. The communique noted that discussion centred on trade problems.1 This evidently arose from a Memorandum that had been drafted by SCCAN. Having in mind the enlargement of the EEC to include the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway and Ireland, and especially the prospect of loss of Commonwealth preferences previously granted by the UK, the Memorandum recommended that access be provided to ASEAN countries to compete in the EEC market on equal terms with EEC member-countries, associate members and other countries.2 A second ASEAN-EEC meeting was held in Bangkok in September 1973. The Seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting noted the success of the Association in obtaining from the EEC "the recognition of ASEAN as one region and the preferential access of certain commodities into EEC markets".

The next important development in ASEAN-EEC relations was a visit by the EEC Commission Vice-President, Sir Christopher Soames, to Southeast Asia in September 1974 during which he met in Jakarta with the five trade ministers of the ASEAN countries. ASEAN pressed for further tariff reductions
and for improvements in the cumulative rules of origin applied by the EEC to ASEAN imports, and proposed a number of projects for EEC assistance. The major outcome of the Jakarta meeting was an agreement to set up a Joint Study Group (JSG) which would "serve as the mechanism through which to explore together all possible areas where cooperation could be broadened, intensified and diversified". The first meeting of the JSG was held in Brussels in June 1973. An ambitious work program was drawn up, largely at the initiative of the ASEAN delegation. It had to be admitted, however, that by mid-1975 ASEAN-EEC cooperation had made only limited progress.

The next major step taken by ASEAN to extend its international contacts was the approval by the Standing Committee in March 1973 of the establishment of an ASEAN Geneva Committee (AGC) to coordinate ASEAN's approach to the GATT Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Also, in January 1974 a delegation of Australian officials had an informal meeting with the ASEAN Secretaries-General in Bangkok to discuss possible economic cooperation. Australia offered to cooperate with ASEAN in economic and technical projects. The ASEAN Standing Committee approved this cooperation and during a visit by the Secretaries-General to Canberra in April the Australian Government announced a decision to provide A$5 million for ASEAN economic projects. The communique of the Seventh Ministerial Meeting welcomed the outcome of "the ASEAN-Australian dialogue on economic cooperation". In November 1974 A$2.5 million was given by Australia to ASEAN for research on high-protein food production, particularly
from soya beans. The communique of the Eighth Ministerial Meeting expressed satisfaction with Australian assistance for projects related to the proper handling and storage of grains and the transport of livestock and other perishable foodstuffs.

The communique of the Eighth Ministerial Meeting also noted a report from the Secretaries-General on proposed assistance from New Zealand for ASEAN's economic and social development. A formal dialogue with New Zealand had commenced in February 1975. Informal contacts between Canada and ASEAN commenced in December 1975 following an offer of assistance from Canada. The U.S. also approached ASEAN in January 1975 suggesting consultations on economic matters.

ASEAN's formal contacts with Japan commenced on a less amicable basis. On the eve of the Sixth Ministerial Meeting Tun Ismail told the press that he would raise during the meeting the threat posed to natural rubber producers like Malaysia by Japan's synthetic rubber production. The communique stated that the ministers had considered the "indiscriminate expansion" of Japan's synthetic rubber industry and the acceleration of its exports, which they asserted posed "a serious threat" to the economies of ASEAN countries. They expressed "grave concern" and urged Japan to review its actions. Meetings of ASEAN Senior Officials resulted in the sending of two memoranda on this subject to Japan. In response to the second memorandum Japan agreed to direct talks. The first such talks were held in Tokyo in November 1973. Further joint meetings were held in Kuala
Lumpur in February 1974 and again in Tokyo in March 1974. At the Seventh Ministerial Meeting held in May 1974 Malik noted the Japanese Government's decision to request Japanese synthetic rubber manufacturers and exporters to plan their production and exports in such a way as not to harm the interests of the natural rubber producing countries of ASEAN. Japan reportedly had agreed to consider the level of production of the type of synthetic rubber that was the closest substitute for natural rubber, to provide technical assistance in research on new uses of natural rubber and to increase its own use of natural rubber.11. ASEAN had some cause to be pleased, in this instance, at the success of its coordinated efforts.

In the post-Vietnam War period, ASEAN's ability to promote an image of increasing unity and viability, and to coordinate its position in regard to contacts with non-regional countries, meant that it came increasingly to the attention of major Western countries who were attempting to develop a future relationship with non-communist Southeast Asia. As ASEAN established itself as the foremost regional organization in Southeast Asia, its members began to develop a deeper appreciation of the potential utility of the Association's heightened international stature. Although the effect of intra-ASEAN cooperative activities on the organization's international credibility had always been seen as an important consideration, it appeared to be seen increasingly as at least as important as the intrinsic benefits of such activities.
Prior to the Bali summit, a series of apparent mutual misunderstandings of almost comic proportions led to discussion of the possible attendance at the summit of other heads of government. It was reported that Marcos, Lee and Kukrit, while in Kuala Lumpur for the funeral of Tun Razak in January 1976, had agreed to invite the prime ministers of Australia, New Zealand and Japan to attend the summit. Japan and Australia were reported to have expressed interest in attending. Australian sources stated that Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser had been sounded out by Kukrit while he also was in Kuala Lumpur for the Razak funeral. Indonesian officials expressed surprise at these reports since they understood that the summit was intended for ASEAN leaders only. Denials were subsequently made that any invitations had been issued. Marcos stated that he had not heard of the proposal. He felt that ASEAN should consolidate before such meetings were held. Hussein Onn thought that it would be inappropriate for other heads of government to participate directly in the Bali discussions. Malik claimed that Australia had taken the initiative in seeking an invitation during a visit to Jakarta by Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock.

The matter was referred for decision to the ASEAN foreign ministers during their meeting in Thailand in early-February 1976. Malik stated that Indonesia had invited the three prime ministers of Japan, Australia and New Zealand to visit Jakarta. He said that he was pleased that they wanted to attend the summit and if the other ASEAN members agreed
Indonesia would extend the invitations. One report speculated that a compromise would be reached by the foreign ministers in which the three prime ministers would be invited to meet the ASEAN heads of government after the Bali summit. In the event, however, Thai Foreign Minister Chatichai conveyed to the diplomatic representatives of Australia and Japan the written decision of the ASEAN foreign ministers that invitations would not be issued in response to the "informal" approaches received from them. The ministers expressed their thanks but stated that a meeting after the Bali summit would be impossible because the ASEAN leaders would have to depart Bali immediately after the summit. The message also expressed "gratification at your Government's recognition of ASEAN as a collective and indigenous body and your desire to make a contribution to our joint efforts and undertakings in the economic field." Reports claimed that the ASEAN foreign ministers had been piqued at the way that Japan had used the press in lobbying for an invitation. Prime Minister Miki reportedly had also sent a top foreign ministry official to convey his desire to meet ASEAN leaders as soon as possible. Fraser commented that he did not consider the decision not to issue an invitation as a rebuff. He said that Australia had put the view that "if an invitation were extended we would be honoured and we would try to accept if that were possible. But I was also aware of the sensitivity of ASEAN members about other countries.".

It seems likely that, whatever other reasons may have influenced them, ASEAN leaders decided not to invite the leaders of other countries to Bali primarily because they
wished to concentrate first on the promotion of intra-ASEAN cooperation. They were clearly not averse to the development of relations with the industrial countries of the West and Japan at a later stage.

Post-Bali

The ASEAN economic ministers agreed in March 1976 to "establish ASEAN machinery for dialogue with third countries or groups of countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA, Japan, West Asian countries, EEC and COMECON countries as well as other regional groupings or blocs." They also agreed to adopt joint approaches on world economic problems in international fora. During the remainder of 1976, ASEAN began to apply greater pressure to some dialogue countries in an attempt to obtain economic concessions. ASEAN was appreciative of Australia's project assistance but concerned that increasing levels of protection for Australian industry was damaging ASEAN's exports. In July ASEAN officials rejected an Australian proposal for the establishment of an ASEAN-Australia Trade Committee. Instead they drew up a hard-hitting Memorandum recommending an ASEAN Canberra Committee which would be consulted before any increases in protectionist measures. The Memorandum was approved by the economic ministers. ASEAN representatives also continued to pressure the EEC for economic concessions, especially during the second meeting of the Joint Study Group in December 1976. As well as trade concessions and project and advisory assistance, ASEAN sought industrial cooperation and the transfer of technology from the EEC.
The notion of inviting the heads of government of Japan, Australia and New Zealand to a meeting to follow the second ASEAN summit appeared to crystallize in January 1977, at about the same time that agreement was reached on the holding of the summit itself. ASEAN members may have been influenced by the positive attitude shown by Fukuda, the new Japanese Prime Minister, towards the development of relations with ASEAN. At their informal meeting in February, the economic ministers noted that Fukuda had responded favourably to the idea of a meeting with the ASEAN heads of government and would be sending a foreign ministry official to the ASEAN capitals to prepare the groundwork. They also discussed the possibility of a Lome-type Convention between ASEAN and Japan, analogous to that under which African, Caribbean and Pacific countries gained preferential access to EEC markets. This matter had been discussed with Fukuda by Indonesia's Minister of State for Economic, Financial and Industrial Affairs, Widjojo Nitisastro. He had also raised with Fukuda the possible financing by Japan of the first five ASEAN industrial projects.

The informal meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers in February 1977 welcomed forthcoming dialogues with Japan and the U.S. It reaffirmed that ASEAN was ready to conduct similar dialogues "with all other countries, groups of countries, and international organizations." A formal dialogue with Japan, to be known as the ASEAN-Japan Forum, was institutionalized during a meeting in Jakarta on 23 March 1977. Earlier, on 3-4 February, a formal ASEAN-Canada dialogue had also been
In mid-April 1977, Malaysia announced that it had been authorized by ASEAN members to invite the prime ministers of Japan, Australia and New Zealand to meet with the ASEAN heads of government immediately after the August summit. Though the three prime ministers were quick to accept the invitation there was evidence of some nervousness, at least on the part of Australia, that the summit would be used by ASEAN to increase pressure for economic concessions. Peacock was reportedly expected to seek assurances that the post-summit meetings would be a venue for "cooperation rather than confrontation". From Australia's viewpoint, these fears appeared to be justified by its experience during the ASEAN-Australia dialogue meeting, thereafter known as the ASEAN-Australia Forum, held in Surakarta in May. At Surakarta, ASEAN officials reiterated their unhappiness about rising protectionism in Australia and about growing trade deficits with Australia. The Australian government came under increasing domestic pressure to accommodate ASEAN interests. In June 1977, Malaysia commenced delaying the issue of import permits for Australian goods. Similar delays had been commenced by the Philippines. Prior to his departure for the ASEAN economic ministers meeting that month, Datuk Hamzah said that he would raise the issue of Australia's "unhealthy trade practices" during the meeting and seek concerted ASEAN retaliatory measures against Australia's exports. In his opening address to the meeting, Lee Kuan Yew stated that in its dialogues with the EEC, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S., ASEAN must "press home the disruptive
consequences of their protectionist tendencies on our people." He suggested that ASEAN's bargaining position would be strengthened "if we can coordinate our import policies to collectively close our consolidated markets to those who unreasonably and unilaterally shut off our exports." After the meeting Singapore's Finance Minister Hon Sui Sen disclosed that no agreement had been reached on concerted action against Australia for the moment. He said that there had been lengthy but inconclusive discussion on the matter during the meeting. The official report of the meeting indicated that each ASEAN member would draw up a list of products imported from Australia on which "possible countervailing measures" could be enforced. Lee Kuan Yew spoke of "considerable frustration and bitterness" in countries like the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia that Australia - "a very wealthy continent, sparsely populated, with enormous natural resources not yet fully developed, with an industrial capacity commensurate with those resources" - should want to continue to protect labour-intensive industries.21.

Other developed countries fared much better by comparison in their relations with ASEAN during this period, but did not escape entirely from the newfound enthusiasm of some ASEAN spokesmen in exercising their economic muscle. During a visit to Japan Marcos informed his hosts that ASEAN wished to see greater effort from Japan to "correct our present imbalance in trade, channel investments into more desirable areas, upgrade official assistance and step up the transfer of technology to ASEAN countries." Using more robust language, a "prominent ASEAN official" was reported to have
stated privately that the "time for soft speaking with the Japanese is over. They have taken advantage of our gentle manner. It is time to give them some of their own medicine." Rajaratnam cautioned that if Japan did not concede that its "formidable" trade surplus with ASEAN should be reduced, then "it could lead to all sorts of political tensions and misunderstandings." Under pressure from ASEAN, the EEC also continued to improve the preferential access of Asian countries to its markets, to the extent that Lome Convention countries complained of the erosion of their own preferential treatment. In terms of tactics, however, influential voices in ASEAN continued to favour a moderate approach. Asked if ASEAN would apply pressure to Japan if it refused to liberalize its terms of trade and increase development assistance, Lee Kuan Yew replied that he thought that was the wrong approach. "If we begin to think in terms of retaliation, pressure or leverage even before we begin to talk, then we are off on the wrong foot." Nevertheless, the ASEAN economic ministers recommended in their report to the ASEAN heads of government that during the post-summit meeting with Fraser they should express serious concern over protectionist measures, urge Australia to liberalize trade barriers, and request better access for ASEAN products. They also formulated a long shopping list of requirements for the heads of government to present to Japan. With regard to New Zealand, the ministers recommended the development of a preferential economic relationship and that New Zealand be asked to phase out labour-intensive industries.

During the Tenth Ministerial Meeting in July, the
foreign ministers commended ASEAN for the progress that had been made in dialogues with other countries. Malik noted that the Association was being taken "more and more seriously" by these countries. Romulo commented that the rest of the world regarded ASEAN "with increasing respect". He added that the task before ASEAN was to enhance this favourable image by increasing "the credibility of ASEAN as a strong, viable and growing regional aggrupement."

Kuala Lumpur

As noted previously, it was widely considered at the time that the most important aspect of the Kuala Lumpur summit was not the meeting between the ASEAN leaders on 4 and 5 August 1977, and the resultant at best modest progress in intra-ASEAN cooperation, but the subsequent meetings on 6-8 August with the prime ministers of Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Popular perceptions of the summit within ASEAN countries were illustrated rather cleverly by a cover design for Asiaweek magazine which was titled "THE SUMMIT : ASEAN HOLDS THE ACES". It featured the faces of the ASEAN leaders on five aces and the faces of Fukuda, Fraser and Muldoon on three joker cards. Romulo remarked on his arrival prior to the summit that he thought that while the Bali summit would be remembered for its concentration on the internal consolidation of ASEAN, the Kuala Lumpur summit would be remembered "for demonstrating the positive stance the ASEAN member-countries have adopted in their relations with other countries, particularly with their neighbours." In his address to the summit Suharto said that he was convinced that the post-summit
discussions would "bring about favourable results." He hoped that these dialogues and the forthcoming dialogue with the U.S., which was to commence in Manila in September 1977, would "produce tangible results within the shortest possible time". Hussein Onn looked forward to discussions "in the spirit of partnership and interdependence". Marcos was more blunt. He suggested that the time was propitious to urge the developed nations to "commit themselves to a firm policy of liberal trade instead of merely aid and to guarantee to us the purchasing power of our exports and assure us our markets for manufactures and semi-manufactures." Lee also was blunt. He noted that the upcoming talks with Japan could be "an important landmark on a road that could lead us to a more productive relationship." He warned, however, that they "could just as easily become a ceremonial ritual along an inconsequential road that will lead us nowhere." The outcome would depend, he predicted, on whether Japan took a long-term view and whether ASEAN was able to create the conditions which would make it advantageous for Japan to offer the concessions and assistance sought by ASEAN. Tanin merely commented that the meetings with Japan, Australia and New Zealand would provide an indication of "the growing recognition being accorded ASEAN as a viable and effective regional organization of international standing."

The summit communique issued on 5 August made clear the expectations of the ASEAN heads of government for the future development of their relations with Japan, Australia, New Zealand and other developed countries. It urged the developed countries to take "urgent positive measures" to extend to
ASEAN "an arrangement for the stabilization of export earnings derived from ASEAN commodity exports"; it viewed "with concern" the spread of protectionist tendencies in developed countries and called on them to "take immediate measures" to remove such protection; and it called on the developed countries to extend financial assistance to the ASEAN industrial projects "on the most favourable terms and conditions". With regard to Japan, the heads of government looked forward to an expansion of economic cooperation "particularly aimed at improving access to the Japanese market, stabilizing prices of and earnings from ASEAN export commodities, financing ASEAN industrial projects, and enhancing ASEAN agricultural and industrial development."

Noting progress in projects with Australia, they stated that they would welcome closer ASEAN-Australia economic cooperation.

Prime Ministers Takeo Fukuda, Malcolm Fraser and Robert Muldoon were greeted in a series of airport welcome ceremonies upon their arrival in Kuala Lumpur on 6 August. Fukuda arrived with a delegation of 52, including Foreign Minister Hatoyama, Chief Cabinet Secretary Sonoda and Minister of International Trade and Industry Tanaka, occupying several floors of the Regent Hotel. Fraser brought a delegation of 23, including Foreign Affairs Minister Peacock and Minister for Special Trade Negotiations Howard, and moved into the Equatorial Hotel. Muldoon checked into the Merlin Hotel with a delegation of nine. Proceedings commenced with an "informal" meeting on 6 August between the ASEAN heads of government and the three visitors. In a welcoming speech Hussein Onn expressed
appreciation for the interest shown in ASEAN by Japan, Australia and New Zealand. He remarked upon ASEAN's unity of purpose, its collective determination and "our feeling of having achieved, step by step, what we have set out to do". Referring to the forthcoming discussions he expressed confidence that the results would be satisfactory to all concerned. He thought it would be "unreasonable to expect that there will be no problems or genuine differences of opinion", but suggested that these should not be allowed "to mar or weaken our long-standing friendship."

Separate meetings with the three prime ministers were to be held on the following two days. Expectations were running high. Asiaweek commented that after a long period when ASEAN had been looked upon "with condescension and apathy" it had won increasing respect at home and abroad. The post-summit meetings would mark ASEAN's "unmistakable arrival as a unique new force in international affairs". In Japan, Western Europe and the United States, it was claimed, there was a belief "that the hour has arrived for the West to make an unequivocal economic commitment to the survival and stability of both ASEAN and the rest of the non-communist Third World." One by one, in the alphabetical order defined by protocol, the leaders of Australia, Japan and New Zealand would become "the first heads of government to negotiate with the leadership of the world's most dynamic new economic bloc." For all three, it was noted, the discussions could be "uncomfortable as well as historic". Whether they would be assured of a place in Southeast Asia's history books or only a chapter or a footnote "depends pretty much on them." Many ASEAN observers were said
to believe that "nothing short of an Asian-style Marshall Plan" was needed to win the race between communist insurgency and ASEAN development.24.

Clearly the most important post-summit meeting from the ASEAN perspective was that with Prime Minister Fukuda of Japan. The meeting had been preceded by extensive discussion and preparation between Japanese and ASEAN ministers and officials. Fukuda signalled at an early stage his desire to be as helpful to ASEAN as he felt possible. He adopted the position that he would be going to the meeting with ASEAN leaders with an open mind, ready to give very serious consideration to any proposals made, but he felt it inappropriate to come as "Santa Claus" with ready-packaged presents. Nevertheless, Fukuda appeared aware of the need to display generosity where possible in order to consolidate Japan's relationship with ASEAN. He found the invitation to the talks in Kuala Lumpur to be "very opportune and potentially epoch-making for Asia as a whole." He wanted to "make a great success of the meeting" and establish Japan as an "equal partner" and "true friend" of Southeast Asia. Japanese officials foreshadowed that after the ASEAN meeting, while visiting Manila, Fukuda would announce a set of principles governing Japan's relations with Southeast Asia, which were later dubbed "the Fukuda Doctrine".25.

The joint statement issued on 7 August at the conclusion of a three hour post-summit meeting with Fukuda recorded that:
Japan wished to assist ASEAN regional economic cooperation programs and to further strengthen the relations of interdependence between Japan and ASEAN;

Japan recognized the need for a steady expansion of trade and undertook to facilitate improved ASEAN access to Japanese markets for manufactured and semi-manufactured and primary product exports;

Fukuda expressed his understanding of ASEAN's desire to establish a Stabex (Stabilization of Export Earnings) scheme and agreed to conduct a joint examination of the various problems involved;

Japan affirmed its readiness to extend assistance towards the realization of ASEAN industrial projects, provided that each project was established as an ASEAN project and that its feasibility was confirmed. Japan would "consider favourably" ASEAN's request for finance of one billion US dollars for these projects on concessional terms "to the extent possible";

Japan intended to more than double its Official Development Assistance in the next five years. Greater emphasis would be placed upon cooperation with ASEAN;

ASEAN leaders stressed the importance of continued and intensified investment by the Japanese private sector. Fukuda expressed his willingness to encourage the Japanese private sector to participate in the development of ASEAN through investment and the transfer of technology;

Japan would participate actively and positively in existing international commodity agreements covering ASEAN commodities and would make best efforts for the
early conclusion of other commodity arrangements covering commodities of interest to ASEAN; both sides viewed with concern the spread of protectionist tendencies in developed countries and agreed on the urgent need to curb such protectionism; and the ASEAN heads of government and the Prime Minister of Japan expressed their satisfaction that "a new era of cooperation and understanding" had been ushered in between ASEAN countries and Japan.

Reaction to Fukuda's position during the talks was not entirely uncritical. Lee Kuan Yew commented that had the ASEAN heads of government been able to reach "a different stage of consensus", the Japanese would not have got away with saying merely that they would give "favourable consideration" to financing of the ASEAN industrial projects. Evidently Fukuda had remarked that ASEAN and Japan were both in the same economic boat, to which Lee responded that "some of us are in first class and some of us in steerage." Musa Hitam also reacted cautiously to Fukuda's undertakings, noting that in the past Japan had adopted a hardline attitude on international commodity issues. Generally speaking, however, observers agreed that ASEAN's talks with Fukuda had been successful. Lee concluded that the talks had been "constructive and stimulating". Romulo thought that the commitments made by Fukuda had been "far-reaching". One commentator, noting that Fukuda's impending arrival for the summit had been viewed with some misgivings by those who expected a "hard-headed, businesslike, even ungenerous
"bargainer", concluded that he had in fact impressed all five ASEAN leaders with "his quiet, almost casual manner, with his concrete series of proposals, his open-minded reactions to ASEAN's counter-propositions, and his grasp of detail."

Another commentator thought that Fukuda "stole the show" and that the Kuala Lumpur summit would be remembered most for "drawing the economic barons of Japan into substantial involvement in the region's future."28.

The post-summit talks with Prime Minister Fraser were not nearly so well received. As one journalist put it, they "went down like a lead balloon". Prior to the summit it was reported that the Australian government had been given high-level assurances from ASEAN members that Fraser would not be embarrassed by continued sharp attacks on Australia's trade barriers during his meetings in Kuala Lumpur. Fraser also made it clear that Australia's economic problems would not permit any early major trade concessions. ASEAN officials were reported to be "frankly pessimistic" about the prospects for progress in the talks with Fraser. There was speculation that he could expect "a hot reception". Perhaps for this reason Australia reportedly "lobbied feverishly", but unsuccessfully, to have the three prime ministers talk to the ASEAN leaders as a group, rather than individually.29.

The joint statement issued at the conclusion of the post-summit meeting with Fraser was couched in polite terms. It noted that this "historic meeting" had been "of the greatest value" in furthering bilateral ties. It recorded that Australia had been the first country to establish a formal
relationship with ASEAN in 1974 (somewhat questionable in view
of prior exchanges with the EEC) and that it had been agreed
that relationships between ASEAN and Australia were strong and
constructive. Measures to enhance the quality and quantity of
Australia's development assistance to ASEAN countries were
announced, including a new commitment of A$10 million under
the ASEAN-Australia Economic Cooperation Program and an
undertaking to contribute to aspects of agreed ASEAN
industrial projects. Australia undertook to sponsor an
ASEAN/Australia Investment Seminar and to meet the cost of a
Joint ASEAN/Australia Research Project whose aim would be to
establish a sound basis of knowledge from which a long-term
economic relationship would be developed. It was considered,
according to the statement, that these initiatives would "give
added impetus to the ASEAN/Australia relationship". On the
sensitive trade issue, the statement noted that the ASEAN
heads of government "while appreciating the domestic economic
problems faced by Australia at the moment, expressed a strong
wish to increase their share of trade with Australia." It was
agreed that consultative mechanisms should be improved "to
promote further a cooperative and constructive approach to the
development of mutual trade relations" and that the foreign
ministers would make "appropriate proposals". Similar
observations to those in the Japan-ASEAN statement were made
about cooperation in the commodity area and with regard to
mutual concern about the spread of protectionist tendencies in
developed countries.

Lee Kuan Yew stated that he thought the result of the
meeting with Fraser had been "the best in the circumstances"
since at the first of these meetings it was important that any recriminations should be avoided. ASEAN leaders had adhered to their undertaking not to force a confrontation with Fraser, but in discussions at officials level there had apparently been some hard bargaining during negotiations on the joint statement, creating considerable ill-feeling on the ASEAN side. ASEAN officials reportedly stuck to their guns over their insistence on a firm commitment from Australia to undertake trade liberalization, and on a statement that Australia's policies hindered ASEAN's exports. Australia would not accept either. Officials met until 4 am on the morning of the talks and resumed again at 8 am. "Sources" claimed that reference to Australia's protectionist trade policies was dropped from the joint statement on Fraser's own insistence. Strong resentment was reported amongst ASEAN officials at what they considered the unreasonably defensive stand taken by Fraser and the Australian negotiating team, especially their refusal during the marathon negotiating sessions to accept any direct public criticism of Australia's protectionist policies. ASEAN officials noted later that both Japan and New Zealand had been more candid in admitting they had some restrictive measures in place and more diplomatic in stating that they intended to reduce protectionist barriers. Despite assurances to the contrary at government-to-government level, Malaysian trade officials said that they would continue to discourage Australian imports as the Australians had got away "scot free" from the post-summit meeting because Malaysia did not consider that as host it should press them unduly. The comment was made by "one observer" that Fraser's victory might prove to be a Pyrrhic one since, with regard to promised future trade
concessions from Australia, ASEAN officials "might just grab the stick on which the carrot is dangled and use it to beat the daylights out of Australia." Disagreement continued after the meeting on the role of the proposed consultative body, whose purpose was to inform ASEAN countries of Australian trade policy developments.

While journalists concluded that Fraser had "showed little sympathy and won few friends" in Kuala Lumpur, New Zealand's Robert Muldoon had a much less difficult time of it, despite the similarity of his country's trade policies to those of Australia. Muldoon announced a proposed significant increase in development assistance to ASEAN countries. He also indicated a preparedness to implement and finance a number of measures designed to assist ASEAN exporters to obtain a greater share of the New Zealand market, despite New Zealand's economic difficulties. He endorsed the ASEAN stand on commodity issues and on the spread of protectionism.

All in all, the post-summit talks went very well for ASEAN, especially in terms of the symbolic significance of the recognition accorded to ASEAN by the heads of government of Japan, Australia and New Zealand. ASEAN's effectiveness as a vehicle for collective negotiations with other countries had been clearly demonstrated. Observers agreed that the presence of the other heads of government had given the summit "its biggest lift". The United States also acknowledged at the time of the summit that, as a State Department official reportedly put it, "ASEAN is an idea whose time has come." ASEAN Review declared triumphantly that although ASEAN's tenth
anniversary might not be "an occasion for vigorous self-congratulation" in other respects, it would at least mark for the Association "the most visible sign of its recognition and acceptance by the world of diplomacy as one of the star actors on the global stage". This was especially due to the presence at the summit, as the "centrepiece of the spectacle", of the three invited prime ministers, "waiting in the anteroom of ASEAN diplomacy." "That, if nothing else," the magazine asserted, "makes the Summit a historic event in the progress of ASEAN". ASEAN leaders could take satisfaction from the fact that although with regard to its basic goals the Association may have failed to live up to the expectations of all, it had at least achieved a spectacular success in demonstrating its capacity to exercise international influence.

FOOTNOTES


4. Malcolm Subhan, "ASEAN-EEC Relations", in Southeast Asian Affairs 1977, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies,


6. ibid., 17 April 1974.


CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Having now surveyed the aspirations and objectives that ASEAN's members developed for their Association during the course of its first ten years, and its record in achieving or failing to achieve them, it is appropriate to summarize and to evaluate ASEAN's performance during this period, focusing especially on its members' own views.

It must be recognised at the outset that the criteria by which it was considered that ASEAN's performance should be judged were subject to conflicting interpretations. There were divergent views amongst ASEAN participants and external commentators, and in some instances between these two groups, about the most important objectives for the Association, about the appropriate hierarchy for these objectives and about the degree of urgency with which they should be pursued. These divergences were evident from the time of ASEAN's formation, although their existence then and later was sometimes concealed at least partially by ASEAN's members due to their practice of decision-making by consensus. Rajaratnam on one occasion drew an analogy between the perceptions of ASEAN held by its members and the fiction writer's technique of portraying a key character through the eyes of a number of other personalities in the novel. The outcome was often to make that character more enigmatic than ever due to the
different perspectives of those other personalities. In the same way, he suggested, ASEAN meant "many things to many people." Or as one academic put it: "Regionalism like beauty may be said to exist in the eye of the beholder." On another occasion, while addressing the Tenth Ministerial Meeting, Rajaratnam apologized for not having given a balance sheet of ASEAN's performance during its first ten years "because I know that I can produce different and contradictory balance-sheets and all would be half-truths." One balance sheet, he noted, "could show that we could have done better than we did and that would be right", while another "could show that we had done better than what had been expected of five developing countries in the field of regional cooperation and that would be right too." It follows therefore that even for ASEAN's own members no single criteria for the Association's performance can be regarded as authoritative.

Achievements

While opinions varied as to the extent of ASEAN's accomplishments during its first decade, it is nevertheless striking that for the most part considerable satisfaction was expressed about the Association's performance by ASEAN's political leaders and government officials. For example, in his remarks at the Tenth Ministerial Meeting Romulo declared that ASEAN was now "here to stay". It was "alive and well" and had proved itself "a most effective instrument" for the pursuit of common objectives. Addressing the opening session of the Kuala Lumpur summit Hussein Onn noted that while the road towards the achievement of ASEAN's aims and purposes
could not be expected to be smooth and easy, the Association had become "a viable, pragmatic and respected organization" and "a force that cannot lightly be brushed aside."

Many non-government commentators in the region shared this sense of satisfaction with ASEAN's achievements. One observed that the fact ASEAN had remained united up to the Bali summit, and had emerged from the summit as a vigorous regional grouping, was "somewhat of a miracle". Another noted that since the Bali summit ASEAN members had "nudged up the development of relations with their ASEAN fellow members and their cooperative efforts to bring about collective welfare to just about the top of the list" of their national foreign policy and economic priorities. The Far Eastern Economic Review described ASEAN as the only regional forum which was "a positive reality, a going concern, an organic international organization" to the extent that members were prepared to modify their assessment of their respective national interests "in the regional collective cause."

Non-regional commentators also frequently praised ASEAN's accomplishments. One newspaper remarked that ASEAN, which had been "formed some years as essentially an economic talkfeast", had emerged as "the touchstone of political stability in the area." Another concluded that at end of its first ten years ASEAN had become "the pre-eminent regional organization in Asia". It had "contributed to regional stability and cultivated a sense of regional solidarity amongst its members, developed the mutual political confidence of its members, and promoted social and economic progress."
Economic cooperation had been enshrined in the ASEAN Declaration as the organization's key aim. Other objectives were also important to ASEAN's founders, and over time they were regarded as having increasing importance. The legitimacy of these other objectives was confirmed by the Declaration of ASEAN Concord. Nevertheless, many ASEAN spokesmen continued to emphasize the primacy of economic cooperation. Malaysian spokesmen, perhaps fearful of the implications of any trend towards increased involvement in security affairs, were especially vocal on this point. Hussein Onn stressed to ASEAN economic ministers in March 1976 that the "central purpose" of ASEAN remained the advancement of the material well-being of Southeast Asian peoples through socio-economic cooperation. Others supported Malaysia's view. Upadit told the special meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers in February 1977 that economic cooperation was "undoubtedly the strongest fibre in the fabric of ASEAN solidarity and cooperation". Romulo remarked to the Tenth Ministerial Meeting that: "The house of ASEAN has many mansions, but today economic development takes pride of place." The role of economic cooperation in underpinning political and security interests was often noted.

Though it was unanimously agreed that progress in the economic area had been painfully slow, ASEAN leaders pointed to the measures agreed at the Bali and Kuala Lumpur summits as proof that a beginning had been made in introducing more ambitious schemes to encourage intra-regional economic cooperation. They also defended their modest achievements in this field during the Association's early years against
criticisms that these achievements were insignificant, even though they acknowledged that such cooperation had rarely gone beyond loosely coordinated measures designed primarily to assist national economic development. There was strong support also for the view that ASEAN could play a valuable role as a vehicle for collective bargaining with other countries on economic matters. Some even saw this as a more valuable role than the promotion of intra-ASEAN economic cooperation. The presence of the heads of government of Japan, Australia and New Zealand at the Kuala Lumpur post-summit meetings and the pressure that ASEAN was able to place on them and on other developed countries with whom ASEAN had established formal dialogues, was sufficient testimony for most ASEAN participants to the beneficial role that the Association could play in the management of the external economic relations of its members.

A usually unstated but fundamental role played by ASEAN and endorsed by all its members was the preservation of amicable bilateral relations between them, or, in situations where such relations had broken down, the amelioration at least indirectly of the damaging effects of such disputes. ASEAN's leaders were well-pleased by the Association's success in this respect. From its inception ASEAN countries benefited from the moderating influence that their joint membership of the Association had on bilateral disputes. As early as 1972 Lee Kuan Yew told the Fifth Ministerial Meeting that in his view the most valuable achievement of ASEAN had been the understanding and goodwill arising from the frequent meetings of the Association which had "helped to lubricate
relationships which could otherwise have generated friction." Oemarjadi Njotowijono observed in 1974 that despite lack of progress in implementing large-scale projects, ASEAN leaders were generally satisfied with the organization's progress because they "used a different yardstick", namely the organization's success in moderating bilateral disputes. They compared the present state of relations between Southeast Asian countries with the circumstances of 1967 and concluded that "in the fulfillment of this main function ASEAN has been a brilliant success." In a speech in the same year Rajaratnam admitted there had been "differences and even dissensions" between ASEAN members, but he asserted that "these have never been allowed, because of ASEAN, to get out of control or endanger the organization."4. Addressing other ASEAN leaders at the Kuala Lumpur summit Hussein Onn commented that because of the "rapport and sustained cooperation" within ASEAN the politics of confrontation had become past history. At the same meeting Marcos expressed the view, no doubt with the proposed dropping of the Sabah claim in mind, that "the most laudable achievement of this conference is, finally and at last, the transformation of this region that has been preoccupied with conflict, haunted by distrust and suspicion, into a region of cooperation and solidarity, beyond our most sanguine expectations." Others shared the view of ASEAN leaders that the most salient feature of the Association was, as a Malaysian academic put it, its success "in getting and keeping together the five nations". The New Straits Times commented that "the existence of ASEAN, and the full and frank intercourse at the highest levels it has made possible, have helped immeasurably in the building of regional consensus,
have made it possible to nip in the bud issues which could threaten conflict, have facilitated the settlement of existing disputes".5.

Since ASEAN's foundation political cooperation was a major focus of its activities. ASEAN's political objectives were formalized by the Declaration of ASEAN Concord. Many observers commented approvingly on ASEAN's accomplishments in this area. Members were able to coordinate their views on a number of political issues affecting the region. ASEAN's participants sometimes acknowledged that much of the Association's success had been in the political field. Cooperation in political matters was often much easier than in other areas given the frequent similarity in the political goals of ASEAN's members. Political cooperation was also a natural and almost unavoidable preoccupation for an organization whose key participants for many years were the foreign ministers and foreign ministry officials. ASEAN's members were, moreover, in some respects a natural political grouping, given that they comprised the majority of the non-communist countries in Southeast Asia. Many non-regional commentators asserted that ASEAN's major accomplishments were in fact essentially political in nature. Despite the ASEAN Declaration's emphasis on economic, social and cultural objectives, one prominent analyst of ASEAN affairs concluded that it was "in essence" an organization which "aspires to a central role in the management of regional order". Another commentator also deduced that ASEAN's cooperation was essentially political in nature because "much of the activities have resulted from actions of political leaders
concerned with creating a political climate conducive to more fruitful economic cooperation." A third non-regional observer, attempting to distinguish between the "image and reality" of ASEAN, came to the assessment that a balance sheet of ASEAN showed that its greatest success had been in the political and diplomatic field rather than in pursuit of its declared objectives in other areas. A fourth contended that "it was the political and diplomatic benefits of the association that led to its creation and permitted it to prosper. Indeed, political considerations determined the association's membership, defined the scope of its activities, and gave it its significance for each of its members .... It is appropriate, therefore, to speak of ASEAN not as an alliance, but as a political entente."6.

ASEAN's relative success in political cooperation entailed major benefits in several associated areas. Such cooperation enhanced its members' international influence and indirectly increased their security. These were conscious and very important objectives for ASEAN's members. ASEAN's growing international influence at the end of its first decade was signified by the fact that any useful discussion of the foreign relations of the region could no longer focus primarily on the attitudes and activities of external major powers, as had often previously been the case, but now had to take into account as an important point of reference the individual and collective views of the indigenous states. With regard to security considerations, it has been argued by some observers that these were always of overriding importance in the minds of ASEAN leaders, and that the unity and solidarity
displayed by them was primarily the result of a shared strong perception of external threat, first from China and later from Vietnam. Statements by ASEAN's participants sometimes lent support to this view. For example, Rajaratnam at the Ninth Ministerial Meeting countered the view that ASEAN did not bring great benefits by reminding the Association's critics that "without ASEAN and as isolated individual states we are far more vulnerable and helpless."

**Shortcomings**

Despite the evident satisfaction of ASEAN's members with the organization's overall achievements, they were not complacent. They were well aware of the Association's shortcomings and of the continued criticism levelled against it from both outside and within the region. Indeed, members themselves were all individually dissatisfied with particular aspects of ASEAN's policies or performance. Non-regional commentators were quick to point out, especially during ASEAN's first eight years, that it had not made major progress towards fulfilling the goals of the ASEAN Declaration. One writer described those years as having been characterized by a "somnolent, ineffective state of suspended animation". Others commented that ASEAN was "long on talk and short on action", "distinguished by resolutions rather than than by resolve", "long on vague ideals and short on concrete achievement". They concluded that during this period ASEAN's performance had been "lacklustre and disappointing", that it had "essentially marked time", and that its main achievement had been "a compilation of less than impressive, not to say trivial,
projects." The Straits Times also noted just before the Bali summit that a frequent observation about ASEAN was that it had achieved success "by simply doing nothing important". For eight years it "inched forward rather than leapt through the pages of history ... spending most of the time consolidating major concepts rather than projects and alternating between optimism and despair." ASEAN generally secured much higher praise following the Bali and Kuala Lumpur summits; but many analysts, especially from outside the region, still expressed disappointment with the pace of its development.

Many of ASEAN's participants were themselves frustrated and exasperated by its slow progress. Ali Moertopo remarked following the Bali summit that it had to be admitted "that the tangible results of ASEAN cooperation have been few so far, and that much of the criticism directed to the Association, even the most severe and the most intemperate, cannot easily be dismissed." Rajaratnam noted following the Kuala Lumpur summit that there were those who saw ASEAN as "a commendable charade", its notable achievements being "a lot of pious resolutions and a great deal of rhetoric signifying nothing." He observed on the eve of the summit that ASEAN's achievements had fallen short of the expectations of those who were enthusiastic about the Association. "For the last ten years", he said, "we have become very proficient in finger exercises, but we have not yet played the sonata on the piano."  

Those within and outside ASEAN who expressed disappointment with its achievements often appeared to believe
that the real benefits of cooperation within the organization would only be realized when its activities, especially within the economic sphere, reached a higher level of cooperative endeavour. Especially after the communist victories in Indochina in 1975, both ASEAN's members and external critics increasingly called for the Association to demonstrate its viability by showing its ability to move into more difficult areas of economic cooperation. Because economic cooperation was given so much emphasis by ASEAN it came to be seen as the key criteria by which the progress of the Association should be judged. Unfortunately, this also became one of the areas of cooperation in which it appeared to be most difficult to achieve substantial progress. The growing influence of advocates of regional economic cooperation was demonstrated by their success in committing ASEAN to attempts at expanded intra-ASEAN economic cooperation following the Bali and Kuala Lumpur summits. But this was not accomplished easily and was not on a sufficient scale to satisfy those who believed that ASEAN's future success depended on more extensive integration of its economic and political activities.

It is clear that many of ASEAN's participants saw a bright future for the Association through the expansion of integrative activities. The Philippines appeared to be particularly wedded to this view. Romulo hoped for the development of a "Southeast Asian Community" which would "achieve a certain level of a super-national body." Marcos noted in October 1976 that ASEAN had developed the beginnings of "a regional economic community, through which all the member-states can undertake cooperative effort in their
national and regional development programs and work towards broadening the complementarity of their respective economies." He urged that "the integration of ASEAN must come as a priority." A leading Filipino businessman also applauded progress after the Bali summit towards the creation of an "ASEAN Economic Community". Singapore, which had perhaps most to gain economically from the integration of ASEAN economies, was also a persistent supporter of measures towards the creation of a more integrated regional economy. One Singaporean academic went so far as to suggested that there was an "obvious need for a supranational or regional industrial development authority to coordinate national industrial development plans and to identify projects which can only be promoted on a regional level and by direct government participation." Other ASEAN countries also had many advocates of greater integration, especially economists who saw considerable potential in the integrative economic measures which had been recommended by the U.N. study team. A Malaysian economist, for example, observed that it had been correctly stated that "if the countries of this region could agree to some form of integration and harmonization of policies they will become a viable entity of 250 million people with an abundance of resources." Non-ASEAN critics also saw it as a failing that the Association had not developed a greater degree of integration, comparing it sometimes unfavourably in this respect with other regional organizations such as the EEC. The Far Eastern Economic Review commented that although 1976 had been a "watershed year" for ASEAN, it "was not the decisive turning point towards political community and economic integration that it
might have been." ASEAN had, it added, "failed to realize the
promise outlined in a U.N. report it had earlier
commissioned". In organizational terms, both ASEAN’s members
and outside commentators often lamented that ASEAN had failed
to set up supra-national regional institutions to encourage
the development of a regional outlook. Some foreign observers
pointed to "the need to create a regional institution or
institutions which will in turn create an echelon of those
with a vested interest in regional solutions".14.

Advocates of regional integration usually backed up
their arguments with the view that ASEAN’s progress had been
excessively inhibited by the preponderant influence of
national interests over regional interests in the
organization’s decision-making processes. Musa Hitam on one
occasion expressed this view forcefully with the observation
that there was a need to think more in terms of "supra ASEAN
nationalism", to think "not in terms of having to give away
concessions, but actually making our contribution to the
overall mutual development of all the five member-countries."
He asserted there could never be any real progress "if we are
to allow ourselves to be continually bogged down by narrow
nationalism". Or as a Bangkok Post editorial put it: "Unless
the attitudes of the various governments are basically changed
from the narrower and selfish aspects of nationalism towards
the long-range benefits of regionalism for all people in
Southeast Asia, ASEAN will continue to stagnate".15. There
clearly had been several instances when some ASEAN members had
resisted ambitious economic cooperation measures proposed by
other ASEAN countries. Most frequently these cases had seen
Indonesia pitted against Singapore, the latter being supported usually by the Philippines and often by Thailand also. A Japanese observer concluded that progress towards economic integration in ASEAN had been extremely slow "mainly because of a mutual distrust and persistent fear among the ASEAN member-countries of more economically advanced member-countries dominating the other partner countries and retarding the pace of economic development of the latter." 16.

There were other areas also in which some of ASEAN's participants expressed disappointment with the Association's performance. Although ASEAN had indeed played a very useful role in ameliorating bilateral disputes, bilateral tensions persisted and were a major limiting factor on ASEAN's performance. A factor in Indonesia's lukewarm interest in expanded regional economic cooperation was probably its continuing antipathy towards Singapore. This antipathy had been aggravated by Singapore's abstention on the U.N. resolution condemning Indonesia's military actions in Timor during the latter half of 1975. Malik noted caustically that it seemed that Singapore was afraid that it would share the same fate as East Timor. 17. Strains also continued in relations between Singapore and Malaysia, Malaysia and the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand and even to some degree between Indonesia and Malaysia. 18.

There were also areas of ASEAN's cooperation in the political field where some of ASEAN's members were dissatisfied with the policies adopted by the organization. A
notable example was Malaysia's private disappointment with the failure of other ASEAN members to endorse more active measures to promote the zone of peace, freedom and neutrality proposal and to adopt a more conciliatory stance towards Vietnam. Other ASEAN members appeared to become increasingly opposed to the idea of including the Indochina states in ASEAN at some future stage. Malaysian leaders nevertheless repeatedly stated their belief that the interests of the states of ASEAN and Indochina were "ultimately convergent" and stressed the common destiny of all nations in Southeast Asia. As a "non-military, non-ideological and non-antagonistic" organization Malaysia considered that ASEAN could meet "the common requirements" of all Southeast Asian countries. It pledged itself to "strive relentlessly for a truly Southeast Asian ASEAN". In the face of Vietnam's continued criticism of ASEAN, most ASEAN members preferred to see the future of Southeast Asia in terms of peaceful competition and cooperation between two separate groupings. They appeared to reject the notion that ASEAN might disband in order that a new regional organization could be established to include both communist and non-communist states of Southeast Asia.

In addition, there were evidently some members of ASEAN who were disappointed that the Association did not move towards a greater role in promoting the security interests of its members. At various times, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines appeared to favour increased cooperation in this area. Proposals of this kind were generally resisted most strongly by Malaysia and Singapore. ASEAN's failure to make a major impact in the area of social and cultural cooperation
was also criticized by a number of its participants and by foreign commentators. Hussein Onn lent support to these critics at the Bali summit where he remarked that ASEAN cooperation should not stop at the governmental and bureaucratic level. He felt that it was "time to encourage more people-to-people contact and to give ASEAN a greater sense of community ... through intensified social and cultural cooperation."

Nationalism versus Regionalism

Such criticisms as those outlined above did not go unchallenged by ASEAN's spokesmen, however. They used a variety of arguments to defend the organization's achievements and performance. In reply to those who insisted that ASEAN's performance should be measured in terms of its progress towards higher levels of integration, they asserted, correctly, that ASEAN's founders had never envisaged that it should become a supra-national organization. They saw ASEAN rather as primarily a means to assist the realization of the national objectives of member-countries. Rithauddeen, for example, protested: "Most people do not realize that ASEAN is not a supra-national organization and it is not likely that this will be changed." As an Indonesian academic put it, even though many in ASEAN conceded that it was "too often the case that regional collective interests are forced to give way to interests of the individual members" of ASEAN, these same people also believed that: "Neither political integration, nor economic integration is a realistic target." They emphasized that the nation state was still the primary unit of loyalty in
Southeast Asia and that this was unlikely to change. Indonesia was probably the strongest advocate of this point of view. Another Indonesian analyst suggested that given the fact that most ASEAN countries were still grappling with the problems of nation-building it seemed "over-ambitious to project yet another new idea - that of regional identity". The Indonesian Times stressed that ASEAN was "not a federation of states", and that there should be no discussion of national interest giving way to regional as this could lead to "a conflicting deadlock". "The art of the game", the newspaper stated, was "to let the sovereign interests of the member states as they are." The notion that a single nation must concede to the will of the majority could not be applied. When Malik was asked in an interview in 1971 when ASEAN would reach a point where its members would be asked to surrender elements of national sovereignty he responded that that would not be necessary if ASEAN's affairs were well organized.23.

Other ASEAN members, some of whom saw integration - at least at a relatively modest level - as a long-term possibility, either agreed with or were compelled to acquiesce to the Indonesian viewpoint. Lee Kuan Yew, at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in 1972, acknowledged that "for the present" ASEAN did "not aim at integrating a regional economy". Rather, ASEAN's main aim was "to strengthen and consolidate domestic economies". Even after the Bali and Kuala Lumpur summits, when ASEAN did commit itself to a modest degree of economic integration, members talked in terms of the harmonization of national and regional interests rather than of the latter taking precedence over the former. As a
Singaporean economist commented, ASEAN economic cooperation "however desirable and important, is no substitute for national effort to look after the welfare of its people". Regional efforts could be "no more than a supplement to national endeavour". A Malaysian economist observed that it was "wishful thinking to expect that ASEAN leaders would be willing to compromise the national objectives for some uncertain regional benefit." He noted that there was always a tension between national and regional interests and suggested that a practical approach should emphasize common denominators and strive for an equal distribution of benefits. Hussein Onn also addressed this matter during his speeches to both the Bali and Kuala Lumpur summits. In Bali he stated that ASEAN continued to exist "because it does not demand from us what we cannot give." ASEAN cooperation succeeded, he claimed, "because such cooperation is freely extended, arising out of the experience that in specific instances of cooperation, our separate individual interests are advanced even as our common regional interest is served." In Kuala Lumpur he called for preservation of "the basic equation and balance between national and regional interests that have been ASEAN's cornerstone since its inception".

Consensus

During the course of ASEAN's first decade its members came to accept that the fundamental principle governing collective decision-making should be that of consensus. As Romulo expressed it on one occasion: "The philosophy of action in ASEAN has always been, and I presume for all time, a
commonality of interests rooted in a consensus arrived at through consultation, in which no member exceeds another in influence or weight."25. This principle ensured that where a member believed that a particular national interest would be affected unacceptably by a collective decision then it would have the ability to prevent that decision being taken, although there was often considerable pressure on members to give way on a particular issue for the sake of the regional interest, and there were instances where members were indeed willing to sacrifice some part of their national interest for the sake of the regional interest. Rajaratnam claimed on one occasion following the Bali summit that: "Far more than people realize ASEAN has succeeded in compelling its members to balance national interests with the imperatives of collective interests. ASEAN solidarity is both directed and institutionalized. Many routine problems which before ASEAN would have been discussed and disposed of in purely national terms are now increasingly discussed and resolved in ASEAN terms." Clearly there were also many instances in which collective deliberations did not lead to the regional interest predominating over the national interest. However, whatever the outcome in particular cases, ASEAN's members accepted that the consensus principle was necessary to safeguard the national interests of member-countries. As Hussein Onn explained at the Bali summit, ASEAN sought "not to harm but to harmonize" the interests of all its members.

Some observers drew attention to the fact that consensus, rather than majority decision-making, had led to ASEAN becoming an organization in which progress was in many
instances determined by the "lowest common denominator", resulting in the stifling of new initiatives and the lowering of expectations. On occasion, ASEAN members themselves bewailed these consequences of the consensus style. However, they continued to defend the need for consensus on the grounds that it was the only practical basis on which to proceed and essential to the organization's continued viability. An Indonesian analyst, Lie Tek Tjeng, explained: "If someone commands and others have to obey, I am afraid ASEAN will not work. In a democracy, we talk about majority rule, but in this case, I wonder if we may have to reverse it, and go for minimum requirements that are acceptable to all. I think then we can be more realistic." A Malaysian journalist commented that what made "the cement" of ASEAN's modest progress in commencing new cooperative activities "stick hard and fast" was the fact that it concentrated only on those areas in which agreement was seen to be possible. This is a persuasive argument. If decisions had been taken in circumstances where a member felt that its own national interests had been ignored, this would have been destructive to ASEAN's solidarity and likely to undermine support for the organization.

Members also defended the consensus approach on the basis that in the process of arriving at a decision differing viewpoints were often resolved, or at least a greater understanding of conflicting views resulted. Romulo noted that one of the benefits of the consensus method was "the show of solidarity, and the rewards therefor, out of giving way to the entusiasms and passions of others in a collegial forum .... this is a Southeast Asian manner of coping with seemingly
irreconcilable differences." Similarly, Rajaratnam commented that consensus was often forged "through the modification and adjustment of what were initially irreconcilable viewpoints." 28.

Another way in which the consensus approach worked in ASEAN's favour was that it minimized the degree of conflict within the organization arising from bilateral tensions and from the disparity in size of particular members. A notable achievement was the ability of ASEAN to accommodate the interests of such enormously dissimilar members as, for example, Indonesia and Singapore.

A number of commentators expressed the view at various stages in ASEAN's development that Indonesia, by virtue of its size, resources and memories of empire, might "see itself, if not as the leader of Southeast Asia, as primus inter pares within ASEAN", or that it would seek "a position of regional primacy." One journalist referred to a "basic dichotomy" within ASEAN between Indonesia "which believes it is large and strong enough to go it alone if necessary" and four smaller nations "which feel much more keenly that the survival of each relates to the survival of all." 29. Some observers had assumed at the time of ASEAN's formation that Indonesia would use the Association to assert its own position in the region. This view appeared to be given some substance by remarks by Adam Malik. Shortly after ASEAN's formation he was reported to have warned big countries such as Japan not to try to influence ASEAN to suit their own interests since Indonesia, as the big nation in ASEAN, would hit back. He also reportedly
remarked that "it is natural that the bigger magnet draws the smaller ones."30. This drew a reply from Thanat Khoman who stated that no "big brothers" were wanted in ASEAN and that "the fundamental philosophy of ASEAN is equal partnership."31. Occasionally, other ASEAN participants also expressed some apprehension about Indonesian ambitions for regional influence, and it is certainly true that there were very few major decisions taken by ASEAN which did not accord with Indonesia's preferences.

The record of Indonesia's involvement in ASEAN indicates, however, that on most occasions it accepted the equal status of other members. It did not seek to dominate the Association or to impose its views aggressively upon the other members. Lie Tek Tjeng argued that Indonesia could not dictate what other members of ASEAN should do because if it did so "the very spirit of ASEAN would be dead." He added that Indonesia would not forego trying "to build a consensus whenever there is a problem which calls for a common stand."32. Suharto himself stressed at the Bali summit that ASEAN members took common decisions and "cooperate as partners on an equal footing." This, he believed, constituted "the principal strength of our Association." Indonesia's status as the unofficial "first amongst equals" in ASEAN derived essentially from an unspoken deference on the part of other ASEAN members, based on their recognition of Indonesia's considerably larger size and population. The fortunate coincidence of Indonesia's alphabetical precedence over other ASEAN members, and ASEAN's practice of rotating its meetings according to alphabetical order, subtly endorsed Indonesia's
status. All ASEAN members preferred in the main, however, to share in the Association's joint achievements rather than to view it primarily as a means to the fulfillment of narrower national goals. Ghazali Shafie observed on one occasion that to discuss foreign policy without talking about national interests was "like discussing love without mentioning sex — which may be elevating but hardly realistic." But he asserted a higher common interest in joint efforts to promote the stability and progress of the region.33.

Even Singapore was able to play an important role in ASEAN quite out of proportion to its miniscule size and population relative to other members. Singapore might also have been handicapped by the fact that it was the only economically-advanced, semi-industrialized, non-agricultural country in the group, and also the only member with a predominantly Chinese population.34. These circumstances did indeed lead to some difficulty for Singapore, complicated further by its tendency towards outspoken bluntness in its dealings with the rest of the world — a tendency perhaps itself created by its concern that its interests should not be overlooked. Thanat Khoman commented at the time of the Kuala Lumpur summit that the smallest ASEAN member was "perhaps the most advanced industrially and perhaps the most aggressive in pushing its demands. So it tends to create suspicion. It tends to make the other partners beware of not allowing the smallest to dominate the others economically."35. Singapore benefited, however, from its treatment as an equal within ASEAN and won respect, even if sometimes grudgingly, for its articulate contribution to the ASEAN debate and its defence of
ASEAN's interests. Singapore came to identify its interests strongly with those of the Association.

Gradualism

A further argument employed by ASEAN members against the organization's critics, and a natural consequence of the emphasis on consensus, was that a cautious, evolutionary approach to ASEAN's development was likely to lead to surer gains in the long term. This approach came under question during the periods leading to the Bali and Kuala Lumpur summits. However, by the close of the Association's first decade, caution was enshrined alongside consensus as another fundamental principle of ASEAN's mode of operation, advocated warmly by some and accepted reluctantly by others. Adam Malik, for example, argued that efforts to strengthen ASEAN had "only naturally gone through a slow motion " because regional cooperation in Southeast Asia was "only a new venture". It took quite a long time, he reasoned, "to harmonize the national interest of each member state with the regional interest as a whole". Philippines Secretary of Industry Vicente Paterno explained to a conference in mid-1977 that ASEAN had "adopted the philosophy of step-by-step progress ... the idea that it is more prudent at this initial stage of development of our regional agglomeration to set directions for our voyage of cooperation, and to plot the paths that we will take from one step to the next but not commit ourselves to long-term plans .... As mutual understanding increases, perceptions become more universally shared, ASEAN cooperation can take larger steps and programs of longer range can be
confidently announced."36. Suharto, at the Bali summit, noted that there may be some who wondered what were ASEAN's concrete achievements and who felt that it could move at a faster pace. He stressed to these people that "regional cooperation takes time before it can move forward with greater rapidity." On the same occasion Hussein Onn remarked that ASEAN had "always made haste slowly, not because we are not moved by dreams of what is desirable, but because we are only too aware of what is sustainable." The New Straits Times, at the conclusion of the Kuala Lumpur summit, asserted that those who demeaned the achievements of ASEAN "misunderstand the nature of regional integration, the speed with which national interests can be harmonized with regional interests and the conditions necessary for supranationalism to be built up. They lack an understanding of the obstacles to economic cooperation". A Malaysian official addressing a symposium in October 1977 observed that any appraisal of ASEAN's achievements would depend on the yardstick which was used: "If we had set our expectation too high, especially in the economic fields, we would certainly be disappointed. On the other hand if the successes were to be measured against the failures of past history, I am sure one cannot deny that we have made great strides in all fields".37.

Even Rajaratnam conceded that ASEAN's "Mini Minor" performance may have been a matter where there had been no choice because: "If it had gone any faster the organization could have cracked up under the strain as did earlier attempts at regional cooperation." He suggested to the informal foreign ministers meeting in February 1977 that the shaping of
regional cooperation was "less like forging steel and more like delicate filigree work" since an essential precondition for regional cooperation between five sovereign states with different interests, different social, economic and political styles, and different historical antecedents was "the creation of confidence and mutual trust between the partners, the emergence of a conviction that such differences of views and interests as may manifest themselves from time to time are of less consequence than a deep awareness of our collective interests." Such a conviction of overriding collective interest, he warned, "cannot be created overnight." In a speech in October 1977 Rajaratnam noted there were different perceptions as to the desirable pace of regional cooperation. Some felt ASEAN should move faster, but others, he noted, "on equally valid grounds", cautioned a somewhat slower pace. Lee Kuan Yew's resignation at the conclusion of the Kuala Lumpur summit to a slower pace of cooperation in areas such as trade liberalization has been noted previously.

Many observers reacted sympathetically to ASEAN's view that caution was advisable, rather than forcing the pace of regional cooperation. One noted that ASEAN had preferred "a cautious and slow advance, lest a more forceful pace should bring into the open latent intra-organizational conflicts with a capacity to destroy the Association and therefore expose the members individually to the more dangerous international environment." Another suggested that given the circumstances of ASEAN's birth it was inevitable that its development "had to be cautious, slow, and relatively unproductive of exciting results." Because ASEAN's founders were determined that it
would not fail as previous schemes had done, they "intentionally chose cautious optimism, pragmatism and modesty of purpose as the guiding principles in their common approach to regionalism." The same approach was sustained during the later years of ASEAN's development, it was argued, because of the continuing "socio-economic heterogeneity and political diversity of Southeast Asia". These circumstances meant that it was "extremely unlikely that the pace could have been faster, or that it would have produced better results even if it could." 39.

ASEAN's emphasis on a cautious approach had the additional tactical advantage that it enabled it to placate those who wished to see it progress to higher levels of cooperation with the argument that such goals were not seen as undesirable in principle, merely that they would only be achieved in the longer term. ASEAN could therefore ask its critics, both within and outside the organization, to suspend judgement until a later date. Hussein Onn in a speech in April 1976 claimed that in the context of regional cooperation ten years was "a relatively short time in the life of an organization such as ASEAN in which to judge its success or otherwise." When Marcos was asked during the Bali summit if ASEAN would move towards an economic community he was able to reply: "We are moving gradually and slowly towards it". Asked about the possibility of an ASEAN common market Upadit could reply that this was what ASEAN was "heading for". "But", he added, "one has to proceed very cautiously and patiently. In this connection, one should not expect a spectacular overnight result which is not possible. We still have to learn a lot and
we have to accumulate experiences." 40.

The Habit of Cooperation

A further corollary of ASEAN's emphasis on consensus and on a cautious approach to the pursuit of new cooperative activities was that when faced with the charge that ASEAN had made few tangible achievements, ASEAN's spokesmen frequently fell back also on the argument that the organization's chief accomplishments had been in the field of intangibles. Survival itself was seen as a major accomplishment. A regional correspondent noted that ASEAN's first decade had passed "and, against tremendous odds, ASEAN is intact." He recalled that when ASEAN was established "there were many sceptics (and I was one among them) who felt it would go the way of many previous attempts at regional cooperation." 41. ASEAN's spokesmen emphasized, however, that the organization had achieved more in the area of intangibles than mere survival. They pointed especially to the entrenchment of "the habit of cooperation" between members as the most important achievement of ASEAN's early years. In this way they sought to rebut the accusation that ASEAN's progress before the Bali summit had been insignificant. As early as 1972 Ghazali Shafie asserted that although ASEAN had not been as successful in economic cooperation as some "critical and impatient observers" would like, it had made progress in achieving "a greater and growing community of interest between the member-countries of ASEAN ... above all there has developed a healthy habit of cooperation, which promises well for the future development of the region as an organized and integrated entity." In 1974 Tun
Razak commented that ASEAN had "made some progress in establishing among us a genuine and growing habit of thinking and working together in regional terms."\textsuperscript{42} At the Bali summit Suharto identified one of ASEAN's most obvious and important achievements as "the deepening of mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation among us". This he felt would constitute "the basic strength of our Association in facing the challenges in the future." The Bali summit communique expressed satisfaction with ASEAN's progress since 1967 "especially in fostering the spirit of cooperation and solidarity among member states." This spirit of cooperation, derived in part from the growing familiarity of ASEAN leaders and officials with their counterparts in other member-countries, came to be dubbed as "the ASEAN spirit". In a speech in April 1977 Hussein Onn stated that perhaps the greatest achievement of ASEAN during its first ten years was the development of this ASEAN spirit amongst its members, which he defined as "a spirit of understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and solidarity."\textsuperscript{43}

Observers readily acknowledged that the habit of cooperation had become firmly established, even though it did not always lead to unanimity or to tangible results. Somsakdi Xuto in 1971 noted the emergence of a growing number of government officials responsible for regional cooperation activities whom he labelled "regional cooperation practicioners". Frequent close contacts between members of this group had led to a deep commitment to the promotion of regional cooperation. By 1973 he believed that the habit of consultation between ASEAN members on all matters of common
interest had become normal. Another observer, writing at about the same time, concurred that there were within ASEAN "innumerable small but increasing contacts, formal and informal, between governments, other institutions, and peoples, which might cumulatively result in the reduction of the relative significance of the untramelled individuality of single governments, by developing new and resilient common interests and activities between peoples, and perhaps inculcating and nourishing new practical senses of regional community." Another commentator, writing after the Kuala Lumpur summit, believed that perhaps ASEAN's greatest asset was its "spirit of cooperation" which he thought was, like nationalism, a psychological dimension that did not lead to easy quantification, but was the cement that helped to associate national and regional interests.44.

Regionalism

ASEAN's spokesmen frequently argued that the "habit of cooperation" and the "ASEAN spirit" had led also to a basic commitment by its members to "regionalism", as a guiding principle in their relations with each other and with the rest of the world. Hussein Onn remarked at the Bali summit that the development of a community of regional interests was "necessarily a slow process", but "in ten short years" ASEAN had succeeded in "transforming radically the climate of alienation into a climate of cooperation". ASEAN countries had become "true neighbours, more conscious of our common destiny, more aware of our shared traditions and histories and more determined to work together towards higher levels of
cooperation." He claimed at the Kuala Lumpur summit that all ASEAN members had come to regard regionalism "as the cornerstone of their foreign policies." Rajaratnam told his colleagues at the Tenth Ministerial Meeting that a point worth bearing in mind was that ten years ago ASEAN members were "separate entities going their different ways". Now there was "a developing conviction that not only are its over 200 million people members of a regional community but also that they could better meet the uncertainties and challenges of the future through collective effort." On another occasion, after commenting on the frequency of ASEAN meetings, Rajaratnam acknowledged that these meetings were "often inconclusive", but the point he said he wished to stress was that "over the years, perhaps without some of us realizing it, an ASEAN, regional approach to problems has crept into our thinking."45.

Non-regional commentators appeared generally to agree that ASEAN had had considerable success in cultivating a feeling of regional consciousness amongst its members. One of these noted after the Bali summit that there had developed "a sense of shared central view among the member governments of ASEAN which permeates their joint endeavours, however limited they may be. This shared central view arises from the measure of common identity among the five member governments in terms of social and economic priorities as well as their prevailing external associations."46.

Socialization
ASEAN's members defended the Association against the charge that its influence was confined to a small elite of politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen. They argued that the "socialization" of ASEAN was already taking place. Rajaratnam claimed as early as 1975 that the "ASEAN spirit" had "percolated, if in a somewhat vague way, to grassroot levels." He believed that the concept of ASEAN had gained "popular approval as a worthwhile aspiration," and that there was "no serious agitation for the abandonment of ASEAN" within member-countries.

In 1977 ASEAN officials produced a publication to commemorate ASEAN's first ten years which listed 27 private organizations affiliated with ASEAN ranging from the Confederation of ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization to the ASEAN Trade Union Council, the ASEAN Federation of Women, the Committee for ASEAN Youth Cooperation, the ASEAN Pediatric Federation and the ASEAN Council of Museums. Events such as an ASEAN film festival and an ASEAN orchid exhibition were held with increasing frequency. The Confederation of ASEAN Journalists held its first meeting in June 1976 and in the same month a Federation of ASEAN Newspaper Publishers was established. A number of projects were in train in the fields of transportation, telecommunications, civil aviation, meteorology, energy and shipping. The ASEAN Federation of Shippers' Councils, established in May 1976, was urged to take measures to mitigate the adverse effects of increases in freight rates by the international shipping conferences. Formation of an ASEAN-based shipping conference and the
development of an ASEAN containerization program were discussed. An ASEAN contingency plan for maritime oil-pollution control was adopted. A project to establish a Submarine Communications Cable Network to link all ASEAN countries was commenced. An ASEAN Regional Satellite System was discussed. An ASEAN Banking Council was established in August 1976. Studies continued on the possible establishment of an ASEAN clearing union. New activities were devised to involve women and youth in ASEAN affairs. An ASEAN Declaration of Principles to Combat the Abuse of Narcotic Drugs and an ASEAN Declaration for Mutual Assistance on Natural Disasters were signed. The Committee on Food and Agriculture conducted studies on the supply and demand for food and strategic agricultural products, fisheries resource management, forestry resource conservation, the supply and demand for animal feed, and the desirability of buffer stocks. The economic ministers agreed to the issue of ASEAN commemorative stamps. ASEAN Labour Ministers held their second formal meeting in May 1977. A "special" meeting had been held in May 1976 which adopted a common stance on international labour issues. ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare and Ministers for Information convened their first joint meetings in July 1977 during which they reportedly formulated policy guidelines for future cooperation.

It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the success of these endeavours. There were undoubtedly many shortcomings as well as achievements. They are listed here merely to illustrate the growing diversity and breadth of ASEAN's activities. The claims of ASEAN's participants that by
the end of its first decade the Association's activities had reached a broad cross-section of the populace in their countries seemed to be largely justified.

Interdependence

A further important theme in the discussion of regionalism within ASEAN was that members had come to consider that, in view of their mutual dependence, regional cooperation was "an imperative." Romulo at the Ninth Ministerial Meeting declared that in the ASEAN region cooperation was "inevitable. Indeed, in the context of today's realities, we have no alternative. A growing interdependence and the need for a shield against external political and economic pressures leave us no choice." Paterno also saw "no better alternative" to ASEAN and expressed the opinion that ASEAN would succeed "because the member-countries believe it must." Rajaratnam stated at the February 1977 informal foreign ministers meeting that after ten years members of ASEAN "cannot conceive of a future without ASEAN because it has so permeated our national life that without it each of us would feel far less secure than we are today. Had there been no ASEAN we who belong to it would have been far less successful than we have been in coping with the dramatic and turbulent changes that took place in our region in recent years." He said that he mentioned this "as a corrective to the disappointment we and our friends are from time to time inclined to express over the slow progress made by ASEAN in the past ten years."
A final argument employed by ASEAN's defenders was that, whatever it shortcomings, it had at least performed a good deal better than most other regional groupings. This was a particular theme of Rajaratnam's public statements. He conceded that many of the criticisms made about ASEAN might be correct but he thought that they also lacked understanding because by the standards employed by these critics "practically all international organizations dedicated to fostering cooperation between nations had pretty sorry records". He admitted that ASEAN was "no less addicted than any other organization to passing pious resolutions." Southeast Asians like other countries were "partial to rhetoric" and their rhetoric was at least equal to other countries in its "articulation and resonance". He claimed, however, that the United Nations had been the source of far more dangerous rhetoric and of more pious resolutions than ASEAN had produced in its first ten years. ASEAN was, moreover, as he told the Ninth Ministerial Meeting, "the only working and coherent regional association of states not merely in Southeast Asia but Asia as well."

Rajaratnam, and other ASEAN spokesmen, resisted comparison of ASEAN's achievements with those of the EEC. He thought ASEAN should be judged by Third World standards. He argued at the informal foreign ministers meeting in February 1977 that Western Europe had required "two World Wars and, earlier still, decades of internecine relations before the rationality of a European Economic Community gained
acceptance." Musa Hitam also lamented that there was "unfortunately a tendency to want to compare the achievements or as the critics put it "lack of progress" of ASEAN with the European Economic Community consciously or unconsciously."

Such critics, he believed, ignored the different preconditions for regional cooperation in Europe and in Southeast Asia. Europeanism had been "a ground swell emerging from the masses desiring unity in the face of certain threats", whereas ASEAN was "essentially a concept being propagated by the leadership" of member-countries against the pressure of intense nationalism. Unlike ASEAN, Western Europe had a basic industrial base and an already vigorous intra-regional trading pattern. After the war it had benefited from large-scale assistance under the Marshall Plan. In any case, Musa continued, the EEC was "an experiment fraught with problems" which was best considered as providing a useful case study of the pitfalls to avoid rather than as a model for regional cooperation. Rithauddeen pointed out that the Treaty of Rome envisaged a much higher degree of economic and political integration than had the ASEAN Declaration. Such views were echoed by a number of other ASEAN nationals. One thought that a moment's reflection would indicate that it was patently unreasonable to compare ASEAN to the EEC since this would be like "asking a ten-year-old why he does not have the physical coordination and worldly wisdom of a thirty-year-old." Another contended that a "really successful organized interdependence among nations of the same region, not excluding the European common market, has yet to be demonstrated."50.
The views outlined above provide a basis on which to evaluate ASEAN's performance during its formative first decade according to the criteria laid down both formally and informally by ASEAN's members themselves. Clearly in terms of its ultimate or ideal objectives the Association's performance during this period had been at best a mixed result. It had failed to extend its membership to all of Southeast Asia; its aspiration to have the region recognized as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality had not been realized; its tentative measures towards economic integration had been attenuated by the perceived constraints of national interest; many of its participants were disappointed with the pace and extent of cooperative activities. But when the objective obstacles to ASEAN's development during this period are taken into account and also the cautious, consensus approach which the organization adopted, its claim to modest success does not appear unwarranted. Generally, ASEAN participants expressed satisfaction with the Association's achievements. When one contemplates the state of affairs between members in the years prior to its inception and the recognition and approval that ASEAN was accorded by other nations and by the majority of independent observers at the conclusion of its first ten years, this mood of satisfaction does not appear entirely unjustified.

ASEAN's evolution during its first decade set the pattern in many ways for its subsequent development. The trends of the first decade were in many respects confirmed and continued during the second. ASEAN has still a long way to go
to realize many of its objectives, especially in developing
its relationship with the states of Indochina. Vietnam's
occupation of Cambodia at the end of 1978 ensured that
progress in that direction was limited for several years.
Rajaratnam expressed at ASEAN's Tenth Ministerial Meeting the
hope that at its Twentieth Meeting the organization would
"have as its backdrop a truly ASEAN community – thriving,
united and accepted by others as a major factor in world
economics and politics." ASEAN has not fully realized this
aspiration. On the other hand, neither has it fallen victim to
the alternative which Rajaratnam hoped would be avoided,
namely "a gradual reversion of the five member states into
separate communities each going its own different ways." While
ASEAN can be credited with major achievements, both in its own
eyes and those of the world, the challenge it will continue to
face will be not just to survive, which it seems sure to do,
but to progress further towards its long-term objectives.

FOOTNOTES

1. Speech by Rajaratnam to Asia Society Conference on ASEAN,
New York, 4-5 October 1977; Michael Leifer, "Regionalism, the
Global Balance and Southeast Asia", in Regionalism in
Southeast Asia, op cit., p.55.

2. J. Panglaykim, "Indonesia's Economic and Business Relations
with Other ASEAN Countries", in Indonesian Quarterly, Vol.
IV, No. 2, 3, 4, 1976, p.64; Bangkok Bank Monthly Review,


7. For example, "ASEAN 1967-76: Development or Stagnation?", op cit., pp.522-534.

op cit., p.6; "ASEAN: Image and Reality", op cit., p.1200.


p.112.


33. "Southeast Asia in the Seventies", speech to the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, 16 December 1968, in

35. *ibid.*. 5 August 1977, p. 15.


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The most important primary sources used were the speeches of ASEAN delegates to the various official meetings of the Association, and the communiques and press statements issued following these meetings. Not all such documents were made available publicly. Nor is there one single public source where they have been collected, although I was able to obtain some of the more elusive items directly from the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. The following were also found to be useful primary sources:

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Other ASEAN speeches and documents were discovered in various issues of the following periodicals:

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