

1967

THAILAND
AND ASEAN
1967-1979



NADHAVATHNA
KRISHNAMRA

1979

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*A Commitment to Regionalism or
Complement to Alignment?*

Nadhavathna Krishnamra

FOREWORD

The International Studies Center (ISC) wishes to express its appreciation to Ambassador Nadhavathna Krishnamra for permitting the ISC to publish his thesis “*Thailand’s Policy towards Cooperation within ASEAN 1967-1979: A Commitment to Regionalism or Complement to Alignment?*” under the new title of “*Thailand and ASEAN 1967-1979*” as the second volume in a series of books on ASEAN history, after Ambassador Thakur Phanit’s *ASEAN’s First Decade*, published in 2020. While the first volume was on the subject of regional integration in Southeast Asia, this second volume focused more on Thailand’s policy and role in that effort.

Ambassador Nadhavathna’s thesis also covered mainly the first decade of ASEAN, from 1967 to 1979 to be precise. The study found that, at first, Thailand’s ASEAN policy reflected largely the concerns of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its attempt to elaborate policy options through various schemes of regional cooperation. But evidence showed that participation in decision-making widened after 1976, as the importance of ASEAN for Thailand increased over time. Thailand’s policies towards ASEAN in its first decade were dominated by a concern that cooperation should enhance bargaining power *vis-à-vis* friends and foes alike through the fostering of greater regional solidarity.

In pursuing these policies, Thailand acted as a crucial “broker and buffer” within ASEAN, which allowed it to play a positive mediation role which allowed consensus to be formed on controversial issues, such as in the founding of the Organisation itself, the launching of the ZOPFAN Declaration, and on the Kampuchean issue. The study also found that, due to policy focus on political cooperation, Thailand’s effort to promote greater economic cooperation during this period was more ambiguous. Nevertheless, the study concluded that the frequently-held view that Thailand was a largely passive player in ASEAN cooperation should be reassessed.

As Ambassador Nadhavathna’s thesis is printed for the first time, ISC decides to keep this book as close to the original thesis as when it was written, presented to, and accepted by the Institut Universitaire de Hautes Études Internationales, l’Université de Genève in 1997. Lastly, ISC hopes that this book will provide a useful additional narrative to the discourse on ASEAN studies, especially with regard to Thailand’s role and policies within the Organisation during its first decade.

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ABSTRACT

The study is an attempt at analyzing cooperation within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) from one national perspective, through an examination of Thai policy towards initiatives within ASEAN during the period 1967-1979. Thailand's policy within ASEAN is analyzed within a holistic framework, incorporating political, economic and functional cooperation, with each of the themes being discussed in turn, as well as through case study examinations of its position on various issues. It is found that Collective Political Defence provides a useful conceptual tool for the examination of Thailand's regional policies in this early period of ASEAN's existence, although it is better suited to the political sphere instead of the more disputed economic and technical spheres, and reflected Thailand's dominant security concerns during these years. Moreover, the holistic approach is seen to be more applicable with respect to planning than in terms of implementation, and coordination became an important problem within Thailand as within ASEAN as a whole. The evidence derived here suggests that Thailand's ASEAN policy reflected largely the concerns of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its attempt to elaborate policy

options through various schemes of regional cooperation, as opposed to strict bilateral alignment with the US and purely military-oriented approaches to national security, although participation in decision-making did widen particularly after 1976. The role of long-serving Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman was particularly significant in driving Thailand's initial interest in regional cooperation.

Although the founding of the Association was greeted with little external or domestic interest at the time, for Thailand was entertaining several concurrent options in regional cooperation, it is shown that the importance of ASEAN for Thailand increased over time. This was also seen in the enhancement of the overall significance of the Organization in regional relations even if bilateral solutions by member states went hand in hand with initiatives within ASEAN. Thailand's policies towards ASEAN were dominated by a concern that cooperation should enhance bargaining power vis-à-vis friends and enemies alike through the fostering of greater regional solidarity, and that it should above all remain flexible and responsive to the members' concerns. Due to its concern for

regional order, Thailand placed great importance on ASEAN political cooperation, and this aspect of its activity has marked its participation above all others. Thailand's strategic perception meant that ASEAN, despite a general desire to reduce great power interference, recognized that such powers did indeed have interests in the region. However, relative governmental instability in the later years contributed to a lack of overall perspective even while Thailand was placing greater importance on ASEAN following the overthrow of military rule in 1973. Nevertheless, an overwhelming theme that emerged was that consciously or unconsciously, Thailand acted as a crucial broker and buffer within ASEAN. Its removal from the central ASEAN security relationship involving Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore allowed it to play a positive mediating role which allowed consensus to be formed on controversial issues of cooperation, such as in the founding of the Organization itself, the launching of the ZOPFAN Declaration, as well as on the Kampuchean issue, although its involvement in efforts to promote greater trade cooperation was more ambiguous. The frequently-held view that Thailand was a largely passive player in ASEAN cooperation should therefore be reassessed in the light of its valuable contribution to ASEAN decision-making.

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Mission of Thailand in Geneva and the Department of ASEAN Affairs for their constant support and friendship. Special thanks go to Dr. Apichart Chinwanno for kindly reading over various proofs and making useful comments over the progress of the research.

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Nadhavathna Krishnamra

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

There is no generally accepted rule for transliterating Thai names into English. In the study, Thai names are romanized according to the most common actual use. This applies especially to the names of those persons granted titles in the pre 1932 period.¹ Thus references are made to Pridi Banomyong instead of Luang Pradist Manudharm, his given title. On the other hand, the name Pibulsonggram is used as that personality preferred to use his given title of Luang Pibulsonggram as his surname. Generally, however, following common usage, Thai personalities are referred to in the text by their first name and not by their surname, and hence Thanat for Thanat Khoman and Bunchana for Bunchana Atthakor. This shall be applied throughout the study with the exception of the bibliography where the Western manner is adopted, with the given name following the surname.

Personalities of royal descent in accordance with the Court Provisions are referred to with their names preceded by the appropriate abbreviated titles e.g. MC for *Mom Chao*, MR for *Mom Rachawongse*, and ML for *Mom Luang*, in declining order of seniority. *Mom Chao* denotes the lowest order of royalty, while the latter two titles have commoner status.

The mode of spelling, while generally following the most common actual use, as far as possible follows the system laid down by the Royal Institute. However, where other authors quoted in the text have used another spelling, the original format will be presented.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEM	ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
AIP	ASEAN Industrial Project
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN-CCI	ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry
ASC	ASEAN Standing Committee
AMM	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASPAC	Asian and Pacific Council
ECAFE/ESCAP	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East/ Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
ISIS	Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN)
MAPHILINDO	Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Thailand)
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NSC	National Security Council (Thailand)
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity

OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
PTA	Preferential Tariff Arrangements (ASEAN)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEAARC	Southeast Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEACEN	Southeast Asian Central Bank Group
SEAFET	Southeast Asia Friendship and Economic Treaty
SEANWFZ	Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SEOM	Senior Economic Officials' Meeting (ASEAN)
SOM	Senior Officials' Meeting (Political- ASEAN)
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asian regional cooperation as expressed in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is regarded as a rare expression of successful regionalism. ASEAN, however, was born out of a conjunction of national interests, and the study is an attempt at analyzing ASEAN cooperation through the national perspective of one of its founding members, Thailand. This is performed through an examination of Thai policy towards initiatives within ASEAN during the period 1967-1979, the first twelve years of the Organization's history. Its objective is to find out the motivation behind Thailand's actions within the ASEAN process and to what extent its policies within the Organization reflected the general trend of Thai foreign policy.

The years 1967-1979 have been chosen as they were years of *détente* worldwide, and yet for Southeast Asia, there was both conflict and cooperation, two very different phenomena. The Eastern twelve year cycle provides a useful benchmark with which to analyze factors of continuity and change, starting from the founding of ASEAN in 1967 to the period of political confrontation unleashed by the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea in late 1978, and subsequent developments in the region which unfurled during 1979. The study ends in 1979 as it is considered that the main structures for ASEAN political and economic cooperation had already been established by that time, and to have continued beyond that crucial year would have meant placing an undue emphasis on the Kampuchean problem, to the detriment of other factors. In important respects, the period 1967-1979 also sees Thailand's external orientation completing a full circle: from the maintenance of commitment to the United States despite the formation of ASEAN in the late

1960s; the move towards equidistance and greater policy autonomy in cooperation with ASEAN in the early and middle 1970s, and then towards a renewed reliance on external powers in the aftermath of the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea in late 1978, albeit with a pronounced emphasis on regional solutions through ASEAN.

The study does not seek to paint for Thailand a constant leading role in Southeast Asian regional cooperation in the postwar period. It is the central contention, however, that the Kingdom's geographical position makes the study of its regional policy of special interest. Due to crucial geopolitical factors, Thailand has always had to give keen attention to developments among its neighbours and within the region as a whole. This has been translated into an interest in forms of regional cooperation at key points in the recent history of the region, and in the form of ASEAN during the period studied. This line of policy did not arise through popular demand but was a policy decision, and the focus of the study leans on this aspect of cooperation. A key assumption is that a policy of regional cooperation is largely consistent with key Thai foreign policy traditions and not really a departure as many have tended to assume.

The study examines this Thai role in regional cooperation through the testing of various hypotheses. The central hypothesis proposed is that from the 1960s onwards regional cooperation was a definite policy option for Thailand. Certain key policy-makers such as Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman recognized and promoted the benefits of regional cooperation, and in the pursuit of this line of policy, they had political as well as economic aims. Nevertheless, membership of ASEAN did not necessarily pose

Thailand with a hard and fast choice between alignment and regionalism. Instead, it served to demonstrate a suitable degree of policy independence for Thailand which was useful both for domestic and external consumption. Hence a further hypothesis is elaborated that ASEAN initially served to supplement existing policy mechanisms and only held out hope as a realistic alternative in the longer term. The argument is advanced that Thailand's long history as an independent member of the international system led it to retain a belief in the role of great powers and in bilateral relations with them as a primary framework for external interaction, which meant that faith in the regional framework was gradual and cautious. As such the question is posed whether policies within ASEAN would be aimed primarily at the maintenance of the integrity and viability of the Association, or at some wider and more ambitious objectives.

A central premise of this study is that an examination of Thailand's participation in ASEAN not only sheds light on its attitudes towards regional cooperation, but also highlights the relative importance of individual themes in its foreign policy. Despite its role as a prime mover behind the creation of ASEAN and constant official pronouncements that the Association constituted the cornerstone of Thai foreign policy, Thailand is often perceived as having a peripheral role within it. The study further aims to discover the source of this impression, and examine how the perception of its role has evolved over time. It is thus essentially a study of Thai policy towards official and unofficial cooperation within ASEAN, and not of its relations with the countries of Southeast Asia in general. Accordingly, it

is also not concerned with the policy of other Southeast Asian countries and that of particular ASEAN members, except as a comparison. It is primarily occupied with describing Thailand's aims and objectives on particular issues of cooperation, with a view to uncovering its general concerns, and to discover the motives behind its diplomatic strategy and tactics within ASEAN. The approach adopted is therefore primarily historical. However, political science tools have been adopted where appropriate in the discussions of foreign policy, regionalism and the system of international relations.

The policy of Thailand would seem to suggest that subsequent to its founding in 1967, ASEAN as an organization grew out of a crisis of confidence in the role of external powers in the region. Despite ambiguity at the beginning as to whether it really intended ASEAN as an alternative to alliance with the United States, given the security imperative of its military leaders, Thailand seemed to share the common perception that the countries of Southeast Asia had to join together to increase their economic and political bargaining power. The conception of a developmental state was characteristic of this policy convergence, centred in the belief that economic development was crucial to internal stability, and within the ASEAN framework this eventually gave rise to the idea of national and regional resilience. Nevertheless, even after its membership of ASEAN, Thailand's interest in regional cooperation seemed to be constantly balanced by concerns regarding the state of its bilateral relations, particularly with the great powers. Moreover, regardless of whether there was a clear commitment to regionalism, it is clear that policy-makers in ASEAN referred

more to *cooperation* rather than *integration*, thereby reinforcing the national perspective on such issues. The study tests this apparent ambivalence through the examination of Thailand's position on particular issues of political, economic and functional cooperation.

An attempt will be made to discover whether Thailand's position on Southeast Asian regional cooperation was static or that there was a gradual evolution in its attitudes towards regional cooperation, accelerated or delayed by internal developments. Nevertheless, while Thailand came to place an emphasis on ASEAN as the cornerstone of its foreign policy, it must also be admitted that membership in the Organization only reflected one aspect of its multi-faceted interaction with countries of the region. At the same time, notwithstanding the fact that membership of ASEAN was only one policy tool, within the existing policy constraints Thai decision-makers did ensure that the Organization helped to support specifically national as well as wider regional interests, and Thailand's role was crucial to the direction of ASEAN, particularly in the late 1970s.

This study takes largely the policy dimension of Thai-ASEAN relations. Thus the emphasis is placed on examination of government policies towards operation within ASEAN, seeking to explain the factors that have influenced such policies and the policy-makers particularly within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, the government dimension is not the only one affecting intra-ASEAN relations, and substantial private sector participation has come to characterize ASEAN endeavours, particularly in the economic areas. On the other hand, during the period discussed this wider participation was

in its embryonic stages, which supports the policy bias adopted in this study. Moreover, the study is not meant to be a comprehensive review of Thai foreign policy carried out during the period, but foreign policy is discussed where it is deemed relevant ASEAN experience. Nevertheless, among many facets the creation of ASEAN was a political act of foreign policy, and this policy aspect has to be investigated.

In examining Thai policies within ASEAN, the study seeks to fill a perceived gap in the academic scholarship on Thailand and its attitude towards regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. As such, it highlights the elements of continuity and change, at the same time trying to elucidate any theoretical underpinnings for Thailand's regional policy. There have been no lack of works on Southeast Asia, but past studies have concentrated on the general development of ASEAN or on the overall foreign policies of the individual states. Certain useful studies do nevertheless exist of individual member countries' policies towards ASEAN and regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. One recent work is Dewi Fortuna Anwar's *Indonesia in ASEAN* which suggests, for example, that an examination of individual member country attitudes is important in the overall analysis of ASEAN's evolution as:

It is possible that some of the objectives and aspirations that have been ascribed to ASEAN have in fact been put forward by one or two of its members, and not really shared by the rest of the group.¹

At the same time, works on Thailand's external relations tend to provide a general review of its foreign policy-making,

while analyzing the overall evolution of Thai foreign policy within the same period. Typically, policy towards Southeast Asia is treated as the sum of Thailand's various bilateral relationships. Shorter monographs that do touch on the relationship between Thailand and ASEAN largely concentrate on particular aspects, such as on economic cooperation or security cooperation, and also tended to limit themselves to assessing benefits and liabilities for Thailand instead of the way that policies were derived.

Little attempt has yet been made, in the author's view, to analyze Thailand's policy towards ASEAN cooperation in a comprehensive manner, integrating political and economic approaches and placing policies adopted towards ASEAN within the overall context of foreign policy over an extended period. This perhaps reflects the perception of a vast difference between the development and security aspects of cooperation, but the effect has been to produce a *de facto* dichotomy and institute two discrete areas of Thai participation in ASEAN, with little linkage between the two. It is also often assumed that the policy of regional cooperation had very little relationship with other aspects of foreign policy, such as with respect to Indochina. For an example, policies within ASEAN as seen on the Kampuchean issue as from 1979 are often not seen within the Thai diplomatic tradition, but rather if they constituted a new departure, and hence the Kampuchean issue is treated as a specific case study. In an effort to provide a holistic perspective on cooperation within ASEAN, an attempt will be made to find out whether a conceptual framework to accommodate Thai attitudes to regional cooperation is possible. In addition, much current

scholarship is concentrated on the developments within ASEAN subsequent to the Fourth and Fifth Summits in 1992 and 1995, respectively, or on the future directions for ASEAN into the 21st century from a prescriptive point of view. Recent attention is thus focused on the post Cold War period to the relative neglect of the formative years of ASEAN. Hopefully, a reassessment of the first twelve years of ASEAN from one national perspective will help elucidate issues of national interest and better explain or enable us to understand the evolution of decision-making within ASEAN, particularly the linkage between national policies and ASEAN policies.

In performing the research, it must be admitted that substantial problems do exist concerning the availability and accessibility to sources. From its origins ASEAN has stood for the minimization or avoidance of discussion of national and bilateral differences for the sake of a wider regional solidarity. Therefore, official ASEAN documents are often found to be sterile in nature, hiding specific national positions or areas of disagreement. No verbatim records exist of the various meetings, such that a scholar has noted of the crucial ASA period that: “records have very limited utility as historical documents, and even its confidential records will leave future historians with the feeling that something is missing.”² Interviews with various personalities involved with ASEAN contribute towards compensating for such lacunae, but also come across a manifestation of much the same problem, with the responses given to questions tending to avoid direct criticism or discussion of one particular member country’s role. Official pronouncements should not therefore be taken at face value, and have to be taken in their specific contexts.

In discussing Thai foreign policy, various collections of official documents compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand (MFA) have been utilized, as well as issues of *Foreign Affairs Bulletin (FAB)*, which provides a useful regular summary of Thailand's foreign relations, and other official publications. To the extent that it was possible, unpublished documents relating to Thai foreign policy from the 1960s onwards, as well as to Thailand's participation in ASEAN, have been consulted in the MFA archives. As a corollary, relevant volumes of *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* and other collections of US documents have been consulted to provide a perspective on the important Thai cooperation with the US in Southeast Asia during much of this period. The study also relied extensively on the use of collections of ASEAN documents compiled by the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, such as the *Statements by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings* and *ASEAN Documents Series*. However, many of the documents on ASEAN political and security cooperation, as well as equivalent MFA position papers, remain classified and may only be alluded to indirectly. Thus in order to supplement printed source materials, some reliance has been placed on interviews with Thai personalities and diplomats associated with policies towards ASEAN.

Substantial emphasis has also been placed on the study of speeches of the major personalities involved. In this exercise, it is fortunate that there is a substantial body of speeches by certain Thai foreign policy-makers, and particularly by long-time Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman who was both a prolific writer and giver of interviews. Nevertheless, an analysis of speeches has

its specific limitations as it does not necessarily reveal the many nuances in policy over time. Thus while the study has as an essential element an investigation of published printed sources and archival materials and the conduct of personal interviews, it also intends to discuss the implications of some of the new literature highlighting aspects of Thailand's postwar regional diplomacy.

In terms of secondary literature, Thai works have been consulted at various locations in Bangkok, including the MFA library and the various faculty and institute libraries of Chulalongkorn University. Among these works are included some monographs and collections relating to Thailand's postwar diplomacy, in an attempt to trace the evolution of Thai diplomacy on regional cooperation. Works in English and other languages have been consulted at the library of the Graduate of International Studies (GIIS), the Modern Asia Research Centre (MARC) library, and the library of the United Nations Offices in Geneva, as well as at other libraries in Europe. For example, recent general histories of Thailand such as David K. Wyatt's *Thailand: A Short History* have been consulted. General studies of the origins of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia such as Arnfinn Jorgensen-Dahl's *Regional Organization and Order in Southeast Asia* and Michael Antolik's *ASEAN and the Diplomacy of Accommodation* have also proved particularly useful, and have been quoted extensively. Meanwhile, articles in *Saranrom Journal*, the MFA's in-house journal, often provides insights into current thinking within the MFA beyond formally-stated positions. Thus older materials have been consulted to provide a contemporary viewpoint on the period studied, but more recent studies,

particularly articles in the relevant academic journals, have also been used to provide a sense of perspective.

The study is divided into 8 main chapters, and the overall organization of the research is thematic. Within certain chapters, however, some account is taken of chronology. The first 3 chapters are aimed at providing analytical tools for the study, including a general theoretical framework; a discussion of the Thai role in Southeast Asia and in the origins of regional cooperation; and an analysis of Thai foreign policy-making. Chapters 4 and 5 investigate whether, and if so, how, actual participation in ASEAN initiatives in political, economic and external cooperation, respectively, served Thailand's basic foreign policy goals and if such goals may be seen to have evolved over time or not. Chapters 6 and 7 provide case study examinations of Thailand's participation in ASEAN activities. Finally, the Conclusion provides an assessment of Thailand's involvement in regional cooperation at the end of the period studied, with a view towards subsequent developments.

The chapters are organized as follows:

- 1) In the first chapter, a theoretical framework is introduced. The two themes of regional cooperation and foreign policy are treated. Although it is not the intention here to discuss in great detail such theoretical issues as integration theory, and thereby risking an overinflation of the attractions of theories of regionalism to policy-makers, Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman's idea of a "Collective Political Defence" is placed alongside conventional theories of coalition-building and regional integration. Thailand's participation in ASEAN is analyzed from a foreign policy perspective as to the extent it would serve Thai political and economic interests.

2) In the second chapter, the role of Thailand in Southeast Asia is placed in a historical context and the circumstances behind Thailand's involvement in the negotiations leading to the founding of ASEAN in 1967 analyzed. Thailand's key role in this process necessarily modifies the proposition that ASEAN merely grew out of the reconciliation process between Malaysia and Indonesia. It is considered whether the issue of timing was important in assessing if Thai participation in ASEAN was inspired by real regional considerations or by shorter term concerns in alleviating the regime's policy difficulties in 1965-1967, as ASEAN became a new instrument for actualizing an independent position.

3) The third chapter discusses Thailand's foreign policy environment and decision-making processes, assessing the role of various bureaucratic agencies, particularly within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the Department of ASEAN Affairs as the official ASEAN National Secretariat of Thailand. Internal and external factors are discussed, and some importance given to the discussion of the role of individual personalities, particularly that of Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, in the determination of Thailand's ASEAN policy. In a larger framework, the place of ASEAN in the overall context of Thai foreign policy is also examined.

4) The fourth chapter investigates Thailand's role in ASEAN political cooperation, including its position on initiatives such as the attempts at the neutralization of Southeast Asia as from 1971 onwards; the political consultations on regional order of 1973-1975; and the Summit process of 1976-1977. An importance is given to discussion of how ASEAN political

cooperation helped to fulfill Thailand's security goals. Thai attitudes to fundamental organizational issues are also discussed, such as that of ASEAN membership, as well as the various proposals to reorganize ASEAN's institutional structure during this period.

5) The fifth chapter analyzes Thailand's role in ASEAN economic and functional cooperation, which became more active subsequent to 1976-1977. This aspect of cooperation constitutes the second leg to Thailand's quest for security, and is also concordant with the general policy goal of modernization. Although the study encompasses a mere 3 years of ASEAN's intensified economic cooperation, it is proposed that many of the Organization's activities from 1967 onwards should also be considered as paving the ground for this wider cooperation. Moreover, ASEAN's general interaction with its external dialogue partners is also investigated. ASEAN external cooperation allowed Thailand to engage in wider international role-playing, whilst providing additional support for security and modernization objectives. The evolutions in this field during the period discussed were to prove crucial for subsequent developments as the mechanisms for economic cooperation established in this period, however flawed in their implementation, continued to serve ASEAN until 1992.

6) The sixth chapter attempts a more detailed analysis of decision-making within ASEAN. The overall relevance of consensus is discussed from the perspective of Thailand and its partners. Thailand's decision-making within ASEAN and vis-à-vis external powers is analyzed through a case study examination of its role at the crucial 1976 ASEAN Summit in Bali in

comparison to other key meetings during the period under study. Special attention is placed on how Thailand is perceived within ASEAN, both by its partners as well as by external actors.

7) The seventh chapter discusses the ramifications on Thailand of Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea in late 1978 and its effects on subsequent Thai policy towards ASEAN and Southeast Asia as a whole. Thailand's reinvigorated partnership with ASEAN, as well as with certain individual powers, from this period onwards may be said to have set the tone for much of its regional policy until the conclusion of the Indochinese conflict, and even beyond.

8) Finally, the Conclusion attempts an assessment of the overall relationship between Thailand and ASEAN in the period concerned, judged against the initial hypotheses. An attempt is also made to analyze whether Thailand has had a significant influence on individual initiatives within ASEAN or on the general evolution of the Organization during the period, and in what manner.

CHAPTER

2

—

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

—

This Chapter aims to provide an overall theoretical framework for the study. ASEAN was founded within the context of the wide popularity of regional approaches during the 1960s, and thus it is necessary to apply various analytical tools developed during this period to relate it to its environment. In discussing the relevance of classical approaches to the process of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, however, it is suggested that there are certain specificities within the Southeast Asian example which should be further investigated. These specificities are highlighted by the examination of the rationale behind Thailand's ASEAN policy, which appears to provide many avenues for future research.

REGIONS AND REGIONALISM

Regionalism as a concept has had a powerful influence on international relations since the end of the Second World War, despite the founding of the United Nations as a global organization in 1945. Yet the concept has remained fairly vague throughout its history. Nevertheless, it may be taken for our purposes as an approach to international relations using the region as the main avenue of interaction. The region thus emerges as a focus of identity or even loyalty.¹ There are also problems with defining the term 'region' itself, which has been a constant source of practical and academic debate. Geographical, as well as political, economic or cultural attributes, have been used to give flesh to the concept. The current consensus appears to be that there are no natural regions, and that regions are social constructs rather than natural entities.²

“Both ‘region’ and ‘regionalism’ are ambiguous terms,” writes Hurrell, “the terrain is contested and the debate on definitions has produced little consensus.”³ It may be seen, however, that the terms are less important than their implication, for they open further avenues for a useful investigation of related themes. Particularly challenging is the idea of regionalism as an intermediate step between nationalism and globalism. The modern debate between globalism versus regionalism is itself an old debate, dating back to the ‘regional debate’ at the 1945 San Francisco Conference on International Organization when global solutions within the United Nations framework were challenged by the proposal to include regional organizations within the postwar international structure.⁴ Paralysis within the United Nations, and particularly within the Security Council as from the 1950s, further encouraged the formation of alliances or organizations on a regional and inter-regional basis. Nevertheless, it will be seen that in historical terms the idea of Southeast Asia with which we are concerned here was a rather recent phenomenon, as it has only been recognized as a region since the Second World War. Moreover, today the concept of Southeast Asia is again challenged by wider formulations such as that of East Asia or Asia-Pacific, as well as by a general globalization trend blurring regional distinctions altogether in a wider interdependence.⁵

Despite definitions of regionalism premised on placing it as the first step on the road towards a community based on a particular region, it is the contention here that regionalism as such does not necessarily provide any quantitative measure of cooperation. This necessitates the use of more precise definitions

such as regional ‘cooperation’ and ‘integration.’ Alagappa describes regional cooperation rather succinctly as: “cooperation among governments or non-government organizations in three or more geographically approximate and interdependent countries for the pursuit of mutual gain in one or more issue areas,” which constitutes a fairly comprehensive definition from a Southeast Asian perspective, and this will be further investigated.⁶ Integration, meanwhile, suggests a far closer association, a merging of interests into a single whole, although the process may be disaggregated into the political, economic and other component fields.⁷ In this context, regionalism is an umbrella concept that covers all forms of cooperation premised on a particular region, regardless of the extent of institutionalization or the depth of such activities.

In practical terms, various stages may be identified for each of the fields of cooperation on the way towards integration. In the economic field, the stages towards regional integration range from a free trade area, a customs union, a common market and finally to an economic union.⁸ In the political field, the relevant stages range from cooperation and harmonization through to confederation. Elements of economic and political integration may also be combined with other fields within a single framework, as in the European example. In this study, reference is made to regional cooperation rather than integration, for it is asserted that while cooperation was accepted as a goal, there was less consensus in Southeast Asia as to whether integration may be regarded as the final objective.

The theory of regional integration may be seen to have developed after the Second World War. Centred on integration

efforts in Europe, it developed as a field of political science largely separate from the study of international organization which involved the UN and its specialized agencies. As such the experience of the Second World War was an important inspiration, and the initial concepts put forward included idealistic proposals for federalism such as that proposed by Altiero Spinelli as a means to prevent the recurrence of international conflict. Prevention of conflict was also central to the idea of a security community which arose out of the postwar North Atlantic experience.⁹ Such ideas were dominated by a concern for the pooling of sovereignty and of sharing of resources, given the fear in Europe of the destructive powers of national chauvinism and totalitarian autarky that had contributed to the two World Wars which so ravaged the European continent. They may therefore be considered to have had an important normative element and classified as belonging to the liberal tradition, concerned as they were by prospects for peace and cooperation.

One of the most important theories which emerged was that of functionalism. As developed by David Mitrany, functionalism typically drew its inspiration from the experience of the Second World War and functionalist ideas may be seen to have played a crucial part in inspiring cooperation efforts in Western Europe. In this approach, technical as well as social and cultural, or 'functional', links would inculcate cooperative behaviour and engender greater integration between the states involved. It stressed the importance of process and adopted an indirect approach to integration as a means of achieving world peace. In a further refinement, Karl Deutsch introduced the idea

of transactions as an important indicator of this process. In his view, the intensity of cultural, social and political flows and transactions may also lead to a possible convergence among different political regimes.¹⁰ In this horizontal bottom-up view, integration would culminate in the attainment of a sense of community among the participants, and facilitate the actualization of a world community. Nevertheless, Mitrany himself was rather distrustful of the contribution of regional organizations to the process, including in Europe, fearing that they would not remain open and would become exclusive. In so doing they would cease to become functionalist and would instead enhance power projection by states.¹¹ Other limitations have been perceived by subsequent scholars, and with these in mind Michael Haas observes: “The functionalist logic may explain the rapid growth into technical regional organizations in Asia, for the success of one led to efforts to begin others, but the ultimate goal of depoliticization of technical issues through collective decision-making has not been reached thus far.”¹²

Neofunctionalists such as Ernst Haas and Leon Lindberg further developed such ideas and instead put the stress on institutions: that the building of a community does not depend on mass support or on identical aims, but on the existence of institutions as the executing agents. As such neofunctionalism may be regarded as a sort of synthesis between federalist and functionalist themes, requiring greater central direction and coordination to arrive at the objectives. The neofunctional approach may also be regarded as a typically European liberal one, focusing on the cooperative efforts of regional elites spurring integration, this time from the top down. Spillover into

other spheres of endeavour would result, widening the scope of cooperation.¹³ It is thus that Michael Haas asserts that within Asia, neofunctionalism appeared to apply in the case of ASEAN, largely basing his argument on the role of the ASEAN Secretariat founded in 1976 which he sees as increasing its areas of competence into broader fields and thereby spurring cooperation among members of the Association.¹⁴ However, it may be seen that neofunctionalism better explains the evolution of regional institutions rather than their creation. In any case, it will be seen that the ASEAN experience showed that institution-building was the least of the concerns of its founders, and in particular the Thais who were more concerned with practical cooperation. Perhaps with such trends in mind, Nye therefore observes that: “the neofunctional approach is more suited to the analysis of cases such as common markets in which significant institutions have been created or market forces released than it is to the analysis of loosely structured relationships.”¹⁵ In the ASEAN case, regional elites were also far more restricted than in the example provided by European parliamentary democratic regimes, which limited the circle of potential advocates of the regionalism that was expressed in ASEAN.

The evolution in international politics by the late 1970s, however, has greatly affected the perception of international institutions. Inertia within the UN and regional organizations became such that the stress in theoretical discussions moved away from the study of formal institutions to a renewed emphasis on the state or to less formal cooperative frameworks such as international regimes. The experience of European cooperation also came to reveal the limitations of functional integration.

With the relative slowdown in the European process during the late 1970s and early 1980s, a new stress was placed on the continuing importance of national decision-making in furthering cooperation and hence 'intergovernmentalism.' The recognition of the place of intergovernmentalism in integration theory thus approximates to the concerns expressed by the promoters of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia in progressing from primarily national solutions, with the preservation of national sovereignty being an overwhelming concern.¹⁶ Moreover, intergovernmentalism marked a move away from 'ideal type' classical models, although much of the normative framework still remained. Most importantly, the greater awareness of the role of government leaders and bureaucracies in propelling cooperation has fed into discussion of the impulse behind the current revival of European integration and evolution into the European Union.¹⁷

Integration theory thus provides important pointers for examining Southeast Asian regional cooperation, particularly in providing a framework within which concerted policy actions taken by states may be studied. It is illustrative of the organizational dynamics around which cooperation centred around a distinct region could be rationalized. This applies specifically with regards to the prevention of conflict through resource-sharing and the fostering of technical links which would encourage a process of spillover. Certainly, Southeast Asian leaders frequently talked about reforging long-lost ties, and stressed the importance of technical and cultural cooperation among each other, particularly in the early days.¹⁸ However, important differences setting apart the Southeast Asian

experience have also been highlighted. What is of primary importance is not necessarily that Southeast Asian leaders did not think in terms of prior precedents or of functional and neofunctional integration. Rather, they seemed to have taken such considerations in mind, but not as ideal types. What was crucial was the retention of flexibility, not only to adapt to changing situations, but also to local circumstances. Hence the broad and holistic instead of a focused integrative perspective of cooperation, and the 'untidy' framework of international institutions in Southeast Asia. Moreover, ASEAN statesmen at the time, however far-seeing, tended to consider Southeast Asia as being rather peripheral to international events, and thus while they may have considered cooperation in Southeast Asia as a stepping stone to a wider peace they saw that real progress in achieving international peace and prosperity depended more on the role of the great powers. In this perspective, regional impulses had limited application, and Southeast Asian leaders were more concerned with stabilizing their own region rather than normative concerns with a wider peace. Therefore, while such themes as intergovernmentalism have continuing relevance, the apparent incompleteness of integration theory in explaining the Southeast Asian experience, and in particular the factors that motivated Thai policy-makers, leads us to seek additional clarification in policy convergence.¹⁹ This necessitates a discussion of foreign policy in general, and the impetus that it gives to regional cooperation. A general discussion of foreign policy objectives and their determinants helps to elucidate national priorities and rectifies the omissions of the conventional theories of regional cooperation.

FOREIGN POLICY AND REGIONALISM

A vital aspect of international relations research, including in the study of foreign policy, is the question of level of analysis. Two basic levels have been identified: the national level and the systemic level.²⁰ In this study, the focus is largely on the national level, concentrating on the institutional structures of Thai foreign policy as a guide to its stance on regional cooperation. In discussing foreign policy, it is important to assess in turn the determinants, goals and instruments behind the policy of individual states. As a first step, the various determinants driving policy goals must be examined, which are interpreted by policy-makers in more subjective terms of national interest. In the case of Thailand, a concentration of academic research on the study of earlier diplomacy has highlighted the roles of personality and idiosyncratic aspects. Santaputra in his study of Thailand's foreign policy up to the 1940s, for example, uses Rosenau's 5 sets of variables for explaining foreign policy: idiosyncratic, role, governmental, societal and systemic, and has highlighted the importance of personal and idiosyncratic, and to a lesser extent, systemic factors in driving policy decisions.²¹ However, the period under study saw a gradual and sometimes arduous transformation in the nature of policy-making as well as the widening of Thai interests, and therefore fresh perspectives on Thai policy are required.

A variety of determinants seemed to have played a role in driving Thailand's foreign policy: permanent factors such as geopolitics, physical endowments and history, as well as more temporary attributes such as the personality of policy-makers

and ideology. Thailand's troubled relationship with its neighbours, and particularly its long and exposed land borders given the lack of natural frontiers, seemed to have placed a premium on security. Due to its history, particularly in the years prior to the Second World War, nationalism appeared to have played a small role in the post 1945 period, in contrast to many of its newly-independent neighbours. Meanwhile, personality gained added importance as policy determination was generally limited to a small number of persons, according to particular issue areas. By contrast, ideology has not normally played a part in Thailand's foreign policy, which was based on more traditional concerns. However, the growing alignment with the US as from the 1950s meant that Thai policy-makers employed ideological criteria in the conduct of foreign relations. In particular, the threat posed by communism to the Kingdom's central institutions of Nation, Religion and Monarchy provided an ideological underpinning to Thai policy in Southeast Asia, as well as to the maintenance of internal order. This became a source of internal policy debate, which may be interpreted as a clash as to whether ideology was a permanent factor underpinning policy, or merely a temporary factor that could be adjusted to the exigencies of the time. It will be shown that the entrenchment of ideological aspects of policy in a departure from general flexibility partly resulted from the government's own efforts at identifying the source of greatest threat and the appropriate response, and hence 'friend' or 'foe,' and which caused tensions within the policy-making circle. Yet while espousing the Cold War ideology of anti-communism, formal and informal contacts with communist countries were not excluded.²² The element of ideology continued

to drive certain political and military leaders into the 1970s, but the dominant approach from the period became one of pragmatism. At the same time, there seemed to be little concern with ‘moral’ aspects of foreign policy, although such high principles as the UN Charter and the importance of honouring national commitments have been upheld consistently in all policy statements.

Driven by the above determinants, security, development and regime maintenance are often referred to as the major goals of the foreign policy of developing countries.²³ Other goals are also present, albeit less important to national requirements though depending on the nature of the administration in power, such as international role-playing. In taking actions to accomplish policy goals, however, the Thai government did not always appear to be a unitary actor, neither did the various government agencies have clearly coherent outputs. Much indeed depended on personality and personal relationships in pursuing particular goals, a fact which will be illustrated throughout this study. Allison in his seminal study on foreign policy decision-making thus suggests that: “monoliths are black boxes covering various gears and levers in a highly differentiated decision-making structure...that large acts are the consequences of innumerable and often conflicting smaller actions by individuals at various levels of bureaucratic organizations in the service of a variety of only partially compatible conceptions of national goals, organizational goals, and political objectives.”²⁴

An overwhelming preoccupation for Thailand throughout its history was to maintain security and national independence. This was carried out through essentially pragmatic policies, with

a distinctive perception of national interest. It was with an eye to national interest that Thai policy-makers have often referred to their foreign policy as that of “Thai-ism,” a theme which tends to confirm the postulates of structural realism.²⁵ In this manner, the concept of national interest renders persuasive a realist paradigm of the international system. It is asserted that the traditional Thai stance as from the 19th Century viewed the international system as not necessarily benign. It was a world dominated by the great powers, and Thailand as a small and weak power had to tread carefully in international relations to protect its interest.²⁶

In this respect, the priorities of Thailand were not that dissimilar from those of many of its Southeast Asian neighbours which had been colonies while Thailand had been the only state to remain independent.²⁷ This was seen in frequent references to Thailand’s status as a ‘small state,’ a concept which had overwhelming currency within policy circles except during the prewar Prime Ministership of Pibulsonggram under the inspiration of Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn when a vigorous policy was pursued.²⁸ Such pursuit of a vigorous and active policy contrasted with the advocacy of a neutral and moral policy or “righteous reactive policy” deemed suitable for a small state.²⁹ Indeed, right up to the end of the 1980s, many Thai scholars saw that Thailand was not even an actor in international politics, and if so, only as a small power in regional terms. This same perception also applied to many of Thailand’s newly independent neighbours, with the exception of Indonesia with its large size and significant population, which nevertheless was also mistrustful of great powers after its colonial experience and its protracted

independence struggle.³⁰ Thus Jorgensen-Dahl proposes that while in Thailand and Singapore:

unfavourable perceptions of the international system tend to be somewhat softened by a greater confidence in their own ability to handle what are perceived to be negative external forces. The view of the international system in general as basically hostile is nevertheless firmly embedded in the beliefs of the leaders of the ASEAN states.³¹

The exertion of this influence of ‘realism’ on policy-makers may help to account somewhat for the strong influence of external factors, including external political and economic threats and the magnified communist menace, on regional policies as a whole. It may also be seen that this general conceptualization led to certain prescriptions as to the policies that should be pursued by the country, including a strong faith in international law and international organization to safeguard Thailand’s interests.³² Such cautious policies were encouraged by the Foreign Affairs Advisors who had helped to guide its foreign affairs from 1892 up to 1949. However, with the experience of the League of Nations and paralysis within the UN Security Council in mind, it was deemed that this was insufficient assurance for Thailand’s sovereignty. Thailand certainly did not regard itself as self-sufficient, and thus to maintain its security it relied on alliances and collective arrangements as well.

The policy of ‘bending with the wind’ may be seen to have formed a part of this threatening vision of the international

system on Thailand's security. As a small power, seeking accommodation with the dominant power like a frail clump of bamboo swinging in the direction of the prevailing wind was the sure-tryed method for preserving national sovereignty. It remains, nevertheless, a source of considerable academic debate within Thailand whether the dominant trend in Thai foreign policy has been the preservation of equidistance and neutrality or 'bending with the wind.' It is perhaps more useful to see that while Thailand recognized the usefulness of accommodating certain great powers given its relative weakness, it has often tried to preserve a certain distance vis-à-vis great power conflicts. Too much has probably been made of the absence of a colonial tradition leading Thailand to accept alignment in the postwar period. As will be seen, the myth of a traditional Thai propensity for neutrality was, and continues to remain, a powerful one in the national psyche. In practice, Thai policy-makers were prepared to resort to various formulas for the preservation of national sovereignty and integrity, with the greatest freedom of manoeuvre being regarded as desirable. Given Thailand's proud record of maintaining its sovereignty throughout the colonial period, the assertion of policy independence was a constant obsession of policy-makers, and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman spoke of the attempts to open channels to the PRC as from 1969 in such terms:

(The action) stems from a principle of our foreign policy, that of being objective and independent. An independent policy, a national policy, of course that policy has been somewhat beclouded by the necessity

created by the communist aggression in South Vietnam, of having to agree to the stationing of foreign troops in Thailand...I should like to say that this exception—or this temporary denting of our principle of foreign policy—was due to the necessities of the time, the requirements created by the communist aggression in South Vietnam.³³

Indeed, it will be seen that both Bangkok and Washington maintained that US bases in Thailand were in fact Thai bases and that US troops were only granted permission to use such facilities jointly with Thai forces for the duration of the conflict in Vietnam.³⁴ Moreover, the choice between neutrality or accommodation may be translated into the mere expression of preferences. It is perhaps safest to say that as much balance was maintained for as long as possible, but when it seemed that one side might have the upper hand and that fundamental national interests might be harmed if Thailand did not adjust its policy, accommodation was resorted to. In this manner, what was achievable was actually what mattered most, given the hard-headed pragmatism of Thai diplomacy. Nevertheless, later Thai policy-makers by the mid 1970s spoke increasingly of the need to assert an independent policy, and of ‘filling the vacuum’ within the region. This was partly in reaction against the previous policy of strict alignment with an external power, and ASEAN became associated with the new mood. For example, Konthi Suphamongkol, a former senior Thai diplomat, speaks of involvement in ASEAN as constituting a return to more traditional policies:

As far as Thailand is concerned, it constitutes a mere revival of its traditional foreign policy that our ancestors so successfully carried out since the 19th Century.³⁵

It may therefore be seen that the idea of Thailand as a small state has been central to the Thai perception of international relations. As a related theme, some also see as the national characteristic a capacity for compromise, drawn from Buddhist religious teachings, particularly the concept of 'the middle way'.³⁶ In this manner, a policy of regional cooperation was therefore consistent with Thai perceptions of the country's position within the international system as a whole. Regional cooperation enabled small states which were relatively weak on their own to combine their power so as to be able to exert a voice in the international arena. Thanat Khoman, for instance, has mentioned that Thailand as a small country could not rely solely on military forces, but must also build on constructive policies, on its brainpower and diplomacy.³⁷ It will be seen that Thailand's long history as an independent state entertaining extensive interactions with foreign powers motivated policy-makers towards pro-active attempts at organizing regional cooperation. However, there was hesitancy in asserting any regional leadership, due to the recognition of residual suspicions within the countries of Indochina of Thailand's previous involvement in the area, often resurrected by problems on the borders. It will also be seen that a cautious and incremental approach was adopted towards regional cooperation, for within the confines of the alignment with the US, visionary approaches were limited

in official circles. Nevertheless, the upholding of regional cooperation as a policy, seen as necessary for obtaining bargaining power over allies and enemies alike, may be regarded as concordant with deeply-felt concerns to regain Thailand's traditional policy flexibility.

The question may be posed whether regionalism was a goal or an instrument. It is the assertion of this study that while in fact it may have been both, regionalism should be regarded more as a policy instrument. Regionalism in the case of ASEAN became valuable as a policy instrument as it fulfilled multiple foreign policy goals. Through regional organization, such goals as security and development were thus accomplished, as well as role-playing and symbolic functions, which enabled Thailand to be associated with policy independence and lessening the impression of commitment.³⁸ In practice, however, common interests are often obscured by national interests. National interest is described as a combination of the national position and the outlook of the policy-makers. In this manner, objective factors such as geopolitics, political system and social structure interact with more subjective factors involving the values and perceptions of policy-makers to formulate policy.³⁹ Proponents of the primacy of national interest such as Stanley Hoffman thereby stress the importance of the nation-state within the international system:

The nation-state survives, preserved by the formidable autonomy of politics, as manifested in the resilience of political systems, the interaction between separate states and a single international system, the role

of leaders who believe both in the primacy of 'high politics' over the kind of managerial politics susceptible to functionalism, and in the primacy of the nation, struggling in the world of today, over any new form, whose painful establishment might require one's lasting withdrawal from the pressing and exalting daily contest.⁴⁰

In assessing national interest, it is crucial to stress the important linkage between foreign and domestic policy. "Foreign policy has never been an entirely autonomous realm," suggests Rothstein, "there is no way that foreign policy decisions can be completely separated from the domestic political system."⁴¹ The goals of foreign policy therefore have to be concordant with domestic ones, and this was particularly true of Thailand under military rule during the late 1950s and 1960s. Even in the 1970s, despite the efforts to keep the domestic sphere separate from the external sphere, the internal anti-communism of the Tanin Government contributed to a deterioration of Thailand's relations with countries in Indochina. Indeed, foreign policy may be regarded as a tool of domestic policy, particularly in terms of national development and role-playing. Moreover, foreign policy may also be seen as an independent, as well as a dependent variable, and prolonged reliance on one particular line of policy, such as alignment with the US, may lead to pressures for the development of alternative directions, such as towards greater independence or regional cooperation.⁴² Such themes will be further elaborated upon during the course of this study.

As for the wider evolution of regionalism since the end of the Second World War and the process of decolonization, regionalism in the developing world has taken various directions,

although the different formulae were not mutually exclusive and were combined by various states to optimize foreign policy options. Of these, inter-regional groupings were the most inclusive, being broad-based coalitions of great potential influence, but often with little coherence and solidarity, such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Commonwealth. Full-fledged regional groupings such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the European Community (EC), or even ASEAN, also commanded substantial importance. At a subsidiary level, sub-regional groupings such as the Mekong Committee, however, appeared less vibrant. During the latter half of the period studied, Thailand was member of only regional and sub-regional groupings, and could not call upon much inter-regional support on a multilateral level. It could thus be expected that Thailand would increasingly place substantial importance on regional cooperation within ASEAN, as well as rely on the inter-regional connections of its ASEAN partners in maximizing its foreign policy leverage.

Despite the encompassing nature of regional cooperation and the clear expectation of a wide range of benefits from the pursuit of such a policy, it is nevertheless alleged that regionalism as a policy was on the whole not taken seriously. An observer's sceptical view of Southeast Asian regional cooperation is provided by a prominent scholar of US-Thai relations, who takes a realist line in suggesting that for Southeast Asian policy-makers, and particularly the Foreign Ministers: "regionalism was a safe, fashionable subject, toward which goal they could accomplish little."⁴³ However, if regional cooperation is taken as an element of foreign policy, rather than more normatively as a

desirable end in itself, such ventures may be seen to provide policy options of some significance.

REGIONAL COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

It may be said that regionalism in Southeast Asia poses a challenging problem. It remains unclear whether the idea of Southeast Asia as a distinct region is a permanent or temporary concept. In any case, it appears that the agenda is not set merely by the countries forming the region alone, but also by those external powers who have interacted with the regional states and have helped to shape the destiny of Southeast Asia since early times. Following the end of the Second World War and the process of decolonization, the idea of Southeast Asia appeared to be a rising concept, an identity reinforced in the 1950s and 1960s by the general popularity of regionalism worldwide. Even as theories of regionalism had lost their salience by the late 1970s, the identity of Southeast Asia was more than ever entrenched, as a result of rather than in spite of the division of the region into two blocs, ASEAN and Indochina.⁴⁴ In the 1990s, however, this identity appears to be declining in face of *de facto* economic integration with a wider East Asia.⁴⁵ This is occurring paradoxically at the same time as ASEAN is for the first time becoming fully representative of the whole of Southeast Asia through its ongoing expansion of membership to cover the Indochina countries and Burma.

In contrast to the postwar situation, prior to 1945 there were relatively few concrete ideas for regional cooperation in

Southeast Asia. Most of the countries still remained under colonial rule, and different systems of colonial domination were perpetuated, with the result that the focus of social and cultural attention or political and economic exchanges was directed towards the respective colonial metropolises instead of towards the immediate region. Even in Thailand, the one country that remained uncolonized, attention was focused on adjustments and adaptations to Western modes, and therefore to the dominant great powers. Meanwhile, the issue of promoting regional sentiment may be seen as problematic as there were fears that advocacy of such a policy as cooperation among territories of the region under the inspiration of Bangkok could arouse Western suspicions of Thai irredentism and anti-colonial postures.⁴⁶ Given the legacy of territorial disputes with the colonial powers prior to the First World War, Thai leaders were already wary of foreign intervention in the Kingdom, and did not want to provoke the colonial powers unnecessarily. Thus in the years prior to 1941, Thailand had to rebut Western claims of it forming an Asian League in collaboration with Japan, with whom it was already forming substantial economic ties.⁴⁷

As already noted, while traditional relations among countries in the region have been extensive and multifaceted, the idea of Southeast Asia itself was a relative recent phenomenon.⁴⁸ The area was usually referred to with reference to its giant neighbours, China and India, and hence terms such as 'Indochina' or 'Further India' were used to refer to parts of the region.⁴⁹ In terms of historical heritage, moreover, there was a divide between mainland and maritime Southeast Asia, although this did not prevent intensive contacts between the different territories.⁵⁰

Colonialism further disrupted intra-regional flows so that by the onset of the 20th Century, Southeast Asia was a confusing mosaic of religions, empires and traditions. Anti-colonialism did nevertheless bring diverse national groups together, as seen in the Vietnamese nationalist Phan Boi Chau's founding of an East Asia United League in Japan in the early 1900s with Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian and Filipino members.⁵¹ References to a distinct region known as 'Southeast Asia' were probably first made by scholars in the interwar period. However, the first popular use of the concept arose during the Second World War when a South-East Asia Command (SEAC) was created by the Allied powers in 1943 for strategic and administrative purposes. The criterion was that there was a region which was not part of China, nor of India, and was distinct from the Pacific.⁵²

Yet the idea of Southeast Asia as independent from wider approaches took some time to take hold. In the years after the Second World War and with the beginning of decolonization, the idea of solidarity among the developing and emergent states of the so-called 'Third World' was strong, stimulating impulses such as the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung and leading up to the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1962. Anti-colonialism was a major factor motivating the foreign policies of newly-independent countries such as India and Indonesia, and hence their regional policies. Within Asia, the idea of a common Asian or East Asian identity based on deep-rooted cultural values was also compulsive, given the influences of the newly-emergent giants: India and China.⁵³ Even among Thai policy-makers, particularly at a time when various

concurrent policy options were being entertained, it was more common to refer to 'Asian solidarity' with regards to common values. It was uplifting to talk of the rich legacy of Asian culture and traditions, and in this regard the idea of cooperation within the more limited region of Southeast Asia perhaps appeared more prosaic and down-to-earth, even 'second-best'.⁵⁴ It was in this view that Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman at the Cameron Highlands Ministerial Meeting of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) spoke that even after attainment of independence by the countries of Southeast Asia, countries outside the region:

did not realize the desire in our hearts to be masters in our house and our abiding faith in the Asian Culture and traditions and particularly in our capability to shape and to direct for ourselves the future destiny of our nations.⁵⁵

Although the idea of Southeast Asia was already becoming strong, policy-makers were unsure about the political effectiveness of such a region, and thus broader approaches as seen in the 1966 'Asian peace moves' to end the conflict in Vietnam involving the wider Asian region were attempted. As will be shown, this wider approach was largely eschewed for a more restricted cooperation by 1966-67, although not yet exclusively.⁵⁶ Growing fear of domination by India or China on the one hand, compounded by ideological constraints against cooperation with the latter after 1949, and on the other hand fears of economic domination by Japan, reinforced pressures to cooperate among close neighbours in Southeast Asia sharing common political and

socio-economic systems as well as similar level of economic development. Accordingly, by the early 1970s, for political and economic reasons the relative identities of South Asia, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia were strengthened to the detriment of the wider Asian identity which had until then been predominant.⁵⁷ At the same time, the question of maintaining all available options open as well as the fluidity of desirable membership attests to the flexibility maintained by the promoters of regional cooperation in the face of the changing international situation.⁵⁸ The discussion therefore tends to support further the contention that the idea of Southeast Asia was more a social construct, influenced by social and political factors, when referred to in terms of regional cooperation.

In this connection, it should be noted that though the commonality of experience within Southeast Asia was often alluded to in ASEAN, this perception was not always so.⁵⁹ During the ASA period Thanat Khoman, in pointing out that it was common interests rather than past links which united the founders of ASA, claimed that the three members “have little in common either ethnically, historically or culturally.”⁶⁰ It was only later on that affinities instead of differences were stressed. Moreover, political relations within Southeast Asia had in pre-colonial times always been dominated by the concept of hierarchy, accompanied by notions of tribute with the symbolic role of China at the apex.⁶¹ Formal equality between states never existed in Southeast Asia prior to 1945, and in the historical past there were no leagues of free Southeast Asian states as found in Western Europe such as in Switzerland, Italy or in the Baltic area based on equality and bound by legal compacts for common

purposes. Instead, power relationships dominated, and the idea of equality among regional states and a mutual sharing of benefits as in the formula of the “spirit of equality and partnership” of the 1967 Bangkok Declaration took some time to take hold.⁶² This may help to explain why Thailand also found it difficult to encourage cooperation with its closest neighbours in the first years, in that it had the recent past been a domineering power within the continent, imposing unequal relationships on tributary territories, and thus certain fears were aroused of Thai intentions of hegemony. The lack of a wide groundswell of pressure for Southeast Asian regional cooperation meant that such a policy was advocated by only a few determined individuals within the national elites. This highlights the significance of the role of certain individuals such as Tunku Abdul Rahman for Malaysia, Adam Malik for Indonesia and Thanat Khoman for Thailand.

In many ways, Tunku Abdul Rahman may be regarded as the father of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. Architect of the Federation of Malaya and its first Prime Minister (1957-1970), his main motivation in promoting policies of regional cooperation was for the long-term survival of Malaysia in the Southeast Asian environment, and his efforts should be seen in the background of the troubled creation of Malaysia. The Tunku was also concerned with the threat of communist insurgency following the Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960, and hence his interest in national development to combat such a menace. Different priorities motivated Adam Malik, Foreign Minister of Indonesia (1966-1977), who appeared to have been preoccupied with a political message. Indonesia wanted to show that it could

play a responsible role in the region after the years of *Konfrontasi* during which it had attempted to 'crush' Malaysia. Participation in regional cooperation would be a concrete demonstration that Indonesia should not be considered as a threat to its neighbours, and hence Indonesians stressed Jakarta's leading role in the formation of ASEAN. After the Sukarno years, Indonesia also required a certain regional stability within which to concentrate on the task of economic reconstruction.⁶³ The Philippines, for its part, had long been considered a half-Western power with its Spanish rule till 1898 and then American administration, as well as its geographical position somewhat removed from the continent. It thus wanted to assert itself as an Asian power by engaging in common endeavours with its neighbours.⁶⁴ As a senior Philippines diplomat observed during the ASA negotiations:

In a political sense, we have what has been described as a split personality, undesirably so as far as our ties with Asia are concerned. The West views us as part of Asia but our Asian neighbours regard us as western, and in particular as American. The unhappy result is that we are not trusted by our own neighbours and we are occasionally taken for granted by our western friends.⁶⁵

In addition, regional cooperation played an important domestic role in the Philippines in providing concrete evidence of policy success for the incumbent government, as seen under President Garcia with ASA and President Macapagal with MAPHILINDO. This need for a policy achievement applied

particularly to the Marcos Government which had been newly installed since December 1965, and hence its receptiveness to ASEAN.⁶⁶ As for Singapore, the city-state was eminently practical in its consideration of regional cooperation. It also wanted to establish itself as a member of the Southeast Asian community, considering the perception of its Chinese identity among its larger neighbours.⁶⁷ However, in the wake of the announcement in mid 1967 of imminent British withdrawal from the region, cooperation with its neighbours was deemed crucial to its survival.

For a long time, Thailand had seen a need for development hand in hand with security so as to establish an appropriate position for itself within the international community. In the postwar period, such concerns were magnified by the spread of communist ideology within Southeast Asia, which led to an overall concern with the economic development of the region as a whole as well as of Thailand itself. This was seen in numerous pronouncements made by various government leaders, such as in Foreign Minister Prince Wan's speech at the 1st Council Meeting of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1955 in which he explained Thailand's interest in the economic development of its neighbours as being motivated by the fact that: "the more prosperous these countries become, the more effective they stand as barrier against communist infiltration in Southeast Asia."⁶⁸ With the launch of ASA and ASEAN it may be seen that there was a change in emphasis to development as an integral element of security. As will be shown later in this study, this was a central aspect of the development cabinets of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat whose legacy was handed on to his

successors. Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman may also be seen to have put this developmentalist preoccupation into his concept of Collective Political Defence underlying regional cooperation. It was recognized, however, that development was threatened by the wider regional instability, and hence efforts were also exerted by Thailand to ensure a regional order so that the free market system upheld by Thailand could be sustained.

The experience of the initial five members of ASEAN thus revealed the overall importance of closer ties and greater responsibility towards neighbours in the launching of regional cooperation, a factor which will be further elucidated during the course of this study. Yet practical aims, more than an innate idealism, motivated the regional leaders: there was no “Zurich Speech” such as that delivered by Sir Winston Churchill in September 1946 that could act as an inspiration to Southeast Asian regional leaders as in Europe. Above all, there was no questioning of national sovereignty as an ideal, and the reference to ‘the peoples of Southeast Asia’ as constituting the basis of cooperation was very much in the abstract. Moreover, there was an ongoing ambivalence as to how regional cooperation and national development could be reconciled in practice. Gordon refers to his interviews with regional leaders during the formative stages of ASA that: “many leaders have spoken with considerable enthusiasm about their personal attraction to the goal of regional cooperation, and a moment later have ticked off many obstacles in the path of achieving this goal. The ambivalence, no doubt, derives from their commitment to regionalism, which they tend to regard as a ‘good,’ and their simultaneous strong commitment to rapid economic development, which is of course also seen as

a 'good'...What led to the establishment of ASA was the belief that the inconsistencies can be resolved.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, despite the importance given to the forging of regional solidarity by ASEAN's founders, the advocacy arguably fell short of the idea of creating a political community.⁷⁰

The role of external inspiration has been of no less importance to the evolution of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, particularly in motivating various regional leaders at crucial stages. As Thanat Khoman stated at the 1st AMM in 1967: "The modern trend either in politics or economics points towards closer cooperation and even integration. Southeast Asia cannot escape the present day exigencies."⁷¹ In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and withdrawal from India, the British were keen to stabilize their positions in Southeast Asia through collective means. This led to the formulation of various British proposals as from the late 1940s for a regional consolidation which were eventually to lead to the creation of the Colombo Plan in 1950.⁷² Economic stabilization was seen as a means to ensure political stability which would enable the countries of Southeast Asia to better resist communism. By contrast, the US appeared to show an initial lack of interest for regional ventures in Southeast Asia and retained a preference for bilateralism as seen in its relationship with the Philippines and Japan, as well as in the abortive Mutual Defence Agreement of 1952 with Indonesia. Washington was particularly distrustful of British schemes in Southeast Asia due to lingering suspicions that they served to perpetuate British colonial influence in the region. At the same time, the US was also wary what it described as the rise of "anti-Western Asiatic consciousness" as exemplified in the

1947 Asian Relations Conference and arising out of an anti-colonialism which might rebound to harm its interests in a key strategic region.⁷³ Thus with the US's growing involvement in containing the advance of communism in Indochina, US policy-makers did begin to develop some sympathy for regional solutions to promote regional order from around the late 1940s onwards. This was seen in its participation in SEATO and in a region-wide approach to planning, especially from the 1950s. Following the creation of ASA, the US Ambassador in Bangkok opined:

I think a multilateral organization for economic and political purposes of the Asian nations would eventually be better than SEATO if we backed such an organization with our power and bilateral treaties with Thailand, etc.⁷⁴

Washington's previous reluctance had also partly resulted from its belief that regional ventures had to be indigenous and arising from regional initiative and yet viable. It did not want such ventures to become an excuse for requests by various states for additional US funding.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Washington policy-makers eventually came around to a policy of support for regional cooperation, as seen in Attorney-General Robert Kennedy's trip to Asia in January 1964 during the height of *Konfrontasi*. It may be seen that the theme of regional development was central to President Johnson's famous speech at Johns Hopkins University in April 1965.⁷⁶ This evolution in the US position towards regional cooperation and economic development

was made in the clearest manner by the provision of substantial financial support for a multilateral instrument such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the Johnson Administration.⁷⁷

The example of regional cooperation elsewhere was also important in the shift in Washington's position by the mid 1960s, as well as a growing recognition that before the US could extricate itself from Vietnam, it was necessary to forge a certain regional solidarity so as to stabilize the states in Southeast Asia. When questioned, Thanat himself emphatically denied that it was necessary to consult the Americans in the formation of ASEAN, but considering the closeness of Bangkok's alignment with Washington, it was likely that the US became aware of such efforts early on.⁷⁸ Explicit US support for Thai efforts in regional cooperation, as well as the important idea that the US presence served as a shield behind which such enterprises could be organized, was seen in President Johnson's Speech welcoming Bunchana Atthakor as the new Thai Ambassador to Washington in January 1968:

Your Excellency's Government has played a leading role in bringing about more harmonious relations among the nations of the area and in laying the foundation for the rapidly growing movement for regional cooperation and development in the Pacific Area and in Southeast Asia. In these activities you have our full support. Behind the shield of our mutual defence effort, the future of a new Asia is being built based on peace, partnership and prosperity.⁷⁹

It is thus probably valid to conclude that by 1967, both Thai and US policy-makers were well-acquainted with arguments for regional cooperation, as separated from collective security within the scope of the Manila Pact.

Comments by Thai leaders also seemed to echo the claim, often made by prominent American personalities as well as scholars, that US forces provided a security umbrella behind which indigenous efforts could be launched. During the early months of 1967, Thanat Khoman was seen to make a revealing observation: "How can you have a regional cooperation if you have someone ready to jump at your throat all the time. We need a protective umbrella as Europe did."⁸⁰ Before this security umbrella, the US sought to provide economic aid to further promote regional stability, and this development theme was carried on from Presidents Johnson through to Nixon. The US's concern with stimulating economic development in the region was also seen in bilateral terms through the US role in the rehabilitation of Indonesia from 1966 onwards following the accession to power of General Suharto. As an illustration of this US concern and of the close partnership of Bangkok with Washington, during Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn's visit to the US in May 1968, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk asked the Thai Prime Minister how Indonesia could be bound together to the other countries of Southeast Asia, and that the US was pleased to give the fullest encouragement.⁸¹

Nevertheless, though it may be seen that the US response to the creation of ASEAN was positive, it was low-key. In this respect, the argument of the 'kiss of death' should also be noted, being essentially that too close an association by US spokesmen

with a venture would identify that enterprise with US interests and hence damn it in the eyes of other countries, just as SEATO was identified with US strategic concerns. It was probably with this in mind that William P. Bundy, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, spoke of functional organizations as well as broader associations such as the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) and ASA in the following terms:

Let me emphasize that in these broader governmental groupings we play no part whatever. These are wholly Asian initiatives and, to the extent that such organizations have a political aspect, it must be wholly in accord with the desires of East Asian and Pacific participants.⁸²

Although there is no concrete confirmation of a deliberate ‘hands off’ policy having been adopted towards ASEAN, this concern may have played a part in the apparent indifference shown by Washington initially. This accorded with the general Thai desire to foster greater regional awareness and forge an independent identity for ASEAN, as well as to create a general distance from the US in both bilateral and multilateral terms. US economic aid continued to be largely given on a bilateral basis, as well as through broad multilateral frameworks as the ADB, and it will be seen that no formal link was made with ASEAN until 1977. At the same time, US interest in regional cooperation was not confined to Southeast Asia. Nye observes that this renewed American interest in regional organizations was in fact global: “In the mid 1960s, as the enormous costs of

involvement in Vietnam became apparent and American foreign policy attitudes became introspective, an increasing number of Americans proclaimed the wisdom of supporting regional organizations as a middle ground between acting as a global policeman and withdrawing into a fortress America.⁸³ The promotion of greater self-reliance on the part of Washington's partners worldwide during the course of the 1960s was therefore seen to be in the US interest. Furthermore, the interest was not limited to policy-making circles, for on the fringes many American scholars and analysts also advocated such policies.⁸⁴ The positive position which was adopted by Thailand's main ally may therefore have provided a powerful impetus to indigenous efforts at regional cooperation.

At the same time, the example of the European Community was doubtless equally powerful in motivating the advocates of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. As Thanat Khoman explained in an interview regarding his conversations with European leaders such as the long-serving Belgian Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak:

Mr. Spaak told me that the US had helped to create the European Common Market. The Europeans were able to set up the Common Market with the approval even support of the US...(regional solidarity and cooperation) is aimed exactly at what the Europeans had been doing, creating a sense of European solidarity, OECD and other organizations like the Common Market (ASA) is exactly the same as what Monnet was trying to start in Europe.⁸⁵

Thus in the view of the most ardent Thai advocate of regional cooperation, the European example was a crucial model for Southeast Asian regionalism, and itself also intrinsically linked to the US policy of consolidating various regions for the Free World. At the same time, one cannot deny that the European efforts were inspired by prominent Europeans such as Monnet, Spaak and de Gaspari even if US support proved to be important in the formative stages.⁸⁶ In retrospect, the example of Europe was probably also closest to that of Southeast Asia. Following the destruction of war there was a need for reconstruction and development, while the communist threat and tensions posed by bloc politics were also ever-present in both regions. However, Rieger has posited that the perception of the European Community in the eyes of the countries of ASEAN has in fact undergone important changes during the course of time: in the early years and through the 1970s the European example was thought to be worth emulating, an impression which lessened during the uncertainty within the European process in the early 1980s, although now the tide appears to have turned yet again. These changing perceptions, as echoed by the evolution in the field of integration theory, have invariably affected the musings of ASEAN leaders on the relevance of the European example.⁸⁷

Thanat's assertion that he drew inspiration from the European Community therefore requires further investigation. On numerous occasions, he had admitted that he was motivated by the European example:

It should be put on record that, for many of us and for me in particular, our model had been and still is, the European Community, not because I was trained there, but because it is the most suitable form for us living in this part of the world, and that inspite of our parallel economies which are quite different from the European ones.⁸⁸

However, other personalities involved in the negotiations for the founding of ASEAN in 1966-67 such as the then Malaysian Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie also gave an explanation of the genesis of ASEAN stressing the importance of Malaysia-Indonesia cordiality as being equivalent to Franco-German reconciliation in the creation of the European Community.⁸⁹ It has already been seen that the 1960s were the heyday of regional cooperation and accordingly its influence was pervasive. Certainly there were elements in ASEAN which were *communautaire* in spirit: both encompassed wider stabilization activities although concentrated on economic, social and technical cooperation. As with the EC, ASEAN did not have a military content. Just as in Europe where there existed institutions such as NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) which performed the security functions, Asia had an equivalent in SEATO up to 1977. However, it could be asserted that ASEAN was already inherently more political than its European counterpart as there was a greater division of work within Europe, due to the proliferation of institutions, while Asia as a whole had few multilateral institutions. The subsequent evolution of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia did also

contrast with the wider European process which moved towards greater multilateral dialogues as seen in the convening of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) from 1973 onwards, considering the limited role of *détente* in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, Thai Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan held out hope for a similar process of regional reconciliation in a 1975 speech in which he declared:

Just as in Helsinki last week the 35-nation East-West Security Summit Conference at long last confirmed post WWII realities in western Europe. So I venture to hope that, in the not too distant future, the post WWII and post-Vietnam War situation in Southeast Asia and the wider Asia and Pacific region will also be similarly stabilized.⁹⁰

That such initiatives for regional reconciliation failed to gain support within Southeast Asia not only indicated the degree of polarization within the region, but also important differences in perception between the parties involved. As will be seen, this restricted the scope for a wider cooperation encompassing the whole of Southeast Asia.

It will be seen during this study that the European Community not only inspired ASEAN by example and in theoretical terms, but also in more concrete respects. The EC was able to transmit the benefit of its experience to ASEAN through its formal development cooperation, such as via the funding of various studies on the possibilities for the enhancement of ASEAN cooperation during the course of the period under

study. Most importantly, the 'push-pull' factor may be seen to have played a part in stimulating ASEAN cooperation. The external cooperation of the Organization was formalized partly as a result of the demands from ongoing economic negotiations with the EC, particularly after Britain's membership of the grouping in 1973, as well as fears of growing protectionism within the EC and the developed world. Accordingly, the structure of ASEAN external cooperation was laid down in the early 1970s with relations with Europe, as well as other developed countries such as Japan, firmly in mind. As Roy Jenkins, then President of the European Commission, commented:

ASEAN has an important role to play to ensure the peaceful development of its part of the world...We know from our own experience how difficult it is to move to closer regional integration, but we know that, paradoxically, external influences can often help to overcome difficulties.⁹¹

It may be further asserted that given that there was no indigenous precedent in terms of political relationships within the region, Southeast Asian leaders were likely to use at least an interpretation of the European examples, past and present, for the purpose of their own regional organization.

Nevertheless, there were crucial differences between the two regions which should be highlighted, for they had important policy implications. These included long-term historical and cultural factors. The European experience was long in gestation with its intellectual inspiration harking back to the 19th Century

and even beyond. It also had a strong democratic strain, arising out of Western humanist ideas as well as the fight against totalitarianism during the Second World War, which was completely lacking in the Southeast Asian formulations. The role of parliaments and other non-bureaucratic groups was crucial throughout important stages in the European process, from the creation of the Council of Europe in 1949 and even in the run-up to the 1975 Helsinki Conference on European Cooperation and Security, while to this day ASEAN still lacks a representative regional parliament. Thus it is noted by Ernst Haas that: “Pluralism of groups, values and institutions is the hallmark of western European political life,” which may not be present in other regions.⁹² Mitrany, for his part, remained a fervent admirer of such democratic inspirations within Europe:

It rests indeed squarely upon the most characteristic idea of the democratic-liberal philosophy, which leaves the individual free to enter into a variety of relationships—religious, political and professional, social and cultural—each of which may take him in different directions and dimensions and into different groupings, some of them of international range.⁹³

By contrast, Southeast Asian regionalism stressed other aspects of relationships. For example, it contained important external elements such as the expression of anti-colonialism, and was policy-led. If the role of elites was common to both experiences, then in the ASEAN case it was political elites, rather than the wider group of social elites and opinion-formers that

was present in Europe, who played the crucial roles in motivating actions. As such, it was rather more a community of policy than a community of spirit. The national backgrounds cannot also be ignored, for the nature of decision-making in the ASEAN countries cannot be divorced from the structure planned for the Organization. It may be seen that all the ASEAN countries in 1967 possessed parliaments but which varied in terms of representativeness. Certainly, the view was that executive/bureaucratic influences should lead in policy-making on regional cooperation, and as there were no parallel tracks moving towards the same aim, the top-down policy approach remained pervasive.⁹⁴

With this in mind, what kind of vision of Europe as a relevant example for Southeast Asia did Thanat and his Thai colleagues subscribe to? This has been a source of much speculation in the light of the numerous comments by Southeast Asian leaders of a European inspiration. The question may be approached from the viewpoints of structure, content and decision-making. The evidence suggests that, despite certain far-reaching comments, Southeast Asian leaders did not mean the adoption of the entire EC infrastructure as it was agreed from the start that ASEAN should be practical and less formal.⁹⁵ A minimalist approach to structure and formality was adopted, with the 1967 Bangkok Declaration being sparse in its prescriptions, unlike the rather comprehensive Treaty of Rome.⁹⁶ In terms of content, for the Thais ASEAN nevertheless also meant a comprehensive range of cooperation, as with the EC, including political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Other issues, such as legal and constitutional questions, have been largely ignored, or at least have remained vague. Another

important source of difference between the European and Southeast Asian situations laid in decision-making, in particular the application of the ASEAN consensus model, in national as well as regional terms. This involved the principle of *musjawarah*, or consultations, for arriving at decisions via *mufakat*, or consensus. Nevertheless, it is also noted that consensus and consultations as such are not necessarily unique to ASEAN. As a noted study of ASEAN regional politics suggests:

The significance of *musjawarah* as a mode of conduct in international negotiations lies not in its unique or peculiar features, because there are none which are not known or practised elsewhere, but rather in the emphasis and the position it has been given as the mode of conduct in the relations between the ASEAN group of states.⁹⁷

In the case of Thailand, while consultations do indeed feature prominently in social interactions, it may be asserted that the Malay village atmosphere in which *musjawarah* and *mufakat* are fostered is somewhat removed from the world of the policy-makers. However, Thailand as a middle power within ASEAN fully accepted the principle of equality within ASEAN and that of consensus as a mode of action. A final factor which set the Southeast Asian example apart from Europe was seen in the external orientation: there was a difference in the treatment of superpowers. While stressing their autonomy, the members of the EC did not seek to disguise which power bloc they belonged to, whereas ASEAN members with their proximity to

Vietnam, where violent conflict was being fought, strongly asserted their policy independence and their non-appartenance to any one power bloc. In this light, ASEAN could be seen in symbolic terms as a complement to multilateral security arrangements and bilateral alliances, enabling the countries of Southeast Asia to maintain their independent image by a political investment in indigenous regionalism.

Regionalism in Southeast Asia has therefore been shown to be a recent and rather fluid phenomenon, with key actions being driven at the beginning by a few prominent individuals within each of the countries concerned. The key role played by such personalities, who were outward-looking in their approach to international affairs, tends to suggest that external influences and ideologies played a larger role than might have been expected, at least in the Thai case. However, it will also be investigated whether Thai leaders conceptualized their own ideas of regional cooperation and the extent to which such concerns affected policy outputs.

THE PLACE OF COLLECTIVE POLITICAL DEFENCE IN INTEGRATION THEORY

While Thais are not known for their fondness for dogma and theoretical formulations and flexibility was a major concern in guiding the participation in regional cooperation, there were attempts to justify interest in regional cooperation at a conceptual level. Among Thai policy-makers, Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman appeared to have had the most coherent and comprehensive vision for regional cooperation. Thanat's vision

comprised various themes, parts of which were emphasized or deemphasized as necessary throughout his long public career and, it must be said, according to their political usefulness. Among the most well-elaborated elements of Thanat's themes was the concept of 'Collective Political Defence' which formed the basis behind his ideas for regional cooperation, as set out in various speeches such as the important statement to the Council of Foreign Relations in New York in May 1968, and in various interviews during the course of 1968-1969.⁹⁸

The prominence given to the theme of Collective Political Defence by Thanat Khoman seems to suggest, for Thailand at least, that security had an important part to play in his scheme of regional cooperation. However, the concept was only crystallized in the 3 years *following* the creation of ASEAN, which tends to indicate that its importance grew during this time, and that at the beginning it was not necessarily tailor-made to fit ASEAN. The concept was kept deliberately vague and in terms of generalities precisely to enable it to be reformulated to adjust to changing circumstances. Nevertheless, it may be said that a quest for bargaining power, regional order and development appeared to have been the first priorities, and remained fairly constant themes. What was notable was that no reference to Collective Political Defence seemed to have been made prior to the founding of ASEAN in 1967.⁹⁹

In examining the term Collective Political Defence, it is probably necessary to divide it into its constituent parts. Firstly, 'collective,' which appears to be the most straightforward element, and can be taken to mean joint actions by all the members of a body for their mutual benefit, as well as actions

taken by other members for the benefit of one or more of their number. 'Political' is rather more problematic, but was taken by Thanat to mean all areas of cooperation, excluding the military dimension:

We must use other means than military means to shore up our positions, our independence and our security. The only available means are diplomatic and political ones, political consultations, political and economic cooperation. By political, of course, I mean not only political but economic, cultural and social measures as well.¹⁰⁰

In this definition of 'political,' Thanat was probably alone among the ASEAN statesmen in considering such a broad dimension of the term, although his interpretation was not apparently challenged in public. However, it was probably inserted to distinguish the concept from the more orthodox formulations of military defence and hence military collective security, such as through SEATO. Lastly, 'defence' is taken to be the purpose of the collective actions, and can be provided for one of the members or for ASEAN as a whole. Thus 'defence' could apply both to Thailand when threatened by events in Indochina, as well as for ASEAN in filling the vacuum of power within Southeast Asia in the late 1960s. One can argue that 'defence' presumed defence against something, external or internal, but the precise definition of threat has often remained deliberately vague, at least partly due to the concern that ASEAN should not alienate the countries of Indochina and the PRC. Certainly, strong efforts were taken to avoid the impression of

ASEAN being antagonistic to any particular country or ideology. At the same time, it is equally possible to argue that 'defence' was also a rather negative policy, though it arose at a time when it was felt that a 'positive' policy was difficult to achieve. However, it appeared that Thanat often used the term 'security' interchangeably with 'defence,' which lends a more far-reaching impact to his proposals, for the use of 'Collective Political Security' as an alternative formula also further clarifies the wider perspective of the word 'political,' which now seems to have indeed been specifically included to distinguish Thanat's new form of collective security from the more traditional type of collective security under the 1954 Manila Pact founding SEATO.¹⁰¹ As such, the new form of collective security comprised a broad definition of security to encompass all aspects of cooperation, excluding the military one, a definition which was generally accepted within ASEAN, considering its general compatibility with the wider concerns of other regional leaders and notions such as *Ketahanan Nasional* (National Resilience) which was promoted by Indonesia. On the other hand, as with the ongoing debate on comprehensive notions of 'security,' it was more often the case that while policy-makers upheld the notion in principle, in terms of implementation the more narrow traditional concepts of security have continued to predominate, as will be seen in the discussion of ASEAN political and economic cooperation.¹⁰²

It is, moreover, the contention of this study that Collective Political Defence as proposed by Thanat and his colleagues should not be thought of merely in terms of defence against communism, but also as an instrument for the general assertion

of policy autonomy against all forms of interference from external powers. Policy autonomy was aimed at not only for Thailand but also for Southeast Asia as a whole vis-à-vis interference from erstwhile allies such as the US, as well as countries identified as distinct threats. Accordingly, it should be seen as an heir to the tradition laid down by the Thai statesman Pridi Banomyong at the time of the Southeast Asia League in 1947. Indeed, it may be seen that some of those within the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) who had been admirers of Pridi Banomyong in the 1940s, later promoted policies of regional cooperation and forging close ties with Thailand's neighbours. In view of Thanat's admission that he had been inspired by the example of Pridi Banomyong amongst others in the immediate postwar years, it is interesting to see Pridi writing his memoirs in the 1970s ascribing his aims in terms very similar to that of Collective Political Defence, such as in reference to "a desire for mutual defensive assistance among small countries in Southeast Asia in face of impending threats from two emerging giants, China and the newly-independent India."¹⁰³

The main elements of Collective Political Defence as expounded by Thanat and the MFA may therefore be identified as: a) the promotion of a comprehensive form of regional cooperation, with an emphasis on joint diplomatic action; b) a cooperation which would be carried out primarily to support national capabilities, although with a view to promoting greater autonomy of the region as a whole; and c) flexibility in adopting common approaches only when deemed necessary. An important but unstated element behind the concept was that of informality, for there was no treaty obligation involved. As the MFA's radio

station observed in 1972: “Political collective security, for all intents and purposes, does not envisage a conclusion of contractual accord. On the contrary, it depends primarily and solely on the collective will of the countries concerned to protect their concurrent interests and to promote the well-being of their respective peoples.”¹⁰⁴ As such, it conformed entirely to the policy requirements set by Thailand. Whatever the case, Collective Political Defence was used to justify the inclusion of political issues as from 1968-1969 into what was until then outwardly an association for economic and cultural cooperation, and for putting such issues at the forefront of ASEAN’s priorities. With hindsight, these concerns may be regarded as having constituted a major factor in ASEAN’s political development. As a theory, Collective Political Defence further provided a useful tool for presenting the Thai public with concrete justification. for Thailand’s involvement in ASEAN in a manner which could be easily understood-that of a defence of Thai security. Accordingly, controversial positions adopted by the government could be defended domestically on the grounds of Collective Political Defence being exerted on behalf of ASEAN as a whole. This justificative role may also be extended into the realm of policy adjustments, which could under Collective Political Defence be put to the maintenance of ASEAN solidarity, a facet which became clear in the early 1970s.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Thai diplomats used the term Collective Political Defence in various regional fora and not merely within the ASEAN context, and also combined it with the notion of creating a ‘power base,’ and thus it reflected wider concerns of the Thai government. This was seen in writings by Bunchana Atthakor:

Each individual country is not strong enough both in terms of military and economic capabilities to offer an effective resistance against a massive and combined attack by the Communist side. What Southeast Asia needs, at least for the time being is, therefore, the existence or the presence of a power which can be a defensive counterweight against the Communist power... (One can also see) many concrete efforts of the nations in the area to create a Southeast Asian power base of their own. This power base will not necessarily be a military one. It can be a political base as well as a social and economic one which will give significance and weight to their voice in world politics.¹⁰⁶

Collective Political Defence therefore had internal as well as external usages, building upon a convergence of the ASEAN political regimes.

Viewed in the light of contemporary theoretical approaches, however, we have already seen that there appeared to be certain problems with Southeast Asian regionalism. It could be argued that most of the major theorists of regional integration had formulated their theories well before the founding of ASEAN, failing to mention the Organization altogether or have claimed a specificity that could not be fitted within the framework of integration theory. Whatever the case, few have applied a purely theoretical approach to the phenomenon of ASEAN's evolution.¹⁰⁷ Yet even the most prominent among the theorists of regional integration had admitted by the mid 1970s that the focus on the region should be questioned for its identity becomes fuzzier as competing foci of policy gained greater prominence, although

asserting that in Asia and Latin America while there is a commitment to modernization regional integration has remaining relevance. Recognition of such issues only underlies the importance of flexibility and the lack of normative content within Southeast Asian cooperation, and the importance of externalities.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, certain additional observations may be made regarding compatibility with previous models. The national basis of cooperation was crucial in Southeast Asia, and Collective Political Defence fitted within this state-centred framework. For a start, there are grounds to believe that ultimate federalism was rejected altogether by the ASEAN founding fathers: it had already been attempted in Southeast Asia in the case of Malaysia, proving only partly successful as seen in the separation of Singapore in 1965. At the same time, neofunctional concepts seemed to have acted as a powerful spur to cooperative ventures in ASEAN: in expecting networks of communication to spread, the ASEAN founding fathers could be regarded as having anticipated spillover. Moreover, in the long run ASEAN leaders, including Thanat Khoman, did expect cooperation to form a community of states within Southeast Asia. However, not only did ASEAN's founders show a lack of concern with institution-building, but such concepts as Thailand's Collective Political Defence and Indonesia's National Resilience may also be said to be state-centric, tending to reinforce national sovereignty rather than leading to its transfer. There was no vision of going beyond the nation-state, and there was a firm stress on *cooperation* and not *integration*. Thus the vision of regionalism was strictly limited, for the Thais were as jealous of national sovereignty as the newly emergent nations of Southeast

Asia, if not more, due to their wartime experience and their proud diplomatic record.

In the light of its conceptual background, ASEAN may be seen largely as a policy response to external challenges, both in economic and in political terms. In this sense, the neorealist position and systemic perspectives help to further elucidate the nature of its actions. Moreover, Collective Political Defence appeared to suggest that Southeast Asian regionalism had much to do with the politics of alliance formation, and economic and political elements may be seen to be integrated within a single framework. Liska, for example, introduces a broader framework of alliance beyond traditional military assistance, although he emphasizes formal ties linking members of an alliance together which tends to differentiate the informal linkages within ASEAN from such concerns. Of particular interest is his discussion of the functions of alliances, including aggregation of power, interallied control or restraint of allies, and promotion of international order, some of the concerns shared by ASEAN's founders.¹⁰⁹ In this perspective, shorn of formal alliance commitments, participation in ASEAN itself may even be regarded as a loose alignment. However, considering the existing alignment with the US, which held priority, the ASEAN option could only serve as a supplement at the beginning. Moreover, the main drawback to such approaches and that of neorealism, as Hurrell suggests, is that they tend to ignore domestic factors and the identity of the actors involved.¹¹⁰ The sharp break between domestic and systemic factors would ignore, for example, the ambiguity in the Thai case as to the respective roles played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the military, and the legitimizing function played by ASEAN in domestic terms.

Seen from these perspectives, Collective Political Defence and other concepts expounded by ASEAN leaders catered more specifically to the situation in Southeast Asia than conventional theories. It therefore appears that theories dominating discussions of the European experience by themselves perhaps offer an insufficient explanation for the Southeast Asian experience in regional cooperation as seen in the case of Thailand. They do, however, offer guidance as to the factors that motivated regional leaders at the time, and could be combined with national and systemic perspectives to provide a more comprehensive rationale behind regional approaches within Southeast Asia. Hurrell's "stage-theory" approach, for example, is persuasive in its suggestion that particular concepts may have to be adapted to different eras of cooperation in accordance with an organization's natural development.¹¹¹

The question is also asked whether in the scope of Collective Political Defence, ASEAN constituted a security community as in classical formulations. Deutsch describes "peaceful change" and the absence of violence as a means of political action as central to his idea of a security community, in which interactions between the members and to a lesser extent with external powers are regulated by an agreed code of conduct.¹¹² The ASEAN Declaration itself referred to respect for justice and the rule of law, as well as principles in the UN Charter as a guide for relations among states in the region (Operative Para. 3 (2)). With this in mind, Pranee Saipiroon in her study of ASEAN governments' attitudes towards regional security has drawn attention to the close link between the avowed objectives of ASEAN and the imperatives of security revealed in the speeches

at Bangkok in 1967.¹¹³ Various scholars have certainly ascribed to ASEAN a security role: “ASEAN became a security regime of collaboration with understood norms, rules, and decision procedures, which gave due emphasis to interests shared, to well-understood constraints, and to collaborative processes for mitigating the worst effects of anarchy.”¹¹⁴ At the same time, others see it more as a loose political entente, given the relative paucity of formal mechanisms: “ASEAN has given psychological reassurance and symbolic support for the member countries—not as a traditional security alliance, but as a political entente among friendly countries.”¹¹⁵ It is also pointed out that the ASEAN governments’ claim to institute a framework for regional order was opposed by the Indochinese states and thus the Organization could not speak for Southeast Asia as a whole, being essentially sub-regional in substance such that its credentials in constituting a Southeast Asian security community was circumscribed.¹¹⁶ However, Collective Political Defence itself provided no detailed framework for regional order, nor did it appear that ASEAN was designed to account for all types of transactions between the members of the Organization. Certainly, there were no sanctioning mechanisms against aggression, although non-aggression was implicit in the 1967 Bangkok Declaration and was clearly defined in the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. At times, Thanat did seem to speak in terms similar to that of collective security, but emphasizing the political element and the restricted nature of membership:

Our experience has shown that the existing
collective defence organizations have been weakened by

the divergences of interests and differences in attitude among their members which are separated by political, geographical, cultural and linguistic barriers. A more closely-knit association of nations with common aspirations and similar aims appears to offer the best way of achieving security and progress for its individual members as well as for the region as a whole.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, despite such linkages it may be said that for the Thais regional cooperation within ASEAN seemed to be definitely separated from traditional collective security, which was defined in terms of military cooperation with the US against communism.

It therefore appears that in overall terms Collective Political Defence perhaps lacked precision to provide a detailed examination of actions taken on all individual issues of ASEAN cooperation. To a certain extent, it was also situation-specific, being closely related to the relative weakness of Southeast Asian nations vis-à-vis international developments in the 1960s through to the 1980s. It may be asserted that with the new-found confidence of Southeast Asian states into the new Century, Collective Political Defence now has little relevance, as opposed the ongoing applicability of other concepts such as National Resilience. However, for the purpose of this present study it does provide a framework with which general Thai attitudes towards regional cooperation in its component fields, at least in the initial years, may be examined in a holistic manner.

Following the departure of Thanat in November 1971 with his distinctive interpretation of Collective Political Defence, the

concept was seen differently. Collective Political Defence often came to be seen merely in political terms, taken by its literal meaning.¹¹⁸ This became clear in the years after 1975, and particularly as from late 1978 with the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. Observers came to see Collective Political Defence largely in terms of political support given by the ASEAN countries for Thailand's position as a frontline state vis-à-vis the instability in Indochina, as shown following the incidents on the Thai-Kampuchean border in 1979 and 1980.¹¹⁹ That many Thai leaders at that time also described the concept in such political terms also revealed its evolution from the ideas pronounced by Thanat Khoman a decade earlier, and a reversion to a more orthodox understanding of 'political.' At the same time, it also revealed the enduring impact of the concept on Thai policy-makers. On the other hand, few references have been made to Collective Political Defence by policy-makers in the more recent past, even if the notion of comprehensive security that is inherent in Collective Political Defence is much talked about within both the ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific organizational formats.

Apart from Collective Political Defence, Thanat Khoman has also made references to an 'Asian Concert,' linking ASEAN and other regional organizations in Asia to the Concert of Europe which grew up in the aftermath of the 1815 Congress of Vienna with aspirations of assuring regional order. The specific linkage was that there was the same commonality of purpose within the Asian, and more specifically ASEAN, states as in the mid 19th Century European example. Both wanted to contain what was perceived as an expansionist power while their members generally shared similar socio-political aspirations, and

sought to maintain a balance of power between the states in their respective regions without formal institutions or binding obligations.¹²⁰ Inherently, such ideas as an Asian Concert or an Asian balance of power assumed the importance of political objectives, and moved towards neorealist themes. However, it was also an assertion of the Asian countries' wish to determine their own destiny in reaction against what was seen as the Western countries' arbitrary treatment of crucial issues affecting the Southeast Asian region, such as in the opening of peace talks by the US with North Vietnam without reference to its Southeast Asian allies, as if the US was acting as a European power of the 19th Century, deciding the fate of far away nations at a whim.¹²¹ In many ways, such references to an Asian Concert may further be regarded as an attempt at an expansion of the scope of activities foreseen by Collective Political Defence to cover the wider Asian region, as illustrated partly in ASPAC. In this regard, it was not surprising that many references to such an expanded regional cooperation framework and to 'Asian' solutions were made in 1969, at a time when ASEAN was in difficulties due to bilateral problems between its members. Thus in a March 1969 interview, Thanat declared:

We do not have much choice except to band ourselves together and create not necessarily a military alliance but a group of nations working together for practical purposes to try to safeguard our national interests as well as our common interests. You may call it an 'Asian Concert' in the same way that the Concert of Europe was created in the last century.¹²²

Accordingly, the concept may be regarded as a wider alternative to Collective Political Defence within ASEAN, although the two were apparently not incompatible and did go hand in hand for some time. This Asian Concert concept was also specifically Thanat's and although his successors sometimes spoke in a similar vein, the term does not appear to have been used by others, nor have there been subsequent conceptualizations of a vision for ASEAN. Nevertheless, a common element between the concepts of Collective Political Defence and Asian Concert lay in the desire to create a 'power base' among the members, for characteristic under the approach of Thanat was the eagerness to defend national interests through the maximization of bargaining power, with a judicious mixture of pragmatism and opportunism.¹²³ That such ideas had common currency within Thai policy-making circles was shown in that other Thai policy-makers, including Bunchana Atthakor and Pote Sarasin, also frequently referred to the idea of building up a power base during this period. What is striking, however, are the similarities behind the various regional concepts proposed during this period, with common elements stressing the need for greater regional solidarity and enhancement of bargaining power to promote stability and prosperity.

Thus in Thai attempts at a conceptual formulation for Bangkok's participation in regional cooperation, a dominance of political themes seems to have emerged within a framework of comprehensive cooperation in all fields. Relative silence was maintained on the possibility of military cooperation, due to the perception of the availability of alternative channels of military support, as well as the perception of Collective Political Defence

through ASEAN and other organizations as alternative methods to military means to attain Thailand's foreign policy objectives. It will be seen, however, that the implementation of theory into practice and the circumstances of Thailand's domestic and external politics led to the accommodation of such concerns with Thailand's overall policy.

CONCLUSION

An investigation of the theories of regionalism has revealed the widespread popularity of regional solutions throughout the world during the 1960s and 1970s, as apart from the global impulse of the postwar period embodied in the United Nations. The universality of the experience has led to the formation of a separate field of study of the regional phenomenon. In the desire to prevent conflict among each other and in the recognition of the importance of doing so largely through the formal promotion of economic cooperation and cultural means, much similarity laid behind the ideas promoted by Southeast Asian states and the European example and with functionalist themes. However, precisely because the lower level of pre-existing institutionalization in Southeast Asia and the generally higher degree of insecurity and incompleteness of security linkages, there was a greater need for concurrent national solutions on the part of Southeast Asian states. Certainly, various characteristics have been identified which differentiated the priorities of Southeast Asian policy-makers from their counterparts elsewhere. The general lack of a normative framework may be noted, and the commonality of political culture prevalent in Europe and Latin America was not present in Southeast Asia which was marked by a far greater

diversity. Classical theoretical approaches, while useful for understanding the contemporary role of ASEAN and particularly the push-pull factors that may have motivated ASEAN's promoters, may therefore not fully explain the ASEAN experience. Cooperation took place within an essentially intergovernmental framework, with little concern for institutionalism. In particular, the national emphasis on cooperation and the imperative of the preservation of national sovereignty, constituting the common emphases of developing or new states, as well as the more specific concern of Southeast Asian states with enhancement of bargaining power, have been highlighted. This theoretical discussion leads us to look into certain specificities which lay in the domain of national policy determination.

With the primary goals of Thailand's foreign policy being based on a quest for security and development, such concerns were bound to guide Thailand's attitude to regional cooperation. Regional cooperation as an instrument served both goals and also exhibited important symbolic concerns. Role-playing in regional terms served not only to disguise Thailand's preference for firm security guarantees through an essentially bilateral association with great powers, but also served such concerns by alleviating many of their most harmful effects through the formal assertion of policy independence. Moreover, as regime maintenance may be regarded as an additional goal of policy, regional cooperation thus had to serve the preferences of Thailand's military leaders as well in the early part of the period. Nevertheless, beyond these concerns the overriding importance of promoting greater autonomy should be stressed.

The idea of Southeast Asia itself is shown to be problematic and a relatively new phenomenon in geopolitical terms, albeit with a distinct historical tradition and cultural affinities. The countries making up the region also faced different, and sometimes conflicting, loyalties. There has been more or less constant tension between policy solutions based on Southeast Asia and wider perspectives, with the East Asian or Asia-Pacific identity having more recently shown a resurgence, and such dynamics will probably continue to propel developments in regionalism as a whole. Therefore, implementation of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia as a concept relied heavily on the inspiration provided by a few determined individuals within the national political and bureaucratic elites. The discussion has shown that this observation applied in particular to Thailand whose long-time Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman played a leading role in motivating national efforts towards regional cooperation. External inspiration from Europe as well as less obviously from the US also appeared to have played an important role in motivating such individuals, who have been shown to be cosmopolitan and not at all inward-looking in their worldview. ASEAN, moreover, grew up in the aftermath of the tremendous growth in regionalism throughout the world during the 1950s and 1960s, and was inextricably linked to such concerns. At the same time, there was a convergence among Southeast Asian states of the necessity of asserting a greater regional autonomy, which laid a greater importance on building a new regional awareness and sense of solidarity. On Thailand's part, Thanat Khoman openly admitted inspiration from the example of Europe, although one of his important preoccupations was also to stress

a distinctive regional identity. The prior example and subsequent active support of the EC on an organization-to-organization basis, and the encouragement of the US behind the scenes, including the theme that US forces provided a shield behind which regionalism could be organized, was not denied by Thai leaders. This tended to suggest that, at least for Thailand, regional cooperation was initially overshadowed by existing US-Thai cooperation, and while commitment to the alignment was maintained by Thailand's leaders it could only act as a supplement.

The conclusion may therefore be made that a wide variety of influences motivated Thai policy-makers into a policy of regional cooperation and subsequently helped to sustain a Thai commitment. In their eyes, regional cooperation was at once emulative of previous examples, and yet original. Asia's specificity laid not in that it involved a new form of cooperation but instead in its reinterpretation to remove the normative/prescriptive format from European examples so as to render more flexibility and room for manoeuvre for the participants. This element of originality led to attempts to conceptualize the interest in regional cooperation in Southeast Asian terms. In this regard, Collective Political Defence appears as a possible conceptual framework, involving comprehensive cooperation in all policy areas except the military field. Hence it may be employed as a conceptual tool to assess Thai policies within ASEAN during the period under question within a broad holistic structure as is the main aim of this study. A major objective will therefore be to judge Thailand's policies within the Organization from the point of view of Collective Political Defence. Nevertheless, although a comprehensive range of cooperation was proposed

within the framework of Collective Political Defence as advocated by Thailand in order to accomplish key foreign policy goals, it would become clear that particular aspects of cooperation were given emphasis. Considering the example of the European Community, one would have thought that economic and cultural elements would have had equal, if not overriding, importance to questions of political stability. It will be seen, however, that Southeast Asian leaders opted for practical policy implementation and stressed those elements which were deemed as having priority. Political as well as economic imperatives laid behind cooperation and both were integral to the process. It was held that without cooperation to preserve political order, economic development could not be undertaken. On the other hand, even if it came lower in the list of priorities, economic development served in the long term to create a more sustainable political stability, and served an important justificative role. Economic and cultural cooperation were seen by Thailand as supplementary to political approaches which were regarded as vital to the survival of Southeast Asian states, though this did not prove inconsistent with the objectives set by other member states. Moreover, no clear model was provided for regional economic development, which gives a clue as to what will be seen as a lack of an overall framework for ASEAN economic cooperation, which tended to support national development. This led, not surprisingly, to a certain degree of ambiguity as to the main preoccupations of regional cooperation.

Nevertheless, it may be said from this Chapter that Thai policy-makers led by Thanat Khoman had a definite conception of the overall role of the Organization from the beginning. This

conception seems to have been based on practical, and to a lesser extent, theoretical and idealistic, considerations. The probability of theoretical inspiration behind Thai proposals also supports the contention of a long-term plan for ASEAN cooperation, not a short-term expedient or an *ad hoc* formulation. Functional themes were reflected in the attempt to highlight technical and cultural contacts between member countries as the formal basis for cooperation, as it was recognized by ASEAN's founding fathers that the realization of ASEAN's goals would be a long-term and gradual prospect. Most importantly, in terms of implementation there was significant pragmatism involved in getting regional cooperation on its feet, and it will be seen that within a comprehensive framework planned for ASEAN, political exigencies altered the emphasis and more particularly the immediate priorities behind ASEAN cooperation. Indeed, flexibility was an element which marked regionalism in this part of the world from institutionalist approaches elsewhere.

On the other hand, it will be seen that Thailand did not seek to obtain official endorsement of the concept of Collective Political Defence from its ASEAN colleagues, in contrast with Indonesia and its advocacy of National or Regional Resilience, for it was not regarded even by its promoters as providing an adequate programme for regional order. It was specific to Thailand's requirements, and the idea was also not restricted to the framework of ASEAN and in fact laid behind the various concurrent formulas for regional cooperation promoted by Thailand in the early years. This indicated that for Southeast Asian states, a tidy concentric structure of cooperation was not a priority, and such preferences may explain their relative

openness to interlocking regional structures right into the post Cold War period. However, owing to such concerns Thailand made it understood that during times of crisis in relations with Indochina, it should obtain special consideration from its ASEAN colleagues as 'frontline' state. Accordingly, it may be said that Collective Political Defence had as an assumption a hostile international environment, requiring common solutions by the smaller regional states. Collective Political Defence was also used for internal purposes of justification and legitimation, sustaining faith in the Organization both within government circles and the public at large. However, while Collective Political Defence as a Thai proposal may be fitted into the existing body of theory, the concept, together with various other concepts expounded by regional leaders, was peculiar to the requirements of ASEAN, and primarily to Thai concerns.

CHAPTER

3

THE ROLE OF THAILAND
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

A discussion of Thailand's role in Southeast Asia is incomplete unless one goes back into history and the origins of Thai involvement in the region, for Thailand alone among the states of Southeast Asia has remained independent throughout. This has played a powerful influence on subsequent Thai foreign policy right up to the present. After reviewing briefly the impact of Thailand's historical development on its policy in Southeast Asia, this Chapter goes on to discuss its role in the evolution of regional cooperation among states in the region. It is suggested that despite the alignment of Thailand with the US during much of the period under study, regional cooperation was one avenue in which considerable policy autonomy was shown, on the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within Thailand, and by Thailand as a whole within the regional sub-system.

THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THAI DIPLOMACY

It is now accepted that there was a gradual movement of T'ai populations into the peninsula of Southeast Asia known by popular tradition as *Suwannaphum* or the 'Golden Land.' By the 13th Century a number of Thai kingdoms had been created, including Sukhothai and Lanna. The former has been depicted as the progenitor of the modern Kingdom of Thailand, known in those days as 'Siam,' but perhaps a more accurate description was that there was a multitude of power centres, although the structure was hierarchic. However, for our purposes it is probably useful to concentrate on power centres in the central plains of the Chao Phraya Basin to which the modern Thai kingdom claims descent. In a manner typical of the dynastic

states of the time, the nature of Sukhothai's dominance was temporary, and by 1378 Ayudhya had risen to eclipse the former. What was perpetual, on the other hand, was interaction with neighbouring peoples such as the Burmese and the Khmer, and the rise of Siam was to be at the expense of the ancient Khmer kingdom of Angkor.² Ayudhya in its turn came to acquire a regional role, particularly in trade relations with other regional states and with Western outposts.³ However, in the 17th Century, following French attempts to obtain influence within the Kingdom, there was a backlash against the foreign presence, leading to a certain self-imposed isolation from international affairs.⁴ This process was confirmed when, following protracted conflict with the Burmese, Ayudhya was sacked in 1767 and its population dispersed.

An important factor in Siam's traditional foreign relations was its place in China's tributary system from time of King Ramkamhaeng (1283-1317). In accordance with the Southeast Asian dynastic system Siam, whilst an independent entity, paid tribute to China, receiving tribute in turn from subject territories. Although it constituted a useful tool for the added recognition of its regional legitimacy, for Siam this relationship did not mean subjugation to China.⁵ Rather, for the kings of Siam, the significance of the relationship laid more in that it enabled profitable trade and economic relations with the far-flung Middle Kingdom. With the onset of colonialism, however, this relationship was gradually downgraded so that by the middle of the 19th Century, the link with China was broken altogether.⁶

Although defeat at the hands of the Burmese resulted in several years of turmoil and famine, what was notable was the

rapid recovery of Siam's regional status by the early 19th Century under the first kings of the Chakri dynasty. For the first time since the 1680s, the Kingdom was fully opened up to foreign trade. Dynastic rivalry continued with traditional adversaries, Burma and Vietnam, focusing on control over the Lao kingdoms to the North and domination over Cambodia, and lent an important long-term legacy as to the perceptions of threat. However, with the onset of colonialism, the perception of Siamese leaders became focused on the colonial powers as the main source of threat to Siam's sovereignty, instead of its traditional neighbours. The 1855 Bowring Treaty concluded with Britain was the first of the 'unequal' treaties with Western powers, imposing on Siam extensive consular jurisdiction and restrictions on tariffs and trade. These restrictions were to imbue subsequent Thai statesmen with an important element of anti-colonialism that has often been neglected in the academic literature, although lacking a formal colonial tradition the Thais have generally been prepared to accord a greater latitude to the Western powers than their neighbours. At the same time, however, Siam sought to maintain friendly relations with all the Western powers in an attempt to balance one power against another, although an emphasis was placed on conciliation of Britain which was perceived as the dominant power.⁷ Moreover, to maintain Siam's sovereignty within the international system, the Siamese monarchs embarked on a modernization process with the help of sundry foreign advisers. In this process, both internal and external factors may be seen to have operated. Recent studies have suggested that the concept of exclusive sovereignty and clearly defined borders was only recently applied

to Southeast Asia. Siam thus played an active, and not passive, role in the reshaping of regional relationships, which centred on the incorporation of outlying buffer territories over which sovereignty was often previously shared with various other regional overlords:

Siam was not a helpless victim of colonialism as generally thought. Siam entered the contest with the European powers to conquer and incorporate these marginal states into its exclusive sovereign territory.⁸

This consolidation of the Kingdom began under the reign of King Mongkut (1851-1868) and continued under his son King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910). The task of maintaining Siam's independence against Western powers was nevertheless difficult, and there was significant concession of territory to Britain and France, with the 1893 Paknam Incident involving Siam and the latter being a notable landmark. For the first time, the term 'bending with the wind' was used to characterize Siamese diplomacy as it made judicious territorial concessions in the face of overwhelming force, and became a buffer between British India and French Indochina.⁹

Since 1893, it may be seen that attempts were made to establish a degree of equidistance between Siam and the great powers, given the relative decline in British imperial supremacy. This reflected a continuation of the strategy of maintaining friendly relations with all powers in order to minimize potential enemies. At the same time, Siamese policy-makers sought to further integrate Siam within the international system so as to

avoid pretexts for colonial domination. Such was the reasoning behind its active participation in international diplomacy from the time of the First Hague Conference of 1899.¹⁰ Siam observed strict neutrality on the outset of the First World War, and then subsequently joined the allied powers in the hope of obtaining favourable treatment in the postwar settlement.¹¹ It was a source of national pride that Siam thus became a founding member of the League of Nations. By the 1920s its external position had stabilized such that a first treaty revision with the Western powers became possible in 1926, giving greater policy autonomy to the Siamese government.

An event which was to have great significance for subsequent Siamese diplomacy was the change from absolutism under the Chakri kings to constitutional monarchy in June 1932. Under the new regime, the maintenance of the Kingdom's independence and internal order remained a key objective, especially as foreign intervention was feared either for the restoration of absolute monarchy or for the imposition of colonial rule using internal instability as an excuse. Accordingly, a basic policy guideline was maintenance of goodwill to all.¹² However, nationalism also became an increasingly important factor as a source of internal legitimation and popular mobilization.

As the constitutional regime gained confidence, a comprehensive treaty revision became part of government policy and a national priority from 1934. Full sovereignty was formally celebrated in June 1939, but at the same time this newly-regained sovereignty was also threatened by the shadow of international conflict. The 1930s thus saw a reaffirmation of what

was to be regarded in subsequent decades as Thailand's traditional policy of neutrality, as seen in Foreign Minister Pridi Banomyong's article in a government publication entitled "Unimpaired Balance in World Relationships is Watchword of Siamese Foreign Policy":

The Government of Siam is fully cognizant of the geographical and political position of Siam in this part of the world, and it is our principle to maintain equal friendliness in our relations with all foreign powers on the basis of these considerations. Siam does not, and will not, favour any nation or any country in particular; and she does not, and will not, grant any special rights and privileges to one country to the detriment of any other country.¹³

Amidst Western suspicions of a growing alignment with Japan given the expanding economic and political ties between the two Asian monarchies, Siamese diplomacy sought to balance the influences of Japan and Britain, and non-aggression treaties were signed with Japan in 1939 and with Britain and France in 1940.¹⁴ On the other hand, increasing nationalism under the Government of Pibulsonggram resulted in a change of the Kingdom's name from 'Siam' to 'Thailand' in June 1939.¹⁵ Pan-Thai ideas were fostered by the influential Director-General of the Fine Arts Department, Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn, who popularized the concept of *Suwannaphum*, or 'Golden Land,' which became a reinterpretation of historical themes to produce the idea of a Greater Thailand incorporating substantial parts of continental Southeast Asia with T'ai populations. Subsequently,

irredentist tendencies were fanned which finally led to war against France in November 1940, culminating in the Tokyo Convention of May 1941 which gave Thailand certain of the Indochinese territories under dispute.¹⁶

Thailand's war record is a source of considerable academic controversy, focusing on the uncertain response to invasion by the Japanese on 8 December 1941 and subsequent accommodation with the invader. Neutrality had failed to shield the Kingdom against Japanese demands for passage through Thai territory, and the Western powers, beset by their own problems in the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, refused to come to its aid. The primacy of ensuring national survival was evoked by Prime Minister Plaek Pibulsonggram, who also employed the metaphor of 'bending with the wind' when arguing his case for accommodation in front of the Thai Cabinet.¹⁷ This process of accommodation culminated in the declaration of war by Thailand against the allied powers in January 1942. Subsequently, Thailand played a small role in the conflict whilst remaining aligned with the Japanese. At the same time, a resistance movement, the *Seri Thai*, also grew up against the official policy of collaboration in Bangkok. This heterogeneous movement was led by the Regent, Pridi Banomyong, in Thailand and the Thai Minister to Washington, MR Seni Pramoj, in the United States. It will be seen that the different roles of Pridi Banomyong and Pibulsonggram in maintaining Thai sovereignty during the Second World War was complicated by the subsequent political struggle between these two personalities.¹⁸ The legacy of the *Seri Thai*, however, was to be crucial in the determination of Thailand's postwar position and of the nature of internal politics.

THAILAND'S DIPLOMACY IN THE POST 1945 PERIOD

The postwar settlement posed grave problems for Thai policy-makers owing to Thailand's previous association with the Japanese. There was, however, differential treatment by the victorious powers as while Britain and the Commonwealth countries pressed for war reparations including in the form of rice, the United States, which had never recognized the Thai declaration of war in 1942 and was initially keen to avoid the re-establishment of colonialism in the region, sought to cushion Thailand against excessive demands made by Washington's partners.¹⁹ Again, as at the turn of the Century, Thai policy-makers can be seen to have resorted to utilizing international organization to assert Thailand's respectability within the international system. In its quest for rapid membership of the United Nations, and the associated benefits accorded to 'peace-loving' states under the UN Charter, Thailand quickly accorded recognition of the Soviet Union and China, and abandoned previous territorial claims in Indochina to placate France such that membership of the UN was obtained in December 1946.

In terms of foreign policy, initially there was an effort to return to a neutral position, though Thailand was sympathetic to attempts to overthrow colonialism in neighbouring territories. However, the internal position of the postwar democratic regimes was not strong and the 1947 coup d'état finally removed from power the advocates of such policies. An important linkage between the internal and external orientation of the country was made apparent by the return of Field Marshal Pibulsonggram to power in 1949. A certain obsession with the communist menace

was to characterize much of subsequent Thai diplomacy. This was centred on perception of the revolutionary role of the People's Republic of China (PRC), given the communist insurgency in Malaya as from 1948 and the links between Beijing and the overseas Chinese population, as well as the political orientation of the regimes in Indochina, as primary security threats. The bipolar nature of the Cold War which emerged only reinforced Thai perceptions of what alignment to adopt. This marked an increasing association with the US, bearing in mind the lessons of the prewar years and the failure of neutrality to guarantee Thai sovereignty. It should be noted that in this period the US was seen in a particularly favourable light in Bangkok circles due to its support of Thailand in the postwar settlement.²⁰

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the US had initially adopted a neutral position towards Southeast Asia. It was sympathetic to anti-colonial movements which had fought the Japanese and were now making demands for independence, but at the same time was mindful of the sensitivities of its European allies which had clung on to their colonial possessions. However, events in Europe and elsewhere in Asia contributed to a change in its policy. The communist takeover of power in various countries of Central and Eastern Europe during the course of 1947 led to the announcement of the Truman Doctrine and a policy of global containment of communism. The setbacks suffered by the Nationalist forces in China by 1949 also lent an urgency to actions to combat communism in Asia, including through cooperative schemes with other powers.²¹ The US thus became sympathetic to Thai requests for assistance against communist threats, and in September 1950 a bilateral Economic

and Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed with Thailand, followed in October by a Military Defence Assistance Treaty. Thailand revealed its support for US policies by providing troops for UN operations in Korea and recognition of the Bao Dai regime in Vietnam, whose legitimacy was contested by Ho Chi Minh and the *Viet Minh*, as well as by generally supporting its 'friends' in international fora. This marked a clear move away from its cautious traditional concern with remaining on friendly terms with all. Indeed, the position on Vietnam as proposed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but ignored by the Prime Minister, had been to adopt a wait-and-see attitude, bearing in mind Thailand's long-held opposition to colonialism and the assessment that the Bao Dai regime could only exist with French support.²² Nevertheless, it was probable that Pibulsonggram felt he needed to make a firm commitment to the Free World as Thailand already possessed some notoriety for its past equivocal and non-committal foreign policy.²³ By 1951, therefore, the Government of Pibulsonggram was able to declare in its Policy Statement that Thailand belonged to the camp of the Free World and was firmly anti-communist.²⁴

With their overwhelming security preoccupations, Thai policy-makers were seriously alarmed by the 1953 crisis in Laos and the presence of Vietnamese troops on Thailand's borders. This contributed to an enthusiasm for regional efforts at collective security, finally leading to involvement in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) through the signing of the Manila Pact in September 1954.²⁵ The primary motive for entering SEATO was thus military security, and realization of the Organization's wider potential came late and

was linked to the question of economic aid.²⁶ Subsequently, Thailand participated in the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 as a defender of Free World policies in Asia, following due consultation with its 'friends.'²⁷ It did, nevertheless, experience a post-Bandung foreign policy euphoria as some comfort had been gained from the assurances of the possibility for peaceful co-existence with the PRC made by the Chinese Premier Chou En-lai to Prince Wan, the chief Thai delegate. However, the radicalization of Chinese policy during the era of the Great Leap Forward, and the fall of Pibulsonggram by 1957, ensured that Thailand's flirtation with non-alignment was short-lived.

Despite increasingly close cooperation with the US and private assurances made by various US Administration spokesmen of an ongoing interest in Thailand's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Thai leaders throughout the 1950s continued to remain disappointed with the extent of Washington's commitment to the defence of Thailand. This first arose in the aftermath of Sino-US talks in Geneva in August 1955, which aroused fears of the softening of Washington's line and possible recognition of the PRC.²⁸ Disappointment with SEATO also grew, and Thai disenchantment with the Organization's inaction towards developments in Indochina reached its climax during a fresh security crisis in Laos during 1959-1962.²⁹ Public remonstrances such as the Thai walkout at the Geneva Conference on Laos over the seating of the communist *Pathet Lao* delegation, as well as various speeches by Thai government leaders against SEATO's inactivity, were such that the US became seriously worried by Thai threats to leave the Organization or

move to neutralism. To compound such actions, Thailand even opened negotiations with the Soviet Union in a seeming move away from alignment.³⁰ As the result of these numerous pressures, the Kennedy Administration finally agreed to make a public assurance in the Thanat-Rusk Joint Communiqué of 1962, which was a formal understanding that the US would provide bilateral support for Thailand if the latter was threatened, bypassing the need for unanimity within SEATO, even though the legal basis for that support would be collective security guarantees within the scope of the Manila Pact. The importance placed by Thai policy-makers on such a document may be illustrated by the fact that in an unprecedented public display Prime Minister Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat went to Bangkok's Don Muang Airport to greet Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman on his return to Thailand after signing the Communiqué.³¹ Its actual impact may also be gauged from the fact that subsequent cooperation between Thailand and the US drew force from either the original 1954 Manila Pact or the 1962 Joint Communiqué itself. Nevertheless, there appeared to be an apparent reluctance among policy-makers to see US troops, whether or not under SEATO auspices, stationed permanently in Thailand for fear of repercussions on its 'independent' image and its freedom of manoeuvre.³²

After death of Sarit in 1963, his successor Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and the military leaders maintained a pro-US policy.³³ Concrete Thai support for the US role in Southeast Asia continued throughout the period of 'Escalation' in US involvement from 1964 onwards, following the launch of the aerial bombardment of North Vietnam through Operation

Rolling Thunder and the sending of American combat troops to South Vietnam. Close collaboration with the US was seen in the ready assent given to the building in Thailand of facilities for the US air effort in Vietnam and the permanent deployment of US troops on Thai soil for the first time, even though infrastructural facilities such as forward airfields and the Sattahip naval base had been prepared since the time of Sarit.³⁴ Also for the first time, Thai forces were despatched to Vietnam, while Thai units also fought in Laos in various guises, constituting the concrete expression of a traditional preference for fighting enemies away from Thailand's actual borders. A senior army commander involved in such activities, General Pichitr Kullavanijaya, later explained Thailand's actions in the following terms: "Fighting outside the country was better so we could avoid damage to the country as well as to people's morale."³⁵ At the same time, the US military build-up in Thailand was sustained through the 1960s into 1968. In return for its cooperation, Thailand received substantial aid from the US, both in terms of economic aid and military subsidies. Although the flow of aid had been seen to have slowed down between 1960-1964 in the aftermath of investments in the big infrastructure projects of the 1950s, there was a fresh expansion of aid on a large scale as from 1964-1965 following the granting of military facilities in Thailand to US forces.³⁶ As an example, the Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARD) designed to bring the benefits of economic development to the localities was heavily funded by the US. Voices of dissent against over-reliance on this line of policy were heard, but they were muted amidst the general preoccupation with security and anti-communism. Nevertheless,

such concerns were present including within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as shown in subsequent writings by Wongse Pholnikorn, a former senior diplomat:

I totally disagreed with the policy of the military regime to interfere and send troops to Vietnam because what (the North Vietnamese) fought for was reasonable and correct...It was wrong for Thailand to take part in the Vietnam War from both the humanitarian and good-neighbourliness point of view.³⁷

However, it is observed that while opposition existed among certain diplomats, particular those of the earlier generation who believed that the traditional diplomatic self-reliance was being compromised, and who certainly made their views known, they were not considered an important factor in the power equation and could be ignored.³⁸ Moreover, other diplomats, particularly those involved with SEATO on a day-to-day basis, strongly believed that association with SEATO and the US brought concrete benefits for Thailand and that the relationship should be sustained. Thus for much of the time there was not necessarily a strict dividing line between the positions of the military and civilians within the bureaucracy, and an outward consensus was maintained.

THAILAND'S ROLE IN REGIONAL COOPERATION 1945-1965

Much of the initial inspiration for Thailand's regional policy after 1945 can be traced back to the impact of the Second

World War. After the destruction of the war years, the postwar period was marked by substantial intellectual ferment, both in Europe and Asia. The Second World War had demonstrated that the Western presence in Southeast Asia was not so permanent and unassailable as previously assumed. In many places in Asia, ideas for closer relations between Asian peoples emerged. A landmark event was the Asian Relations Conference (ARC) in New Delhi organized by Prime Minister Pandit Nehru of India in March-April 1947.³⁹ Nehru admitted that he had been inspired into holding such a conference following a tour of Southeast Asia and discussions with Aung San of Burma, among other regional personalities: "It so happened that we in India convened the Conference, but the idea of such a conference arose simultaneously in many minds and in many countries."⁴⁰ Following the New Delhi Conference, Aung San also advocated closer cooperation among the peoples of Southeast Asia with his idea of a 'South-East Asia Economic Union' to consist of Burma, Indonesia, Thailand, Indochina and Malaya.⁴¹ That the Burmese leader even urged Thai leadership in regional affairs was significant in the perception that Thailand, as the only state in Southeast Asia which had remained independent throughout the colonial period, had a positive role to play.⁴² At the same time, the example of developments in Europe was also a powerful influence on other forms of regional organization in Asia. It may be seen that the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) was created by the UN Economic and Social Commission in March 1947 as a *quid pro quo* for Asian support for the establishment of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in Geneva.⁴³ Thailand eagerly participated in ECAFE

activities, and Bangkok became the site of its headquarters after it was transferred from Shanghai in 1949 following the communist takeover of the Chinese mainland.

It was in this climate of growing pan-Asian sentiment that the Thai governments inspired by Pridi Banomyong hosted liberation movements such as the *Lao Issara*, *Khmer Issarak* and the *Viet Minh*. In Bangkok on 1 January 1947 the idea of a Union or Federation of Southeast Asia was launched by the various Indochinese resistance movements in exile, apparently independently of Thai initiatives. Edwin Stanton, the US Minister in Bangkok, was asked to forward the proposal to the UN Security Council, but the response of the US Government was negative.⁴⁴ The need for a sponsoring power for such initiatives probably led to discussions between the resistance leaders and Thai statesman Pridi Banomyong, whose anti-colonial sympathies were clear. At the same time, however, the British may also be seen to have played a role in urging Pridi towards efforts at “regional consolidation,” having themselves tried to foster regional cooperation through the perpetuation of the wartime Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) in the Office of the Special Commissioner in Singapore and other associated organs.⁴⁵ These various influences led to an initial meeting of regional representatives in July 1947, which brought about the formation of the Southeast Asia League under Thai Government sponsorship in Bangkok in September, involving representatives from the three Indochinese states, Burma, Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia.⁴⁶ The Thai MP Tiang Sirikhan became the League’s President. According to Thanat Khoman, Pridi was motivated by the consciousness that with the possibility of a

power vacuum in Indochina caused by the prospect of a French withdrawal and considering Thailand's long history of independence, Thailand should be an initiator of schemes to unite countries of the region, not under any Thai hegemony, but as equal partners.⁴⁷ This view is supported by Wongse Pholnikorn, a former *Seri Thai* member and an admirer of Pridi within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who attested that Pridi had told him he had in mind the idea of Southeast Asian countries coming together so that they may jointly determine their destiny, without having it being dictated to them by the great powers.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, in addition to these elements of regional idealism, it was also possible that Pridi thought that regional leadership could compensate in national terms for the return of Indochinese territory to the French and pressing domestic problems, at a time when anti-colonialism was a feature of Thai diplomacy. This anti-colonialism was exhibited when Thai delegates at the first session of ECAFE in Shanghai in June 1947 voted together with India and the Philippines for the granting of full membership to dependent territories.⁴⁹ Moreover, in the first statement ever made by a Thai representative at the United Nations, Foreign Minister Arthakitti Banomyong at the 2nd UNGA in September 1947 declared that the Thai Government supported the principle of self-determination and that: "nothing could better promote stability in South-East Asia than the realization of the national aspiration for freedom of the peoples in that region."⁵⁰ As seen in the testimonies of Konthi Suphamongkol and Wongse Pholnikorn, many of those involved with the *Seri Thai* supported such policies, although the League itself only lasted a couple of months.

A policy of regional cooperation, however, did not have a national consensus at this stage. There was internal opposition to the League and its supporters who came mainly from among the politicians of the Northeast *Isan* region, such as Tiang Sirikhan and Tong-in Phuriphat. It is interesting to note that while the Indochinese resistance movements in Bangkok supported the League and their leaders such as Prince Souphanouvong of Laos occupied important posts within the Organization, the client governments of the French in Laos and Cambodia tended to be dismissive of Thai ventures, with French sources citing a fear of “crafty” Siamese initiatives or that of “Siamese domination.”⁵¹ In fact, the presence of left-wing Indochinese leaders in the League played into the hands of elements within Thailand opposed to the dominance of Pridi’s group in Thai politics, especially the army which had been eclipsed since 1945, and the League was denounced by such right-wing elements as paving the way for the institution of a republic in Thailand, or of seeking the separation of the Northeast of Thailand within a Southeast Asian formula.⁵² The coup d’état of November 1947 and the eclipse of Pridi and the *Isan* supporters of the scheme in the National Assembly henceforth put paid to plans to incorporate the whole of Indochina into a common network of cooperation within Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, although the contemporary impact of the Southeast Asia League was small and the Organization short-lived, its significance laid perhaps in its inspiration to a generation of Thai diplomats such as Thanat Khoman and Konthi Suphamongkol that a regional perspective was a desirable and worthwhile policy for Thailand. It is also interesting to note that beyond Thailand no evidence

has yet been found in *Viet Minh* and Lao writings that recall Thai efforts at regional leadership in this period, which may suggest that the League was of peripheral importance even to the Indochinese resistance movements, although the subsequent conflict which divided the region may have played a part in this apparent neglect.

It is also often taken for granted that Thailand ruled out regional cooperation as a whole after the experience of the Southeast Asia League, which ignores various attempts to create regional groupings in the late 1940s. Rather, the emphases were different: the policy was not rejected as a whole, only certain formulas, such as cooperation with liberation movements. Further caution was caused by suspicions of communist inspiration behind certain regional ventures, such as the Calcutta Conference of Youths and Students of Southeast Asia Fighting for Freedom and Independence in February 1948.⁵³ At the same time, considering Thailand's subsequent alignment, pleas emanating from Bangkok for regional cooperation were also often not reciprocated among certain newly independent states. Thanat Khoman was to write of his experience in advocating regional cooperation during this period that:

It was an uphill task to rally people to this worthy cause. The reason was that a number of nations in this area had just emerged from colonial bondage, and they were suspicious of western countries and those who play with them among which Thailand was included.⁵⁴

Internal developments within Thailand also militated against a policy of solidarity within Southeast Asia. In the late

1940s, the League's former advocates were vigorously pursued by their political opponents. For example, Tiang Sirikhan, the former President of the League, was imprisoned in May 1948 on charges of high treason for conspiring to establish a separate state in the Northeast and then in cooperation with the resistance movements to establish a Communist Federation in Southeast Asia.⁵⁵ After the so-called 'Grand Palace Rebellion' launched by Pridi Banomyong and his supporters in February 1949, the *Seri Thai* were eliminated as a political force.⁵⁶ In subsequent years, a crucial base of support for regional cooperation among politicians and intellectuals within Thailand was therefore conspicuously missing.

In this light, subsequent ideas for regional cooperation came solely from the government leadership and bureaucracy. To some extent such attempts at regional organization in Southeast Asia were inspired by the announcement of the Atlantic Pact leading to the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in April 1949, as well as by ideological concerns of anti-communism and particularly the threat emanating from the newly-founded People's Republic of China.⁵⁷ As such they represented a different emphasis from endeavours in 1946-1947 as they were more motivated by ideological considerations than by a genuine belief in regional force. In June 1949 Pibulsonggram advocated a security pact in the region, involving the Philippines, India, Burma and Thailand, but when Philippines President Elpidio Quirino's idea of a wider Pacific Union emerged in July after a meeting between Quirino and Chinese Nationalist President Chiang Kai-shek in Manila, the Philippines was allowed to take the lead in developing further

ideas.⁵⁸ There was, moreover, still some remaining attachment to the cautious traditional policy of remaining on friendly terms with all and a reluctance to engage in binding external ties which could limit policy flexibility, as seen in the comments of the last Foreign Affairs Adviser, Kenneth Patton, in July 1949 that the Thai leadership:

should insist on a policy of cooperation with the United Nations and be careful to avoid Thailand being drawn into any regional pact which would limit future liberty of action. The constitution of a united front against the Chinese Communist Government if accepted by the country, could in my opinion, create undesirable responsibilities without affording any military, financial or other effective aid for the anti-communist front in the Far East.⁵⁹

It also appeared that with the increasing alignment of Thai regimes with the US, Thai leaders generally approached regional schemes with greater caution for fear of possibly upsetting Thailand's major ally by default. Nevertheless, taking place before the Thai recognition of Bao Dai as Emperor of Vietnam and the despatch of troops to Korea, the US was tempted to see Thai moves towards regional initiatives in mid 1949 in positive terms as the first clear actions taken by Thailand against the communist threat. Under the policy document NSC 48/2 approved by President Truman in December 1949, allocating funds for 'the general area of China', the US had revealed itself to be sympathetic to regional associations and had resolved to study the necessity for collective security arrangements separate from

such bodies.⁶⁰ In fact, among the important considerations for Thai leaders in taking such regional initiatives appeared to have been the requirement for a certain viability or endorsement by the US, the major military power in the region.⁶¹ Despite the general readiness of the US to support regional ventures from a distance, therefore, and even though the concept of a Pacific Union was reformulated to encompass economic and cultural cooperation, with the continuing US reluctance to back such a venture in concrete terms in the belief that the role of Chiang Kai-shek in the proposed body would prove problematic to its long-term viability, Thailand also remained relatively cool towards the project.⁶² Quirino's proposals did culminate in the Baguio Conference of May 1950, although the Philippines' ambitious plans for an anti-communist alliance involving economic, cultural and political cooperation, including a multilateral trading arrangement, faltered on the poor response and lack of adequate follow-up.⁶³

Prince Wan's tenureship of the post of Foreign Minister as from 1952 has become associated with Thailand's membership of SEATO. Thailand's involvement in regional collective security was linked to its concerns over the 1953 security crisis in Laos and French withdrawal from Indochina following the 1954 Geneva Conference. Indeed, Thailand's pressure may be seen to have been crucial in encouraging greater involvement by the US and thus in the reformulation of the US position towards the region. Thailand's keen interest in such a multilateral formula as SEATO was illustrated in its attempt to make the alliance as close to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Europe as possible, as shown in the clear instructions for Thai

delegates at the 1954 Manila Meeting.⁶⁴ Once again, Thailand's accommodationist reputation may be regarded as having proved beneficial in the prevailing atmosphere dominated by the domino theory, and may have played a part in the success of Thai moves to press for security guarantees through SEATO. Despite this apparent success, it appeared that throughout the 1950s non-aligned countries actually received more US aid than certain 'committed' countries such as Thailand, which mitigated the overall achievement.⁶⁵ SEATO did have economic, social and cultural functions as outlined in the Pacific Charter accompanying the Manila Pact, but they did not constitute the essential part of its activities which remained security-oriented in nature. The Organization, moreover, was flawed in that it had only three Asian members, being Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan, and was thus exposed to accusations of being a tool of the Western powers rather than a *bona fide* regional enterprise. However, in spite of SEATO's various limitations, Thailand nevertheless accorded priority to the Organization and Pote Sarasin, the Thai Ambassador to Washington, returned to Bangkok to become the first SEATO Secretary-General.⁶⁶ In turn, the fact that Bangkok eventually hosted the SEATO Secretariat revealed Thailand's importance within the Organization. Meanwhile, it was also during this period that Thailand became a member of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia in October 1954, obtaining vital funds for economic development in the process.

Some first moves to improve ties with newly-independent neighbouring countries may also be seen during this period. Despite tensions with Burma due to apparent Thai tolerance of

the presence of armed elements hostile both to Rangoon and Beijing on the common border, Thailand participated in the 6th Buddhist Council hosted by Burmese Prime Minister U Nu in 1954 as a symbol of religious solidarity and bilateral reconciliation.⁶⁷ This was followed by the signing of a Treaty of Amity and Friendship with Burma in October 1956. Similar treaties had previously been concluded with other regional states, such as with the Philippines in 1949 and Indonesia in 1954. While significant in terms of enhancing bilateral relationships, such treaties nevertheless failed to secure for Thailand the security on its frontiers which it felt was required, and problems remained with other neighbours such as Cambodia. Thus they proved of limited value in the stabilization of Thailand's regional relationships, and a lasting impression that emerged from the 1950s was that Thailand was less interested in cooperation with its neighbours than in fostering ties with the great powers.

With this in mind, the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 further awakened the potential for regional reconciliation. Thailand actively participated at Bandung, although in the view of certain regional states, it had appeared hesitant at first, revealing some crisis of identity.⁶⁸ In the event, positive results were obtained from the Conference, and it was a source of considerable national pride that Foreign Minister Prince Wan was elected Rapporteur at the Meeting. The atmosphere at Bandung as well as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence expounded by Chou En-lai and Nehru served to reassure the Thais of China's peaceful regional role. Subsequent to the Meeting, moves were made to open channels to China and to render more flexibility in foreign policy. Internal discussions

were also opened on the merits of a policy of neutralism.⁶⁹ Left-wing parties were even able to issue statements to the effect that as there was no longer any threat of aggression against Thailand, the holding of SEATO manoeuvres in the Kingdom was 'provocative.'⁷⁰ However, this atmosphere of optimism proved to be short-lived given developments within both Thailand and China, and Thailand's alignment with the US was re-confirmed with the overthrow of Pibulsonggram by Sarit Thanarat in November 1957. Nevertheless, unofficial contacts with China continued until Sarit's second coup d'état in October 1958, as the result of which a strict policy of anti-communism was established.⁷¹

A significant development in Thai attitudes towards regional cooperation may be seen in the appointment of Thanat Khoman as Foreign Minister from 1959 onwards. As Ambassador to Washington, Thanat had been a key member of Field Marshal Sarit's brain trust when the latter was planning his 1958 coup d'état, and upon his appointment he had made a declaration that he wanted to enhance ties with neighbours.⁷² In fact, the Policy Statement of last Pibulsonggram Government in 1957 had already contained words that the Government wanted to enhance relations with neighbours, while in February 1953, that same Government had announced a new policy of 'good neighbourliness.'⁷³ However, we have seen that although there had been intermittent talk of regional ventures during the Pibulsonggram years, they did not appear to have a priority. Certainly, if the level of diplomatic representation is any indication, the fact that Thailand's representation in many neighbouring countries including Laos, Vietnam and the

Philippines remained at Legation instead of Embassy level until the second half of the 1950s suggested that low priority was given to formal relations with neighbours. It will be shown that subsequent to 1959 there were more sustained and coherent regional policies, possibly in an effort to differentiate a new and active foreign policy from that of the previous administration.

Thanat Khoman, who had received his education in France in the 1930s and subsequently entered the Thai diplomatic service, had been a *Seri Thai* member during the Second World War and an admirer of Pridi Banomyong. Moreover, he had witnessed first-hand the evolution of Japan's wartime Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity scheme as a staff member of the Thai Embassy in Tokyo between 1941-1943. While posted to New Delhi during the postwar ferment as *Chargé d'Affaires*, he also wrote articles for Thai newspapers on the desirability of regional cooperation.⁷⁴ There are therefore substantial grounds to indicate that he was familiar with the arguments for greater regional solidarity. The Policy Statement of the Sarit Government as declared on 12 February 1959, in which Thanat would have had a hand, thus contained the words:

Good understanding and close cooperation between friendly nations, particularly those in the Southeast Asian area, will help to maintain peace and prosperity in this region of the world.⁷⁵

In an emulation of Pridi Banomyong, Thanat spoke of his earnest desire for Thailand as the only country within Southeast Asia to have remained independent to launch regional

initiatives.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, it may be seen that there was also a gradual shift in the Thai position on SEATO, for in the view of Thanat while the Organization provided an important military shield for Thailand, it also obstructed Thailand's efforts to foster an indigenous regional cooperation due to the participation in the Organization of two colonial powers, Britain and France, whose own interests in the area were fading.⁷⁷ It was also probable that Thanat did not feel such an attachment to SEATO as an organization as it was not his own initiative, but rather that of his predecessor, and therefore he was more ready to seek other alternatives.

Given this background, Thailand's participation in the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) was strongly influenced by its disappointment with SEATO over the Organization's reaction to the situation in Laos. As Thanat Khoman subsequently wrote:

For Thailand, in particular, its disappointing experience with SEATO taught it the lesson that it was useless and even dangerous to hitch its destiny to far away powers who may cut loose at any moment their ties and obligations with lesser and distant allies.⁷⁸

However, it will be shown that such interest in regional cooperation which arose out of pique with the behaviour of great powers and their impact on regional affairs did not preclude future, and more intensified, cooperation with them. It did, nevertheless, force weak countries such as Thailand to find alternative tools which could act as a powerful bargaining counter vis-à-vis ostensible allies as well as more hostile powers.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, it may be seen that the origins of such a body as ASA, the first truly indigenous organization for regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, laid in discussions between Malaya and the Philippines on how to promote greater cooperation in Southeast Asia for the benefit of regional security. These led to the joint announcement made by Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and President Garcia of the Philippines in January 1959, followed by the proposal of a Southeast Asia Friendship and Economic Treaty (SEAFET) in late 1959.⁸⁰ Eight countries were mentioned for possible membership in the Tunku's letter presenting the concept to other Southeast Asian leaders in October 1959.⁸¹ Thailand was at first hesitant about becoming involved as it remained preoccupied with the situation in Laos and may have been unsure of the viability of the proposed organization. One cannot also ignore the implication that in the early days of the negotiations Thailand still retained some residual confidence in SEATO. Thailand's subscription to the project may be seen to have occurred during course of 1959 as the situation in Laos deteriorated, and its diplomacy became more active thereafter.⁸²

In July 1959, Thailand produced a 'Preliminary Working Paper on Cooperation in Southeast Asia,' stressing the economic benefits of cooperation as well as informality of format for an indigenous Southeast Asian effort at regional organization.⁸³ However, distinct political motives were also apparent in that the Working Paper also suggested that the new organization "take up and consider any concrete and practical problem affecting the Southeast Asian region or some of its members, regardless of whether such problem is political, economic, or

otherwise.”⁸⁴ This statement perhaps indicated what was to become a longstanding Thai objective in regional cooperation: that the organization involved should be able to discuss all potential issues of interest. However, for reasons of political exigency, attempts had to be made to deny any political intention, and thus only economic, social and cultural cooperation were formally mentioned. Apart from Thanat, other Thai policy-makers were also involved in the discussions at the periphery, as indicated in an interview given by Finance Minister Sunthorn Hongladarom around the same time: “In principle we think it is a good idea, at least, for countries in this area to get together and pool their resources...We have been kept informed of the developments in connection with the proposal, and we are very much interested in the idea.”⁸⁵ However, in common with Malaya and the Philippines, the initial organizational aspects of the negotiations were handed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this regard, it appeared that influential roles in the formulation of the Thai position were played by Thanat Khoman himself as well as by close colleagues such as Konthi Suphamongkol.⁸⁶

Unfortunately for the future of the new body, efforts to widen prospective membership proved largely unsuccessful, despite Thanat’s trips to neighbouring countries such as Cambodia, Burma and Laos to obtain broader support.⁸⁷ As a consequence, the gestation of the new regional organization proved to be a long and tortuous process. Impatient with the delay, in February 1961 Garcia, Thanat and the Tunku at a meeting in Kuala Lumpur therefore resolved that the organization should finally be established, and a Joint Working Party on Economic

and Cultural Cooperation Among Southeast Asian Countries comprised of technical and planning officials met in Bangkok in June to finalize the details of cooperation.⁸⁸ A final decision was then taken that there was the required minimum viability with three countries as founding members, leading to the signing of the first Bangkok Declaration on 31st July 1961 by the Foreign Ministers of Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand, founding the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA).

There were, however, continual problems with the perception of ASA as being anti-communist, given the ideological orientation of its founders. The Tunku's October 1959 Letter had specifically mentioned the goals of the proposed Association as being economic, scientific, cultural, educational and social cooperation, but also included a provision for political cooperation "if so desired."⁸⁹ The alignment of the Philippines and Thailand with the US was also clear. Members therefore felt it necessary to make successive reassurances that ASA was not an anti-communist bloc at ASA Ministerial Meetings, as well as at international fora such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) during 1961-1962. That these assurances were made at the highest level was seen in King Bhumibol Adulyadej's speech on a visit to Malaya in 1962:

ASA is the natural outcome of our long and friendly relations and of the modern concept of international cooperation...the countries of the world have need to review their economic activities in terms of regions and areas. It would seem preferable to pool their resources for quicker and better results. The organization of ASA is the reply to this challenge. It has

no political or military significance. Its main objective is to provide facilities for development of countries in the region.⁹⁰

However, it is the contention that the denial of political significance meant more the denial of 'ideological' overtones, rather than a rejection of any possibility for diplomatic or political cooperation. It will be seen that this distinction in objectives would be made even clearer within ASEAN.

Thanat's speech at the UNGA in 1962 also played on similar themes of ASA not being directed against any country and having no political expression, combined with the reiteration of Thailand's traditional desire for an independent policy:

In a world marked by deep division, by incessant struggle and turmoil, Thailand wants to be its own self. It wants to be free and independent to follow its own destiny without being tied to anyone's coat-tail. None of the political concepts so far advanced by various political groupings now in existence appeals to it, for each and all of them suffer from apparent defects and do not suited the character or the aspirations of our people..What we seek is to be truly free to determine our individual and national life, and to be completely objective in facing both national and international issues and, finally, to be fully independent in order to reach decisions on our own.⁹¹

Despite such assurances, ASA was denounced by prominent states within the region, notably by Indonesia under President Sukarno, which saw it as an imperialist front. A senior

Indonesian diplomat commented that: “we certainly canvass the idea of greater Afro-Asian development on a large canvas, but not minor regional groupings which may develop into small blocs...The spirit behind the ASAS is anyway anti-this and anti-that and Indonesia does not want any part in a negative policy in international affairs, we want to be positive, constructive.”⁹² Observers have also noted that ASA was “barely known at all outside the area,” but at the same time have admitted that it constituted “a substantive illustration of an indigenous effort toward regionalism.”⁹³ ASA’s activities were eventually suspended due to the Philippines-Malay dispute over Sabah, with a last Ministerial Meeting in April 1963. However, the national organs survived within the respective foreign ministries throughout this period.

Upon ASA’s quiescence, Thailand did not remain inactive, though it was not included in the MAPHILINDO scheme of July 1963. However, despite its exclusion it appeared to have kept relatively silent on this latter project, which aimed to unite Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines in a common venture to promote cooperation in economic, social and cultural fields and thereby avoid the worst effects from conflicting territorial claims. Bangkok’s silence was perhaps wise considering Thailand’s concerns about antagonizing its neighbours and its own doubts about the long-term viability of MAPHILINDO. It was certainly not in the Thai interest to support an ethnic Malay organization which had its constituency across various states of the region, considering its own Muslim minority in the South. This may be seen in comments by Thanat Khoman after the May 1966 Bangkok talks between Malaysia and Indonesia: “We are not interested in

anything racial...We like practical cooperation, not cooperation on a racial basis.”⁹⁴ In the event, MAPHILINDO failed to get off the ground with the outbreak of *Konfrontasi*, pitching Indonesia against Malaysia in the aftermath of the announcement of the creation of the Federation of Malaysia by September 1963, and by the tensions caused by Philippine claims over the Malaysian territory of Sabah. Diplomatic relations between Malaysia and both Indonesia and the Philippines were thus suspended within two months of the approval of the Manila Accord by the Heads of Government of the three countries.⁹⁵ However, MAPHILINDO was significant in being a political association based on an economic framework, which may have provided an important precedent for Southeast Asian leaders in subsequent ventures.⁹⁶

In the final analysis, while Thai policy-makers sought to maintain a maximum of options under the ASA framework, ASA may certainly be regarded as a complement to collective security in SEATO. Its aims under its founding document were specifically limited, and it ruled out military cooperation at a time when Thailand felt threatened by the military situation in neighbouring Laos. Thanat Khoman himself described the original SEAFET project as “parallel and supplementary” to SEATO.⁹⁷ There were also indications that Thailand could be reasonably satisfied with ASA’s non-military nature, as seen in its reluctance to attend the proposed Manila conference of anti-communist powers in January 1961.⁹⁸ Critics have nevertheless argued that in this period there was no independent or long-term policy, only “*ad hoc* responses” to circumstances, but while it certainly did not result in a reduction in commitment to the US, there was substantial investment in such a move towards

fostering indigenous regional cooperation.⁹⁹ At the same time, Thailand did not want SEATO abolished while there was no ready alternative.¹⁰⁰ Certainly, ASA by itself offered an insufficient alternative to SEATO, as seen in the ongoing Thai quest for a security guarantee from the US throughout the formative period of ASA right up to the signing of the Thanat-Rusk Joint Communiqué in 1962. The idea that during this period Thailand might have used its participation in ASA while threatening withdrawal from SEATO to obtain greater leverage over the US should not also be excluded, seeing as the 1961 Bangkok Meeting founding ASA took place in the midst of the deliberations of the Geneva Conference on Laos.¹⁰¹ As last seen in the 1956-1958 period, Thai threats to move towards neutrality could be seen to have alarmed US officials and drove them into action to appease Thai critics. A similar dynamic may have worked in this case. At the same time, the policy also worked as a hedge against the possibility of US retrenchment and for improving Thailand's relations with neighbours.

In the longer term, it may be seen that experience in the founding of ASA was to greatly influence Thai participation in ASEAN. In many respects, ASA constituted an experiment, not only for Southeast Asian regional cooperation as a whole, but also for Thailand in particular. It was the first substantial example of an indigenous regional cooperation largely free from external inspiration. The emergence of ASEAN took the example of ASA in mind, and further developed themes which had been barely crystallized by the time that ASA was formed. Much idealism had been engendered by ASA but which remained unfulfilled, and by the time of ASEAN more practical

considerations would be dominant. Nevertheless, important elements of continuity that was to mark the basis of the Thai approach to regional cooperation may already be seen in ASA. These included a general concern for informality and a comprehensive view of cooperation to encompass political consultations, if necessary, as well as joint economic approaches. In both substantive as well as organizational terms, therefore, what commentators have called Thailand's "cautious and incremental approach" to regional cooperation had its origins in this modest organization.¹⁰²

BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THAILAND'S REGIONAL COOPERATION POLICY

While Thailand was generally keen by the 1960s to foster better relations with its neighbours, it may be seen that the nature of bilateral relations had important effects on the course of its policy of regional cooperation. It has been shown that by this period, regional cooperation had become an increasingly important option within the range of policy instruments available to Thailand. At the same time, the convergence of political regimes by 1965-66 had led to a degree of rapprochement between Thailand and the countries to its South. However, it is the contention of this study that the formula of ASEAN that was to evolve was not due to any inherent suitability of membership or a concrete image of Southeast Asia as seen by Thai leaders, but reflected more the political requirements of the moment as well as the restrictions posed by the state of bilateral relationships among the countries of the region.

Indonesia constituted the largest and most populous state in Southeast Asia, and as such was considered a great asset within any regional venture in terms of sheer size and diplomatic influence. Relations between Thailand and Indonesia were generally cordial throughout the post-colonial period. Thailand had supplied arms to Indonesian nationalists at Jogjakarta during the independence struggle, and a Thai mission was opened in Jakarta in 1951. As a sign of the good relations, a Treaty of Friendship was signed between the two countries in 1954.¹⁰³ As already shown, despite initial misgivings Thailand also attended the Bandung Conference hosted by Indonesia in 1955. Indonesia constituted a substantial market for Thai agricultural exports, particularly rice, although the Kingdom imported relatively little in return from Indonesia. At the level of heads of government and heads of state, the relationship was also good, and there was an exchange of visits at the highest level during 1960-1961. In strategic terms, some Thai policy-makers were worried about Indonesia as a potential security threat considering its large size. Territorially, only Indonesia is larger than Thailand within ASEAN, with a land mass of 1,919,443 square kilometres versus 513,115 square kilometres, while Indonesia has roughly 3 times the population of Thailand or the Philippines.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, despite the proximity of the island of Sumatra to Thailand, the general geographical distance of Indonesia's core largely negated that threat perception, while Thailand in turn was seen to represent no threat to Indonesia's leadership of the Malay world and thus no rivalry existed between the two nations. Indonesia's close relationship with the PRC during the early 1960s in the period of Sukarno's Guided Democracy, however, was a cause

for some concern in Bangkok, as was the adventurous nature of its foreign policy in upsetting the regional balance in archipelagic Southeast Asia. On the other hand, by 1966 there was a definite rapprochement of political regimes as the military-dominated rule of President Suharto gained the upper hand in Indonesia and changed the existing left-leaning policy. It quickly became clear that the New Order was fully compatible with the regime of Thanom in Thailand. With its non-aligned and Islamic credentials, association with Indonesia thus became an even more desirable factor in international relations. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the Javanese as exemplified by Suharto may be likened to the Thais, with a preference for a careful, softly-softly approach to relations.¹⁰⁵ As will be seen, the political transition in Indonesia was crucial to the founding of ASEAN, for Indonesia employed its active participation in regional cooperation as a symbol of its new policy orientation. Thailand's receptiveness to such overtures and the relative absence of Indonesian-Thai tensions made it possible for subsequent active collaboration between Jakarta and Bangkok on matters of regional cooperation.

Thailand's good relations with Malaysia constituted another vital part of the jigsaw. Of Thailand's potential partners within ASEAN, Malaysia has had the longest interaction with it as a neighbour. Malaysia constituted Thailand's second largest trading partner, again largely in terms of foodstuffs and commodities, and there was a vibrant cross-border trade and tourist exchange. Both were monarchies within Southeast Asia, which contributed towards a close cultural and political affinity. Under the premiership of Tunku Abdul Rahman, who was half-

Thai, Malaysia was also strongly anti-communist, which further propelled close cooperation between the two countries, including within multilateral organizations such as ASA and ASPAC.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, Malaysian Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Tun Razak entertained close relations with Thanat Khoman, including socially on the golf course.¹⁰⁷ Such amicable relationships were concretized by Thailand's action in providing 'good offices' to help resolve the Malay-Philippines dispute over Sabah, and the conflict between Malaysia and Indonesia, between 1963-1966. As a participant pointed out, while 'good offices' implied a more discrete action than that of a mediator, Thanat took an active part in initiating the discussions: "the three Ministers had several meetings both directly and often with the presence and participation of the Thai Foreign Minister...a series of private bilateral consultations were held between the Thai Foreign Minister and each of the other Ministers at various times and places."¹⁰⁸ Certain problems did, nevertheless, emerge from time to time to cloud the general friendly relations between Malaysia and Thailand. Such problems generally centred around the borders between the two countries, although close security cooperation had begun early on in the days of the Malayan Emergency as from 1948, leading to the setting up of a Joint Border Commission and the conclusion of a border agreement in 1965 allowing 'hot pursuit' of communist insurgents across the border. There was remaining Malay concern at the possibility of Thai irredentism over the northern Malayan states, and an even stronger Thai concern at the perceived sympathy for Muslim separatists in Thailand's southern provinces by their co-religionists in Malaysia.¹⁰⁹ The separatist issue was

further complicated by the ethnic nature of the communist insurgency in the border regions. Despite the close border cooperation, the Malaysians frequently felt that Thailand was often more concerned with the separatist problem and was content to allow communist groups to subsist to form a buffer group on the common border. However, at the time of the founding of ASEAN, Malaysia's main preoccupation laid with the forging of better relations with Indonesia, and so the question of the borders with Thailand was not a major cause for Kuala Lumpur's concern. Thanat Khoman was thus able to employ his good personal relationships with Malaysian leaders as a contribution towards the re-establishment of relations between Malaysia and Indonesia, and to employ regional cooperation as a means to concretize this reconciliation process and obtain Thailand's other policy objectives.

Singapore had traditionally played an entrepot role for Thailand in respect of primary commodities as well as in manufactures as it did for much of Southeast Asia. It thus emerged in the post-colonial period as Thailand's largest trading partner within ASEAN. Strong cultural and commercial links between the Sino-Thai families and their relatives in Singapore, as well as educational ties, also bound the two business communities together, particularly those in the southern provinces of Thailand. Problems that did occur after Singapore's independence from Britain in 1963 centred on the nature of the business relationship, with some jealousy on the part of Thai entrepreneurs of Singapore's status as a regional business centre, particularly in respect of its traditional entrepot activities regarding commodities such as natural rubber, tin and vegetable

oils.¹¹⁰ Concerns, moreover, were expressed at the level of smuggling trade which accrued to the benefit of Singapore.¹¹¹ This contributed to a general rivalry between Bangkok and Singapore as a regional centre for Southeast Asian exchanges, with Bangkok having the upper hand in political exchanges and Singapore dominating the economic exchanges. Indeed, in common with many contemporary observers, Thailand did not initially regard Singapore as a very important player in regional political relations upon its separation from Malaysia in 1965. The island-state concentrated on developing an international non-aligned profile in the early years while lessening its association with Britain and Malaysia.¹¹² However, it will be seen that by 1967, the strategic perception in Singapore had evolved from a strict non-alignment towards a greater appreciation of the usefulness of a superpower presence in Southeast Asia, which was close to Thailand's own concerns. Certainly, within Thailand there was no great fear of the possibility of Singapore's emergence as a 'fourth China,' in contrast to the concerns of Malaysia and Indonesia. Anti-Chinese sentiment within Thailand was largely directed at the PRC itself and there was the recognition that Lee Kuan Yew himself was strongly anti-communist. In this manner, Singapore's new political orientation, as well as its status as a non-Malay state, helped to facilitate Thailand's readiness to include it in its plans for regional order.

Last but not least, Thailand has consistently enjoyed friendly relations with the Philippines. This dated from the time when Thailand was a strong supporter of Philippine independence in the postwar settlement, and accorded diplomatic recognition to the new state on 21 September 1946. The two countries

exchanged legations in 1949, which were upgraded to embassy status in 1956.¹¹³ Since 1949, a Treaty of Friendship also bound the Philippines to Thailand, and Thai students regarded the Philippines as an important regional centre for higher studies.¹¹⁴ There were therefore strong cultural ties even though there was no substantial trade between Thailand and the Philippines. At the same time, few outward differences appeared to mar Thai-Philippine bilateral relations, although the geographical distance between the two countries and the latter's removal from continental Southeast Asia as a whole has sometimes led to a difference in strategic perception. Both, however, were firmly anti-communist in terms of leadership. They also shared close ties with the US and were founder-members of regional organizations such as SEATO, ASA and ASPAC, which led to a wider community of interest in political and strategic terms.¹¹⁵ Moreover, both agreed on the important view that while strategic ties with the US were necessary, cooperative relations with Southeast Asian states could act as a desirable supplement.

It may therefore be said that Thailand generally enjoyed privileged links with its future ASEAN partners on the eve of the founding of the Organization. In terms of alliance terminology, it certainly had no alliance handicap vis-à-vis Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. This, however, was not the case with regards to relations with its other neighbours, despite it sharing more important historical, ethnic and religious affinities with Burma, Laos, Cambodia and to a lesser extent, Vietnam. Indeed, the Kingdom's long borders with neighbouring countries on the continent has contributed to constant bilateral problems, such that Thailand's case appeared

to support the argument that geographical contiguity is a contributory factor to conflict.¹¹⁶ In this regard, it was no wonder that of the countries bordering on Thailand, Malaysia with the shortest border of 647 kilometres seemed to have enjoyed the most cordial relations with Bangkok in this period. The borders with Burma were by far the longest at 2,387 kilometres, followed by Laos with 1,810 kilometres. Meanwhile, although the border with Cambodia was relatively short at 798 kilometres, it was badly marked and heavily disputed.¹¹⁷ Most of the border issues resulted from the nature of Thai relations with Western powers during the colonial period, during the course of which the Kingdom was forced to demarcate its boundaries, often at a disadvantage. With this legacy in mind, anomalies occurred regarding Thailand's borders with those neighbours which were former colonies of Western powers, frequently leading to acrimonious disputes which were magnified by the difficulties in the internal consolidation of the states concerned. In the face of such difficulties, Thailand's attempts to reserve its options on border issues were regarded with a dim view by continental neighbours.¹¹⁸

An additional reason why relations between Bangkok and neighbouring capitals in the postwar period had not been totally smooth was the weight of historical baggage and the legacy of pre-colonial hostility. In particular, the struggles between Vietnam and Siam over the trans-Mekong territories in the 18th and 19th Centuries have left a long-lasting legacy, although the impact of historical memory within Southeast Asia has tended to be extremely selective in nature. In fact, prior to the 19th Century the relationship which was the most problematic was

that with Burma, with a long chronicle of conflict between the two Kingdoms while for a large part of its history Vietnam had fallen under direct Chinese influence and did not constitute a direct threat.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, it may be said that historical factors reinforced the ideological threat posed by the communist regime in North Vietnam in the years after 1947, such that there were no official relations between Bangkok and Hanoi until 1976. Even regarding South Vietnam in the pre 1975 period, relations with the government in Saigon with which Thailand shared ideological affinities and common membership of certain regional bodies, as well as close association with the US, were not very smooth. Thailand's dispatch of troops to South Vietnam in 1967 upon the request of the South Vietnamese government marked the summit of the improvement in relations with Saigon, but the relationship at the top level was often tense, particularly in the early 1960s during the persecution of Buddhists by South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem, while by the early 1970s there were additional bilateral problems concerning maritime jurisdiction and fisheries.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, on Thailand's Western borders problems occurred between Thailand and Burma on Bangkok's alleged support for anti-government forces or exiled politicians, especially considering Thailand's occupation of the Shan states during the Second World War.¹²¹ At the same time, Burma particularly after 1962 tended to concentrate on domestic problems and did not interest itself very much in international affairs, while it remained concerned with the reaction of the PRC to any association with pro-Western states. Thus it did not appear very promising as a partner in regional cooperation.

More intensive and closer interactions with Laos and Cambodia throughout history have fostered long-term prejudices with, for example, the paternalistic and often patronizing feeling in Bangkok propagated by popular historiography of the idea of such countries as having formerly been ungrateful and untrustworthy vassals.¹²² In turn, at the very least Thailand has been accused of providing shelter for political refugees from such countries, and at worst in actively promoting anti-government organizations. More recently, Thailand's occupation of trans-Mekong territories in Laos and Cambodia between 1941-1945 after the Franco-Siamese conflict aroused fears within Cambodia of persistent Thai attempts at domination. This, for example, made the issue of cooperation with Cambodia a very sensitive matter. In the 1960s, diplomatic relations had been broken off by Cambodia on many occasions amidst much acrimony. Thailand was accused, in cooperation with South Vietnam, of supporting anti-government *Khmer Serei* guerrillas.¹²³ To compound such problems, the personal relationships between Thai leaders such as Sarit Thanarat and Thanat Khoman with Prince Sihanouk were also tense, particular after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on sovereignty over the disputed Khao Phra Viharn in favour of Cambodia in 1962.¹²⁴ Thus at the time of the founding of both ASA and ASEAN, relations with Cambodia were poor. Meanwhile, although Thailand shared the greatest cultural affinities with Laos, tensions occurred intermittently between the two 'fraternal' states. The strong Thai interest in maintaining a friendly regime in Vientiane throughout the period meant that its military involvement in Laotian affairs, often without the knowledge of the MFA, was intensive and sustained. The military

in particular highlighted the strategic importance of Laos to Thai security as the basis for its ongoing concern. Bilateral problems were further compounded by the strict observance of neutrality in formal terms by the Laotian and Cambodian governments, which made their participation in a discrete group of countries of a distinct political complexion undesirable. Such factors ensured that the scope for Thailand's cooperation with those two countries was rather limited.

It may therefore be said that the state of bilateral relations between Thailand and other countries in Southeast Asia by 1966-67 largely dictated the choice of Thailand's partners in regional cooperation. The generally friendly relations with countries to its South and an increasing identity of interest with such countries led Thailand to concentrate its efforts subsequently on motivating Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines as priorities for a regional partnership. At the very least, there was a definite, even if secondary, Thai interest in ensuring that its Southern flank did not disintegrate into disorder, which might further aggravate communist insurgency or invite direct intervention by communist powers in the affairs of the region. The inclusion of other countries, including Singapore, was seen as desirable but not indispensable, for a core group was now identified. With hindsight, it could be said that reliance on such a group concretized the switch by Thai diplomacy from a focus on continental Southeast Asia as an avenue for political action to archipelagic Southeast Asia.¹²⁵ Ideological and political differences meant that Thailand did not achieve cooperation with the countries with which *a priori* it shared the greatest historical and cultural affinities. Instead, it moved towards and

area in which it shared political and, to a lesser extent, economic ones. Accordingly, Thanat stressed more the existence of common interests among countries proximate to each other, rather than mere geographical contiguity, and thus the major factor in promoting future cooperation was the furtherance of common interests.¹²⁶

THANAT KHOMAN AND THE FOUNDING OF ASEAN 1966-1967

There is a tendency to ignore or overlook the linkage between ASA-ASEAN and the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), as well as the aspects of continuity between the years 1961-1967. This has by implication given the academic treatment of ASEAN and ASPAC an overwhelmingly political dimension, to the exclusion of other crucial elements. Nevertheless, it is clear by the ASA example that Thai policy-makers already recognized the potential of regional cooperation as a policy tool. The Thai record on regional cooperation in the first 20 years following the Second World War has also been shown to be not as sterile as it first appears, even if it is notable that membership of SEATO and ASA occurred at moments of relative crisis for the Kingdom. Thailand's subsequent role was to focus on the part played by Thanat Khoman as conciliator in regional disputes, putting his personal relationships with Malaysian and Indonesian leaders to good use. Thai initiatives in this period consisted in the launching of several concurrent policy options, and would rely much on secret diplomacy to accomplish the required objectives.

ASPAC constituted one such option, being the embodiment of an idea to promote a wider Asia-Pacific

cooperation in all fields, but without the active participation of the US so as to assert a formal independence of objective by the members. Founded at a meeting in Seoul in June 1966, ASPAC comprised nine members: Australia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, South Vietnam, Taiwan and Thailand. The inspiration of South Korea was crucial to the launch of ASPAC, within the wider perspective of formalizing a political coalition to sustain and coordinate the efforts of the Free World in maintaining a free market system over that of a planned economic system in East Asia and the Pacific.¹²⁷ However, despite such political overtones it may be seen that the general direction of the Organization was eventually decided by its diverse membership. With the opposition of Japan to any security or anti-communist content in the new Organization, the formal stress was placed on economic matters, although it was also clear that political objectives were maintained by some of its most prominent members, including Thailand. Thanat Khoman was a prime mover in realizing this transformation within ASPAC towards a more comprehensive cooperation and in getting the Organization on its feet, notably by playing a mediating role in Seoul. While ASPAC was not a Thai initiative, Thanat Khoman saw in it a broad coalition within which to realize Bangkok's policy options and to involve South Korea, Taiwan and Japan in a common network of cooperation with Thailand. Having already hosted preliminary talks at the officials level in March-April 1966 prior to the Seoul Ministerial Meeting in June, Thailand chaired the ASPAC Standing Committee during its first year and hosted the Second ASPAC Ministerial Conference in Bangkok in July 1967. Indeed, its activities in Seoul

and thereafter have led some commentators to regard Thailand as “the architect of ASPAC.”¹²⁸ That it saw ASPAC as part of the widening of policy options available to it beyond military collective security was suggested by its subsequent activities within the Organization. It did not press for a military element in ASPAC, and indeed redoubled its participation in the Organization even after this aspect was excluded by Japan.¹²⁹ The hand of Thailand was again revealed in ASPAC’s adoption of a flexible, non-institutionalized consultative nature. However, as with ASA, ASPAC continued to remain tainted with anti-communist overtones, considering the political affiliations of its members, and was pointedly excluded by non-aligned countries such as Indonesia, as well as Singapore. This limited its practical and symbolic value to Thailand, although it continued to participate actively within ASPAC throughout its existence. In terms of legacy, moreover, ASPAC provided a lesson for ASEAN in that once it was publicly accepted that political issues were included in the range of cooperation, it was difficult to deny the ideological inclination of the Organization as a whole.¹³⁰

The year 1966 was also notable for the founding of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to promote economic development in the region, although the ADB had a wider membership involving both developed donor countries as well as Asian countries. In this regard, Thailand as a founding member of the body had expressed an interest in hosting the ADB Secretariat. Thailand’s bid was motivated by the fact that Bangkok was already the regional seat of UN organs such as ECAFE and other international bodies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour

Organization (ILO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), but of the nine potential sites including Tokyo, Manila was instead chosen.¹³¹ Meanwhile, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) was founded in 1965. Thailand also played a major role in the founding of the Southeast Asian Central Bank Group (SEACEN) in Bangkok in February 1966, revealing its continuing interest in fostering cooperation among states in the region in various different functional fields. However, considering the difficulties encountered within organizations with a disparate membership, as shown particularly in SEATO, Thailand was more keen to opt for cooperation with restricted circle of Southeast Asian states, although this was not yet the exclusive solution as it continued to keep wider options open.

It is often quoted that the idea of a new organization was launched from late 1966 onwards, with the Bangkok Meetings between Indonesia and Malaysia to resolve the *Konfrontasi* being crucial to the process. At the same time, it was possible that various bilateral discussions between Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand during the course of 1965-66 to discuss normalization had already raised the possibility of reviving a form of regional cooperation.¹³² The general desire at this time was to provide regional solutions to problems, the greatest of which was consolidation of the reconciliation between the parties in dispute.¹³³ Thanat himself mentioned the importance of his conversations with Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik at the Celebration Dinner in Bangkok on 1 June 1966 sealing the reconciliation as constituting the origins of the process.¹³⁴ This highlighted Indonesia's key importance, but was

it the main force behind the founding of ASEAN? Anwar's explanation of Indonesia as the prime mover behind the creation of ASEAN is more plausible only if it is accepted that a basic understanding for the revival of regional cooperation had already been reached by July-August 1966, but that due to Indonesia's specific circumstances the New Order leaders had to make sure that Sukarno would be smoothly eased out from power. Following this process, Indonesia could then launch the necessary internal and external initiatives with full confidence.¹³⁵ This is suggested by the Joint Statement issued on the occasion of Thanat's visit to Indonesia in August at the invitation of Malik, in which the two Foreign Ministers:

agreed that close and mutually beneficial cooperation amongst the countries of the region would be the best means to ensure the continued progress and prosperity of their peoples, and at the same time it would contribute significantly towards efforts to preserve peace and security in the area. They, therefore, agreed on the necessity of taking practical steps to provide an effective framework within which such cooperation could be further promoted.¹³⁶

This view is apparently supported by Thanat's own comments, which stressed the importance of getting Indonesia on board: "it was a very serious threat to the free nations of Southeast Asia to have a close cooperation between Indonesia and China."¹³⁷ However, if one were to accept the argument of the centrality of Indo-Malay reconciliation in the founding of ASEAN, then by extension the role of Thailand was also crucial as a mediator between the various parties.

The generally confused picture of this period is caused by the impression that there were at least three contending options for regional cooperation: firstly, for the revival and expansion of ASA; secondly for an extended or 'Greater' MAPHILINDO to cover other Southeast Asian countries; and thirdly, the founding of a new organization.¹³⁸ It is the contention here that Thailand's emphasis was on the revival of 'regional cooperation,' and not stressing any organization in particular, though a purely Southeast Asian one was desirable. Moreover, the basic rationale for cooperation remained the same for ASEAN as for ASA: that Southeast Asia consisted of small nations; possessed only a feeble voice in the outside world; and was vulnerable to external interference from outside powers.¹³⁹ In 1966 alone, ASA was relaunched and ASPAC founded, with the hand of Thailand being prominent behind both moves, although neither of them as yet contained Indonesia. Hence Thailand was sensitive to the sensibilities of Indonesia which did not want to join ASA, an existing body it had previously opposed. What was important for Thailand's role was that Thanat was relatively open to the idea of a new organization. In this regard, it may be seen that Thanat had subscribed to the 1959 SEAFET scheme fairly late on, and did not therefore regard ASA as 'his' organization. This was in contrast to the Tunku who seemed intent on the preservation of ASA, and appeared rather distrustful of Indonesian manoeuvres.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Malaysia also agreed on the general need for regional cooperation, as shown by Home Affairs Minister Tun Ismail's speech of June 1966 on the desirability of an embracing regional organization encompassing nine countries:

The name of an embracing regional association does not matter. It need not be ASA. What is important is that the organization should be based on the principles of economic, social and cultural cooperation, I cannot think of a single country in South-East Asia which would repudiate those principles.¹⁴¹

Thailand was, moreover, a factor in avoiding prolonged reference to an expanded MAPHILINDO, which might have been a preference of the Filipinos and the Indonesians but resisted by the Malaysians.¹⁴² Certainly, it would have been difficult to accommodate the ideology of MAPHILINDO to the membership of Thailand. Here, perhaps, lay the significance of the Thai role. Thai negotiators were able to synthesize their own sponsorship of a revival of regional cooperation in whatever form with an Indonesian demand for a totally new organization, in a manner as to suit the sensibilities of the other participants.

It is not the aim of this study to say which was precisely uppermost in the minds of each of the regional states, but it suffices to say that there was a convergence of interests. All parties agreed on the need for economic development to concretize regional stability, while the assertion of greater regional solidarity was deemed necessary in the light of rapid changes in the international and regional situation. Although there were no concrete manifestations of a US withdrawal from Vietnam at that juncture, there was already a distinct Thai discomfort, and particularly Thanat's, at the extent of anti-war propaganda in the US. Such popular activism was seen as undermining official resolve in Washington to remain engaged

in Southeast Asia, despite verbal assurances by US representatives. Reporting back to Bangkok after attending an international conference in June 1967 at which US efforts Vietnam were attacked, Thanat indignantly complained that it was “incomprehensible that American money to the amount of one million US dollars has been spent to have us and all of us attacked and insulted.”¹⁴³ Already marked by 1966-1967, Thai suspicions of the US political system was to expand in later years. As we have seen, there was also a greater determination to proceed with indigenous ventures after the perceived failure of SEATO with its heterogeneous membership.¹⁴⁴

Both Ghazali Shafie and Ali Murtopo have written about their respective roles, and the circumstances that laid behind the formulation of the Malaysian and Indonesian stances have been fairly well covered by existing scholarship. However, the motivating forces behind the respective policies of Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore are less well discussed. In respect of Thailand’s policy, two alternative interpretations could be proposed. In the first interpretation, there was a dual track policy: Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn and the military leaders pursued support of the US, and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman may or may not have been informed of the details of the state of bilateral negotiations. In this interpretation ASEAN was of less importance to Thai policy. Thanat was allowed to concentrate his energies on regional reconciliation in the archipelago, and was authorized to proceed with some role-playing and engage in regional cooperation partly to compensate for the MFA’s exclusion from decision-making on Thai-US

relations and important security issues. Alternatively, ASEAN was deliberately intended as a policy initiative which was sold by Thanat to the military leaders, partly as a complement to alignment. Given the generally cautious Thai policy, perhaps an amalgamation of the two positions is more plausible, although the central role of Thanat is evident in both. It is true that Thanat had been an influential member of Sarit Thanarat's entourage, but after the passing away of Sarit in 1963, his role was arguably less important *vis-à-vis* the new triumvirate of Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Thanom Kittikachorn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Prapat Charusathiara, and Deputy Minister of Defence Thawee Chullasapya. By late 1966, there were press speculations that "powerful elements in the Government are anxious to edge him out."⁴⁵ A policy of regional cooperation, as well as Thanat's consideration of candidacy for the International Court of Justice at that time, may therefore be seen as an attempt to create an international role for himself to counterbalance domestic uncertainty as to his position. In this light, Thanat's promotion of regionalism has been described as "something of a personal crusade which was tolerated but never enthusiastically supported by other Thai leaders."⁴⁶ Indeed, a process of estrangement from the military leadership that was to lead to Thanat's exclusion from the 1971 National Executive Council may already be detected in this period. However, such differences should not be over-emphasized at this early stage, for Thanat continued to actively support the military's efforts. Furthermore, Thanat remained firmly anti-communist, and throughout this period may be seen to have vigorously advocated the continuation of US bombing efforts in Vietnam, including

after the announcement of US bombing halt in October 1968. The central question also has to be asked whether there was a security crisis in the region in 1966-1967. In contrast with the founding of SEATO or indeed of Thai participation in ASA, the founding of ASEAN *did not* coincide with a security alert. Indeed, the last months of 1967 were a time of relative confidence for the struggle in Vietnam prior to the Tet Offensive of February 1968, although insurgency within Thailand had itself intensified.¹⁴⁷

Moreover, to say that for Thailand regional cooperation at that stage was a firm alternative to alignment is probably too simplistic as its advocacy coincided with an escalation of US involvement in the country, as suggested by numerous indicators. Many Thai writers nevertheless seem to suggest that the relaunching of regional cooperation during the course of the 1960s constituted a perceptible break with the US alliance and led to efforts to devote more attention to neighbours.¹⁴⁸ Agreement was reached for the US to use U-Tapao airbase for B-52 bomber aircraft in March 1967, with two of the main negotiators being Thanat and his personal assistant Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul, who was a key resource person in drafting the ASEAN proposals. The U-Tapao Agreement was greeted with enthusiastic comments from US Secretary of State Dean Rusk: "no country has been stronger in its support for the concept of collective security, and no country has been quicker to recognize that collective security carries obligations as well as benefits."¹⁴⁹ Indeed, the expression of close Thai-US ties cannot be clearer stated than in President Johnson's visit to Thailand in October 1966 and December 1967, and particularly in the visit of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit to Washington between 27-29 June

1967, during which Johnson “noted his admiration for the constructive role of Thailand in furthering regional economic and political cooperation in Southeast Asia.”¹⁵⁰ It was also in 1966 that the landmark Treaty of Amity and Commercial Relations was signed with the US, which among other provisions granted US businesses privileged status in Thailand above all other foreign enterprises. During the course of 1967, the first Thai combat troops were despatched to Vietnam. In June 1967 the Queen’s Cobras regiment arrived in Vietnam and in October, the despatch of the Black Panthers Division was announced.¹⁵¹ Exactly one month after the signing of the Bangkok Declaration, King Bhumibol, attended by Thanat, inaugurated the new SEATO Headquarters in Bangkok amidst pomp and circumstance. Moreover, it was only in July 1967 that the British made a firm public declaration about withdrawing from positions east of Suez, when the negotiations for a new regional organization had already been under way for over a year.¹⁵²

On the other hand, to say that ASEAN was a mere adjunct to existing cooperation with SEATO and the US is to downplay previous efforts in ASA and ASPAC as well as Thailand’s role in the regional reconciliation process. Nevertheless, while useful as an option it is safe to assume that decision-makers were unsure about the relative potential of any regional organization in particular at that stage, and thus a cautious approach characterized the Thai moves. In contrast with other potential members, such as the Philippines or Singapore, Thailand neither sought to exert its presence or show that it was an integral part of Southeast Asia, nor unlike Indonesia did it need to reassure its neighbours of its peaceful intentions or regional legitimacy. What it wanted,

however, was greater security and a sustainable economic development. In a number of ways, ASEAN served to enhance both. Membership of ASEAN also gave Thailand various additional benefits. Association with non-aligned Indonesia could lessen its 'committed' image in the eyes of the international community, which also helps to explain why Thailand expended considerable efforts at trying to obtain the membership of other Southeast Asian states, including non-aligned Burma.

It is perhaps useful to cite long-term and short-term objectives by the players involved. There was a common perception within Thailand of security and the preservation of national sovereignty as a primary concern, but diverging conceptions of how to achieve it. Thus for the Foreign Ministry planners, the long-term objective must have been to promote regional order with its political and economic implications, but in the short-term to complement the existing alignment by stressing an allegedly vibrant policy independence as seen in promotion of regional cooperation. In this perspective, there is much to recommend the contention that the more Thailand committed itself to the US, the more cogent the argument for regional cooperation.¹⁵³ It is also noted that from the origins, ASEAN was designed to create options for Thailand.¹⁵⁴ Others have suggested that already by 1967 Thanat was feeling that Thailand was 'in too deep' with the Americans.¹⁵⁵ It suited the Thai penchant for ambiguity to have acquiesced to a certain primacy by powerful states such as China and Britain in the past, and the US in the 1960s, while maintaining its independence. However, when the relationship threatened to tip the balance towards too close an association, it was considered necessary to

take actions to rectify such impression. As for Thanat, he admitted in a 1967 interview that in order to safeguard Thailand's security:

We have a two-step programme. First, an immediate or short-range programme, and second, a long-range programme in the social, economic and political fields. On the international level we have the same thing...First, we must have a collective defense system, to counter the immediate threat to our security, and then to have a system of built-in resistance through regional cooperation.¹⁵⁶

Thanat has subsequently emphasized the attempt to create regional solidarity, and more especially the economic element behind moves towards regional cooperation.¹⁵⁷ However, observers have also noted the predominantly political goal of the founders.¹⁵⁸ For the military leaders, meanwhile, the emphasis appeared to have been for the short-term only. Consent was given to a policy of regional cooperation as a mechanism behind which the alignment could be further developed and sustained without arousing further unwelcome criticism, both domestic and external. A conclusion may therefore be drawn that while Thailand may have been playing two foreign policy cards, it in fact also fielded a number of players. Meanwhile, military preoccupations appeared to have characterized the Prime Minister's own actions, which sought to promote closer military cooperation with the US. Some significance could be drawn from the fact that Thailand's response in November 1967 to South Vietnamese requests for further military reinforcements came

from the Prime Minister's Office, and not from diplomatic channels of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From a wider perspective, the launching of regional cooperation appeared to be fully consistent with Thailand's traditional diplomacy and Thanat's policy of not putting all eggs in one basket. At the same time with membership of various regional organizations, each with different attributes, support for collective security could be further maintained.¹⁵⁹ Accordingly, throughout the course of 1967, at various regional fora including ASA, ASPAC and SEATO, Thanat advocated that peace and security would fall primarily within the scope of nations in the region. All in all, it was a policy which imposed few immediate costs to the military leadership and had the potential to open options for the future and thus could be safely promoted. In final analysis, whatever the long-term policy was, the net short-term effect from the various perspectives was to complement the existing alignment with the US. This was pointedly noted by ASEAN's opponents.

In short, it is argued here that ASEAN has all along its gestation been consistent with Thailand's bilateral military ties. Whatever the case, Thanat became the first to realize that with the danger of Thailand becoming too closely identified with the US, a policy of regional cooperation would work to lessen that impression. To put it another way, the policy was not proposed in opposition to the ongoing support of the US in Vietnam, but rather to alleviate its worst effects. In the long term Thailand sought enhanced bargaining power, economic development and greater stability internally and regionally, but in the short term, it needed additional cast-iron guarantees for its security.

Regional cooperation as a whole, and ASEAN in particular, was long-term and defensive in character, whereas maintenance of the alliance with the US allowed it to strike at threats away from Thailand's borders in Vietnam, which was a traditional preference. ASEAN was thus only a tentative option grafted onto existing policy, and much of the discussion of regional cooperation had a 'shadow play' element. At the time of the founding of ASEAN, there was no significant academic or technocratic community within Thailand advocating a policy of regional cooperation, and only policy concerns were in question. Moreover, within policy circles there was more enthusiasm in certain quarters than in others, and there was much uncertainty as to the long-term prospects for such an initiative.

The final months of shuttle diplomacy during January-August 1967 were to prove decisive for the form of regional organization that was to emerge. ASA had already been reactivated when its Standing Committee met in Bangkok in March 1966 and a Ministerial Meeting in August, which strengthened the hand of those who sought to prevent a MAPHILINDO formula. Anwar in her study of Indonesia's policy towards ASEAN suggests that it was Indonesia which drew up the proposal of a Southeast Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SEAARC), to comprise Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia.¹⁶⁰ Other sources, however, indicate the key role of Thailand in drafting the initial proposals, although Indonesia was also keen to emphasize that it did not wish to impose a framework on its prospective partners, and so the role played by Thailand both in the genesis and in negotiation process for SEAARC as go-between and broker was crucial.¹⁶¹

Whatever the case, the initial proposal for a new regional organization had been circulated by December 1966, and in substance closely reflected the public position to be adopted by Indonesia, which does suggest close cooperation between the two countries. Subsequent drafts were later presented by Philippines and Indonesia during the course of June-July 1967. A division of labour seems to have operated. Indonesia occupied itself with internal arrangements within Jakarta and with obtaining wider membership among the countries of Southeast Asia. To this end, Anwar Sani, the Director-General for Political Affairs of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other close colleagues such as Abu Bakar Lubis visited Burma and Cambodia, as well as the Philippines and Singapore, the latter of which had been excluded from the original SEAARC proposals.¹⁶² Thailand spent its time persuading Malaysia of the relative merits of ASA and a new organization.¹⁶³ In the beginning of May 1967, Singaporean Foreign Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam arrived in Bangkok to set out the options that Singapore was prepared to enter into regarding regional cooperation, including membership of ASA or of a new organization.¹⁶⁴ On 23 May, Adam Malik and the Tunku met with Thanat at Bangkok Airport and agreed on a new regional grouping, and that further efforts should be made to enlarge prospective membership.¹⁶⁵ However, at the conclusion of Malik's subsequent trip to various Southeast Asian countries to achieve that objective, Sani reported back to Bangkok of the continuing lack of success in persuading the other countries to join the proposed grouping, although it was indicated that Burma and Cambodia would not at least oppose the new body.¹⁶⁶

A meeting was originally set for July 1967 for the founding of the new organization, to coincide with the Second ASPAC Ministerial Meeting scheduled to be held in Bangkok between 5-7 July. However, it was eventually decided that the new organization, and Indonesia in particular, should not be associated with ASPAC, and a date was set for August instead. The ultimate meetings therefore took place at Bangsaen and Bangkok in August 1967.¹⁶⁷ Following a formal opening session of what Thanat described as “the Conference on Regional Cooperation” in Bangkok on 5 August, the negotiations moved to Bangsaen, at a Thai government guesthouse in the seaside resort outside Bangkok. After the greater part of the details had been worked out, the Foreign Ministers then reunited in Bangkok on 7 August for the final formal sessions, leading to the signature of the Bangkok Declaration which formally established ASEAN in the afternoon of 8 August 1967.¹⁶⁸ The Thai aim, it appears, was to ensure that the Organization was successfully established and hence it played a conciliating role, and did not propose any additional issues for inclusion in the agenda of the Meeting which could prove contentious.

Informality was the hallmark, both of the Meeting and of the Organization which was founded. The Bangsaen talks were held in a very informal atmosphere, with frequent recesses. Even at the subsequent ‘formal’ Bangkok sessions held at the MFA offices in Saranrom Palace, when difficulties were encountered, the Foreign Ministers retired to Thanat’s office to resolve such matters between themselves.¹⁶⁹ Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul, Thanat’s personal Assistant, played a significant role in amalgamating the various national positions and drafting the

proposed Bangkok Declaration, whose political elements nevertheless echoed the Indonesian position and was reminiscent of elements of the 1963 Manila Accord.¹⁷⁰ Despite the prior preparation, certain issues required additional discussion before they could be amicably resolved. The question of foreign bases was an issue for considerable debate between Indonesia and the Philippines. Upon the insistence of the Philippines, the reference to “arrangements of collective defense should not be used to serve the particular interest of any of the big powers” was removed from the original formulation. The inclusion of the reference in the first place, however, has led some to question why Thailand which collated the final draft for presentation to the delegates had permitted such allusion despite its close association with the US and its SEATO membership.¹⁷¹ As this study has argued, the answer probably laid in Thailand’s recognition that the participation of Indonesia was vital to the viability of ASEAN, particularly in highlighting the independent nature of the new body to which Thailand was eager to associate itself. In its concern to ensure that Indonesia subscribed to all aspects of cooperation, Thailand was thus prepared to accommodate Jakarta’s concerns to a wide extent.

A commitment to free trade among the five countries was proposed by Singapore, but quickly rejected by the other delegates as premature, although concrete proposals for cooperation in the areas of tourism, shipping, fisheries and trade as advocated by Singapore were referred to in a separate Joint Press Release.¹⁷² Membership of the new Organization was also at issue, with Sri Lanka’s initial inclusion in the draft Joint Press Release, which was then deleted due to Sri Lanka’s continuing

hesitation about associating itself with such a body.¹⁷³ In addition, the role of ASA was discussed, but there was no mention of ASA itself or of other regional organizations in the Joint Press Release or in the Declaration, such were the concerns regarding ASEAN's identity. Moreover, despite the formal emphasis on economic, social and cultural cooperation, once the details were finalized it emerged that in terms of substance as well as in the preamble, the ASEAN Declaration was more political than the ASA Declaration, although politics was not explicitly mentioned. There was also an overall concern with the minimization of differences, which was to become characteristic of ASEAN. Finally, it was deemed that the name Southeast Asian Association for Regional Cooperation together with its acronym 'SEAARC' was too unwieldy, and thus the name Association of Southeast Asian Nations or 'ASEAN' was apparently proposed by Adam Malik and accepted by all those present.¹⁷⁴

There appeared to have been a compromise over ASA as well, possibly to soothe the Tunku's sensibilities over the *de facto* untimely demise of a cherished project. One week after Bangkok, a Meeting of the ASA Joint Working Party met in Manila to consider the state of the ASA projects, followed on 28-29 August by an ASA Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur to formally decide on the future of the Organization. It was eventually decided to wrap up the Organization and to transfer the existing ASA projects to ASEAN.¹⁷⁵

On Thailand's part, the emergence of ASEAN may thus be seen to have been the work of Thanat and a few close associates within the MFA. There appeared to have been no wider foreign policy debate beyond that of the Cabinet.¹⁷⁶ This seeming indifference may be placed in contrast to the high level

representation of the Thai leadership at ASA Meetings held in Thailand, and even more recently, the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of ASPAC hosted by Thailand a month earlier which was opened by Prime Minister Thanom and held its plenary sessions at Government House. This heightened the impression that ASEAN's founding in August 1967 was not apparently treated with great significance neither by contemporary observers, nor by certain government leaders themselves. Nevertheless, though the Prime Minister was not apparently present to give his sanction to the Organization, there were signs that he was informed at all the crucial stages, including on the state of negotiations with the various parties.¹⁷⁷ The invitation to the other countries to attend the Meeting was issued by the Thai Government, and not merely by the Foreign Minister had it merely been Thanat's show. At the Bangkok Meeting, a key member of the Prime Minister's national security staff was present, as well as Thanom's own daughter Songsuda Kittikachorn as Assistant Secretary to the Thai Delegation. No indication has therefore been found that this was an initiative completely independent from that of the Government leadership, but at least there is an indication of a difference in emphasis by those involved in the ASEAN negotiations on behalf of Thailand.

At the end of 1967, Thailand was therefore a prominent member of several regional organizations: ASA-ASEAN, ASPAC and SEATO. The only overlap between these bodies may be seen between ASA and ASEAN, which was soon rectified by the phasing-out of the former. Otherwise, the various organizations were seen to be complementary in serving different dimensions of Thai interests.¹⁷⁸

CONCLUSION

Thailand has therefore been a major player within Southeast Asia ever since the establishment of the first Thai kingdoms. Throughout its history, it has developed the image of a flexible and yet cautious diplomacy. Its primary foreign policy concerns, as reiterated by successive administrations, were to maintain national independence and security. However, it may be seen that directions in Thai foreign policy were also largely based on perceptions of threat. Thus in the colonial period in order to ward off the threat from Western powers, Thailand sought to become a member of the Western international system, while in the post-colonial period, the primary threat became that of communism. For much of the recent period, Thailand sought as much as possible to maintain the maximum degree of flexibility and sovereignty vis-à-vis the superpowers. However, when it proved necessary, it was prepared to align itself with the dominant power and subsequently to alter its alignment according to the circumstances to obtain required policy goals.

Thailand's foreign policy from 1950 onwards, and particularly since the 1960s, has been marked by cooperation with US efforts in Southeast Asia. This was premised on countering the threat posed to the national security of Thailand and its central institutions by communism in Southeast Asia. As such Thailand accepted US military and economic aid, and made political and material contributions to US initiatives in the region. This was such that the policy became one associated with Thailand's military leaders, whose influence and power depended heavily on the continued collaboration, and whose

belief in the will of the US to remain engaged continued relatively unshaken into 1967. The closeness of the relationship has left an indelible mark on Thai policy in this period, and has led one to question any commitment to alternative avenues of external interaction. However, the examination of its participation in the formation of ASEAN has shown that the relationship did not prevent the launching of independent initiatives on Thailand's part. Too much has been made of a monolithic and inflexible Thai policy in this period of alignment. Instead, the research suggests that Thais were also able to manage the relationship to secure overriding security objectives, while in due course working to hedge their bets with efforts in regional cooperation. Lip service to regional cooperation had indeed been made by previous governments with little by way of results, for it was perceived that relations with great powers were more beneficial for Thailand's security. Isolated incidents of regional enthusiasm did arise, for Thailand retained a regional vision throughout, although the substance of policy often ran in a different direction. In this case, however, Thailand's participation in ASEAN should not be taken as a pure exigency of the time, but as part of an overall evolution within the policy of certain decision-makers, going back to the early 1960s and even beyond.

Thailand's key role in the formation of ASEAN also modifies the proposition that regional cooperation grew merely out of the reconciliation process ending *Konfrontasi*. While important, particularly in identifying Indonesian and Malaysian concerns, the reconciliation thesis downplays the vital coalescence of interests between the disparate countries of Southeast Asia. Within Thailand, a complicated interplay of

external and domestic factors may be seen to have driven efforts in regional cooperation. Nevertheless, we have seen that although there were internal reasons, often ignored, in motivating Thailand towards ASEAN, it was external factors which carried the most influence. Externally, given the polarized atmosphere of the Cold War, Thai policy-makers were fully aware of the limitations of regional cooperation as a policy, but Thailand's moves were accompanied by a real enthusiasm that such actions would create greater bargaining power and promote regional order, as well as contribute to national development. Participation in ASEAN was not a mere token gesture at regionalism, and reflected considerable farsightedness and long-term objectives by its Thai promoters, rather than a quest for short-term gains.

At the same time, it is possible to make the following specific conclusions with regards to Thailand's entry into ASEAN. Firstly, despite concerns about future US intentions, participation in ASEAN did not yet mean a break with the US. It is indicative that for Thailand the creation of ASEAN did not signify any reversal of alliances, and was not yet a definite departure from a largely bilateral policy of alignment. This is consistent with the hypothesis of the primacy of bilateral linkages in determining national policy, and as such relations with the dominant power. The evidence points out that throughout the gestation period of ASEAN, and for many months thereafter, Thailand showed concrete manifestations of its ongoing support for US efforts in Southeast Asia. This extended from exchanges of visits at the highest level to assent for the use of additional military facilities in Thailand. Seen in terms of the alignment, the involvement in ASEAN imposed so

few costs on the Thai-US relationship that it cannot be said to have prejudiced the close cooperation between the two parties. It did, on the other hand, provide Thailand with many benefits, including creating preconditions under which a more flexible policy could be justified by palliating the heavy reliance on the United States, and gave a certain specificity to Thai participation above common concerns among Southeast Asian countries. As a policy initiative, therefore, it initially played a distinctly supplementary role. Once the crucial decision was made for a revival of regional cooperation to palliate the perceived over-reliance on the US, the actual timing was relatively unimportant. Indeed, the final decision was largely left to the Indonesians, which implies that ASEAN should not be regarded as catering to short-term concerns.

Secondly, the moves between 1965-1967 also indicated the key motivating role of Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman and his collaborators within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In contrast with the case of Indonesia or Malaysia, the Thai military did not apparently play an important role in the discussions for the founding of ASEAN. Moreover, even if the military dominated Thailand's strategic cooperation with the US there is evidence to indicate the key role of the Foreign Ministry in helping to foster regional order. The restricted circle of negotiators behind the creation of ASEAN as shown in the example of Thailand was also illustrative of policy-making in this period, both in Thailand as well as in the ASEAN countries as a whole. While the initial goals for ASEAN may have been prudently limited, it is probably fair to say that the Organization's potential to develop as a power base was recognized by its Thai supporters. It may also have

involved a complex interplay between the personalities at the apex of power hitherto ignored. Thus there may have been two tracks to Thailand's foreign policy, with the regional track as promoted by the Foreign Ministry being somewhat independent of the leadership's line.

Thirdly, for Thailand at the beginning, the main goal in pursuing this line of policy was to promote a general 'regional cooperation.' A variety of region formats was attempted, with an emphasis on the long-term viability of each of the organizations concerned. It appeared that no particular framework was stressed, and an organization such as ASEAN being strictly limited to countries in Southeast Asia *did not* have particular priority at this stage. In fact, the question of ultimate membership of the various organizations in the region was to remain relatively undefined for several years. This multidimensional Thai stance demonstrated the classic Thai preference for a balancing of options, given its simultaneous participation in ASA-ASEAN and ASPAC, as well as SEATO. Indeed, among the countries of Southeast Asia Thailand may be said to have had one of the widest experiences in regional cooperation in its various different manifestations. Contrary to current perceptions, a commitment to ASEAN as the main mechanism for regional interaction did not come until later, though there did seem to have already been a preference for ASEAN as a purely Southeast Asian enterprise, given Thailand's unhappy experience with SEATO and a general recognition of the problems with heterogeneity of membership. Symbolically, ASA and ASEAN also marked an important, and yet almost unconscious, move away from Thailand's traditional concerns with its continental neighbours, particularly in

Indochina. The new focus of attention would be towards cooperation with the countries to the South, which had previously been a peripheral area for policy-makers in Bangkok as shown in the nature of existing bilateral relations, although it would be seen that Thailand's continuing interest in events in Indochina made a distinct imprint on its ASEAN policy.

Fourthly, common elements to the Thai approach on regional cooperation may already be detected at this early stage. These included a cautious and incremental general stance; a minimalist approach to structure and organization; and a comprehensive approach to the subjects of cooperation, and particularly that certain options should not be ruled out. Some of these elements were not peculiarly Thai and rather exhibited a general 'Asian' approach to policy issues, but were particularly marked in Thailand given its cautious and flexible diplomacy. Formal equality among the participants was adopted. It appears, nevertheless, that Thailand was prepared to accord Indonesia the provisional status of 'first among equals' in terms of regional arrangements. In this regard, the initial denial of political activities for ASEAN was largely a function of ideological divisions within Southeast Asia, and it was clear that most members wanted to maximize the benefits from the Association, which meant not excluding possible options. Certainly, in the Thai view ASEAN had a clear political function and possessed a political value beyond its stated objectives and the quest for regional solidarity.

In retrospect, taken along with ASA, the move towards indigenous regional cooperation proved to be of major significance for Thailand, although it was not necessarily seen

as such in contemporary terms. At the time, considering the non-military nature of ASEAN and its predecessors, regional cooperation for Thailand did indeed appear to have acted as a supplement to alignment with the US and collective security commitments through SEATO. To look at it another way, while ASEAN may be seen as a long-term alternative to SEATO, in the short-term it also served to justify a policy supporting Escalation in Vietnam.

CHAPTER

4

THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICY
ENVIRONMENT

This Chapter aims to analyze the factors governing Thailand's foreign policy determination processes. An understanding of the underlying factors behind Thailand's diplomacy would enable a better understanding of the environment from which policies on ASEAN were derived, which in turn sheds light on Thailand's general attitude towards regional cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' interaction with the other agencies regarding ASEAN issues is investigated. It is shown that there was a gradual evolution in the relationship between the various agencies, which helped to determine the development of Thailand's policies within ASEAN.

THE EVOLUTION OF THAILAND'S ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE

Policy-making reflects the nature of the administrative structure, and with this consideration in mind it is necessary to discuss the evolution of the administrative and bureaucratic structure in Thailand. Studies of the evolution of the Thai administrative system have stressed the importance of the original executive role of the monarchy and the bureaucracy. The overthrow of absolute monarchy and the institution of the 1932 system based on parliamentary democracy introduced a constitutional monarchy. Within this constitutional structure, the King played a largely symbolic role, and substantial power and authority was instead vested in the Prime Minister as the chief executive, although a hierarchic social and political structure was perpetuated.¹ Administrative power was instituted in the Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, and power rested

with the Executive rather than the Legislative branch of government. It also entrenched the bureaucratic dominance of power structures, both civilian and military, such that the term 'bureaucratic polity' has been attributed to the Thai state as from 1932 onwards.² Serving and former civilian and military bureaucrats predominated in the Cabinet and in Parliament, working through well-established chains of authority. Despite the weaknesses which have been shown in this vertical approach, which have been rectified by various scholars, in particular with subsequent social changes that broke the framework of the dominance of bureaucratic politics and the role of the military, the applicability of the concept to much of the period under study has important implications for policy-making.³ Accordingly, Dhiravegin has described the polity as an 'atomized society,' under which power was central to getting things done. Within a generally passive societal framework the control of administrative and bureaucratic structures became an essential source of power and legitimation. Moreover, there was a lack of effective balancing force to restrain those in power, owing to the weakness of pluralistic forces:

The social milieu was characterized by the absence of organized groups as countervailing forces necessary for power balancing and for bargaining in the democratic process.⁴

Thus, a major characteristic of the Thai polity throughout the 1960s and early 1970s was the dominance of a strong executive, as well as a general weakness of representative institutions, which

had an important influence on the overall decision-making process. At the same time, governments were preoccupied by a quest for internal stability, and sought to forge a domestic consensus that this was an overriding necessity.

However, within this bureaucracy-dominated structure there appeared to be a general belief in the force of constitutions, though there were frequent changes of constitutional instruments. The forms of democratic government were largely observed during much of the period. Even governments arising out of coups d'état made declarations of policy as a matter of course, lending to the appearance of democratic government.⁵ Policy statements thus had an important symbolic value. Central to such declarations of policy was the commitment to defend the three centrals of institutions of Nation, Religion and Monarchy as instituted by King Vajiravudh after 1910 in the nation-building process.⁶ There was often, however, an appreciable gap between the substance of declarations of policy and the manner in which they were implemented. This was particularly the case as regards Thailand's relations with its neighbours, with the implementation of its border policies often clashing with its general declared policy of fostering amical relations with other regional states.⁷ Nevertheless, it is possible to identify various core elements within the foreign policy part of all policy statements, namely: the observance of international agreements and obligations and the preservation of national sovereignty and integrity.⁸ Beyond these core elements, other concerns such as cooperation with neighbouring countries or in regional organizations were stressed as deemed necessary by individual governments.

The leading role of the military in national affairs which had been evident since 1932 was reconfirmed after 1949, and especially with rise of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat who inaugurated the military-dominated rule of the Revolutionary Party with his coup d'état of 1958. The military justified its political role by pointing out that the separation of civil and military functions has been relatively recent, and that from the Ayudhya period until the late 19th Century, civilian and military administration was interchangeable.⁹ Accordingly, in the popular military view the military are inseparable from the state, and the separation of powers as in the Western democratic manner is artificial within the Thai context. Moreover, from 1959 onwards, the military drew power from its identification with the institution of the monarchy, as illustrated in a military information booklet:

In the 736-years long history of Thailand, the military's standpoint has always been to rally behind the leadership of all Thai kings in defending and safeguarding national independence and sovereignty. Therefore, it is a duty of the military to continue to sacrifice for independence and sovereignty of the country, having the royal strategy of His Majesty the King, national strategy and military strategy as guidelines of conduct for every service.¹⁰

The maintenance of national security thus went hand in hand with the quest for internal stability during much of the period under study, accruing to the influence of the military.

It may therefore be said that the administrative structure of Thailand exhibited an authoritarian mould, even though a democratic period was heralded between 1973-1976 following the overthrow of the military government. In particular, the years 1975-1976 were marked by the rise of Parliament as a representative institution, with a corresponding decline in the power of the old bureaucratic elements, particularly that of the military. For the first time, non-bureaucratic sources of influence emerged within the national power structure, as revealed by the number of businessmen and professionals elected to the House of Representatives, and by the number of businessmen within the Cabinet.¹¹ While this democratic period was marked by substantial political instability, the achievement of the period was the establishment of Parliament as an integral element within the national power structure. Subsequently, a hybrid system was instituted as from 1980 to 1988, which has been dubbed 'demi-democracy.'¹² Nevertheless, even under the framework of demi-democracy, whereby an unelected Prime Minister presided over a Cabinet drawn largely from the various political parties, the parties maintained their individual identities and constituted vital sources of political action.

At the same time, the question of an effective administrative and governmental structure is also posed, with important policy implications. It is suggested that the Thai state "has been characterized by both strengths and weakness when those terms are viewed in terms of societal autonomy."¹³ In this regard, autonomy is regarded as an attribute when a state is capable of initiating major policy shifts without regard for domestic political and economic groups, and that 'strong' states have a

high level of autonomy whereas ‘weak’ states are constrained by societal actors.’¹⁴ However, prior to 1973 societal actors in Thailand remained weak, and the situation was marked by overwhelming bureaucratic strength. It will be seen, nevertheless, that the bureaucracy itself despite specific centres of professionalism lacked adequate mechanisms and human and financial resources to implement policies properly, and that a major problem was an adequate coordination of policies. Such problems tended to increase upon the institutionalization of democratic government with the addition of non-bureaucratic factors. Nevertheless, the well-established bureaucratic structure provided an important source of continuity through the democratic transition, including in the conduct of Thailand’s foreign relations.

THE MAKING OF THAI FOREIGN POLICY

We have seen that in the Thai elites’ perception of the external world, certain factors were regarded as constants. Owing to Thailand’s geostrategic location, the primacy of security was acknowledged and perpetuated in the conduct of Thailand’s external relations. The historical trend showed that apart from relying on an internal resilience Thailand also had to call upon external sources of support, and hence the importance of diplomacy and international organizations, as well as allies, in maintaining Thailand’s sovereignty. This has enshrined a certain institutional memory into Thai diplomacy, leading one certain foreign scholar to note in 1960 that: “The foreign service is good, although as yet attuned more to extracting the largest possible

advantage out of the Western great powers than to maintaining sympathetic links with the new Asian states.”¹⁵ These factors have thus moulded the perception of Thai policy-makers, just as they contributed towards the shaping of Thai foreign policy. A major factor in the making of Thai foreign policy was that in the period studied, there was an increasing multiplicity of sources for the formulation of policy, which contributed to a particularly distinctive policy style.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) from its headquarters in Saranrom Palace has traditionally played the major role in Thailand’s external affairs as the main organ of foreign policy. During much of the period studied, however, the MFA’s role in the formulation of policy was strongly contested by other institutions, such that on certain matters, it was completely eclipsed and relegated to the position of a mere executing agency. Officially founded in 1875 upon the separation of foreign affairs from the other functions of *Krom Tha*, its long history and significant continuity in terms of personnel within the MFA has contributed towards its domestic reputation within the bureaucracy as a whole for professionalism and integrity.¹⁶ This may be seen through the personality of two long-serving postwar Foreign Ministers: Prince Wan Waithayakorn Krommun Naradhip Bongsprabandh (1952-1958) and Thanat Khoman (1959-1971). Their successors such as Charoonphan Israngkun (November 1971-December 1972, October 1973-February 1975) and Upadit Pachariyangkun (October 1976-February 1980) had also for a long time been associated with the MFA. Eventhough Maj.-Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan (March 1975-April 1976) and Pichai Rattakul (April 1975-October 1976) possessed a different

background, they may also be said to have relied heavily on the resources of the MFA.¹⁷

When the Foreign Minister possessed a strong personality and a good grasp of the necessary details, he could exert an enormous influence on policy. This may be said to have been the case during Thanat Khoman's long 12-year incumbency at the MFA during which he was also able to build up a working relationship with the military leaders. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that: "Dr. Thanat's prodigious energies seem often to have precluded the participation of others, particularly on the policy formulation side."¹⁸ As the analysis of the founding of ASEAN appears to indicate, Thanat's preference did seem to be to work within a rather restricted circle of confidantes.¹⁹ Indeed, by gathering around him a circle of highly talented and promising junior diplomats, he could be said to have instituted a policy *Cabinet* in the continental style. However, in choosing to work with a limited group of subordinates, Thanat also tended to bypass the various Directors-General in making his own imprint on policy. Moreover, discussions with some of those formerly associated with the MFA seemed to suggest that while his energy and intellectual panache was admired, particularly in sustaining the MFA's influence vis-à-vis bureaucratic challenges, Thanat's prickly personality not infrequently served to alienate many of those within the MFA.²⁰ Nevertheless, it may be said that good working relationships were generally maintained between the Foreign Minister and the MFA during most of the period under study.

In contrast to the prominence of the Foreign Minister, the role of the Deputy Foreign Ministers have been relatively

unimportant in policy terms as they were usually delegated supporting or administrative roles, with the post often being filled by senior career diplomats. In this manner, the role of the Deputy Foreign Minister was often dependent on whether the Foreign Minister was prepared to delegate important duties, or whether he wanted to conduct his own policy. Below the Foreign Minister and the Deputy Foreign Minister was the permanent structure of the Ministry, headed by the Permanent Secretary and his Directors-General, who headed the various departments. The relative importance of the Permanent Secretary also depended on the style of the Foreign Minister. Under Thanat Khoman, who tended to conduct his own policy as the years progressed, the role of the Permanent Secretary was relatively subdued.²¹ However, after 1971 the Permanent Secretary played a greater role in supporting the Foreign Minister, a role which was magnified by the frequent changes in government and the appointment of politicians as Foreign Minister to accrue to the overall influence of permanent officials within the MFA. As for the permanent staff of the MFA itself, its members were dominated societally by traditional Civil Service families, and in terms of educational background initially by political science graduates from Thammasat University on the one hand, and on the other by graduates from foreign universities, although many of the former also went on to receive higher degrees abroad. As time went by, the profile of new entrants into the MFA broadened to include those with a more varied educational and societal background, although the impression of a close-knit elite group of dedicated public servants remained.²²

It must be stressed that the Prime Minister has a potentially influential role in Thai foreign policy. On individual issues, moreover, there appeared to have been no clear division of responsibility between the Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister. Important decisions during the period were taken by Sarit and Thanom in cooperation with the military. Indeed, Thanom was his own Foreign Minister from December 1972 to October 1973 (and prior to that he had indirect oversight of the Ministry with Charoonphan Israngkun as acting Foreign Minister from November 1971 to December 1972). The alliance with the US was driven by successive Prime Ministers in association with the military, from Pibulsonggram and Sarit through to Thanom. As long as military men occupied the key posts, it was unlikely that the general alignment would be changed.²³ Already during the time of Pibulsonggram, the recognition of the Bao Dai regime in Vietnam in 1950 revealed the importance of Prime Ministerial power when Pibulsonggram forced the decision on recognition through the Cabinet, leading to the resignation of his Foreign Minister, Pote Sarasin. It may be seen, however, that the exercise of this power depended on personality as well as governing style. Thanom, a generally mild-mannered career officer, was often described as “more chairman of the board than chief executive,” given the relative influence of colleagues and collaborators such as Minister of Interior Prapat Charusathiara.²⁴ However, it is also suggested that in 1971 Thanom was able to override the earlier decisions of the National Security Council and the Cabinet on the recognition of the PRC to co-sponsor a US resolution that would have provided a seat for Taiwan in the General Assembly while the PRC assumed

China's permanent seat in the Security Council, revealing that on questions of national security, Thanom could be found to have acted decisively as he saw fit.²⁵

Prime Ministerial influence over foreign policy may also be seen during the transition from the Government of Tanin Kraivixien to that of General Kriangsak Chomanan between 1976-1977. The anti-communism of the Tanin Government could be contrasted with the conciliatory approach of Kriangsak in both domestic and external terms, and yet during the two governments there was a single Foreign Minister, Upadit Pachariyangkun. It will be seen that Upadit played a role in moderating the anti-communist approach of Tanin as Prime Minister in external terms. However, throughout the two governments his most important role, as a former diplomat within the MFA, was arguably to ensure that those within the MFA went along with shifts in government policy. As it emerged, Kriangsak's policy were similar to those of the MFA, with an emphasis on accommodation with Indochina, but Kriangsak also lent a personal touch with his 'kitchen diplomacy'.²⁶ The general synergy between Kriangsak and the MFA was to contribute to what was regarded as a successful balancing diplomacy conducted by Thailand amidst the reassertion of great power rivalry in the region during 1977-1979.

It is crucial to the explanation of Thailand's external relations that quite apart from the intervention of the Prime Minister, the MFA is not the only organ of foreign policy, either in formulation or in implementation. One must take into account the important role of the military in national security affairs and hence in policy towards neighbouring countries.

This was enshrined during the period 1958-1973 by the fact that the Prime Minister was also a serving military officer. Within the national hierarchy, the post of Minister of Defence was regarded as crucial, as was that of Army Commander-in-Chief. For a long time, the latter post was filled by Field Marshal Prapat Charusathiara, who was often regarded as the strongman behind the Thanom Governments of 1963-1973. Meanwhile, throughout the period the post of Minister of Defence was occupied by serving or former military officers, which tended to further reinforce the institutionalization of military influence. According to key military officers, the military constituted a factor of major importance in border areas in the implementation of policy, and thus, had to be consulted upon formulation.²⁷ Most importantly, the military had the cartographic expertise with which to determine the location of Thailand's borders, and although the MFA's Treaties and Legal Department was responsible for interpreting Thailand's treaties with European powers which had caused so many problems with its neighbours, the latter was frequently forced to defer to military preferences. The military also dominated the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) which was founded in 1965 to coordinate counter-insurgency and anti-communist activities and whose operations often had an impact beyond Thailand's internal boundaries.²⁸ A contemporary commentator thus spoke of the military being able to put "barbed-wire entanglements around Thailand's foreign policy," and that "one of the weaknesses of past Thai Cabinets has been that each minister functioned as an autonomous authority."²⁹

The military also handled important issues such as military aid during this period. As will be seen, cooperation with the US and the importance of military aid in national terms meant that close relations were entertained by certain Thai military leaders with their US counterparts. There was thus a tendency to conduct security planning with the US in mind, and to rely on external channels of information even if each of the Armed Forces possessed an intelligence capability as did the Supreme Command and the central organs of the Ministry of Defence.³⁰ As will be seen, it was of some significance that elements within the Thai military at various echelons of power often had a different conception of national security from that of the Foreign Ministry. In the latter period a frequent complaint made against the MFA was that it often failed to consult with the military on vital political questions that had security implications, or that policy changes occurred too swiftly without allowing the military adequate time to adjust.³¹ An additional check on the independence of the MFA also laid in that many of the diplomatic posts throughout the 1950s and 1960s were often occupied by military men or those from other agencies seconded to the MFA in political appointments. This was certainly true with regards to representation in the neighbouring countries, such as in Vietnam and Cambodia, as well as in certain ASEAN capitals, particularly where close military cooperation with such countries was deemed important. With this in mind, according to a senior Thai diplomat, foreign policy towards neighbouring countries was security-oriented, particularly in respect of borders, where a buffer policy was often maintained. Initiatives in such areas were often run independently of the channels of

the MFA, and indeed of Bangkok itself. Hence Thai troops could be sent to Laos and training provided to troops of the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia without any prior consultation or active input by the MFA. With this perspective in mind, the MFA concentrated on “turning enemies into friends” or at least in minimizing potential enemies by increasingly promoting accommodatory postures within the region to offset negative implications of overcommitment to the US.³²

Within the Prime Minister’s Office have been established various agencies which during the time of Sarit helped to concentrate bureaucratic power under the Executive. Certain of these agencies possessed some role in the field of foreign relations. One such agency was the National Security Council (NSC), which originally founded as the War Council in 1944 with the task of coordinating wartime policy, and was reorganized under Sarit in 1959 with both internal and external responsibilities.³³ It was primarily charged with setting the broad lines of policy on national security, with subcommittees discussing individual issues of concern.³⁴ Key decisions such as the despatch of troops to Korea in 1950, the establishment of relations with the PRC during 1971-1976, as well as support for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in 1982, were debated in such arena. The policy agreed upon was then implemented by the MFA. The National Security Council Secretariat developed at the same time with a wide mandate on the study of security policy and as linkage between military and civilian policy/bureaucratic circles, headed by the Secretary-General of the National Security Council who also had a Cabinet seat. Individual resource persons, including from the MFA as seen in

Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul during the late 1960s, were also appointed to the NSC Planning Council. The NSC was chaired by the Prime Minister, and for much of the period its members usually included the Ministers of Defence, Finance, Foreign Affairs and Interior, as well as the Supreme Commander, with the Secretary-General of the NSC as Secretary, although membership changed over time and tended to increase as the years went by, making the body less manageable. Potential bureaucratic conflicts between the NSC and the MFA, however, were lessened by the fact that there was little recourse to the National Security Council by the Prime Minister until the civilian cabinets of the 1970s, which felt a need to gauge military opinion on various issues, and by the fact that the initial Secretaries-General of the National Security Council also had backgrounds within the MFA.³⁵ The first Secretary-General, Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn (1959-1963), was a former Ambassador and Foreign Minister, as was his successor Phraya Srivisarnvaja. Thereafter, the National Security Council Secretariat was headed by military men such as General Chira Vichitsongkhram and General Lek Naewmalee, which served to ensure the dominance of a military perspective in the body. However, a new era of professionalism was heralded by the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila as Secretary-General, and coordination with the MFA was further improved by Siddhi's subsequent appointment to the post of Foreign Minister in February 1980.

It appeared, however, that few ASEAN issues were debated within the National Security Council before the Indochinese problem resurfaced in late 1978. In so far as it was perceived that ASEAN and its individual member countries could serve to

promote Thailand's security, cooperation within ASEAN was discussed and incorporated into the wider national security plan, although on the whole the NSC was not involved with the details of policy towards the Organization on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, it was important for the MFA to obtain the views of the NSC Secretariat as well as from the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces on such subjects as possible military cooperation within ASEAN so that a national position could be determined which had the support of all the relevant agencies. As such representatives from the NSC Secretariat and the Supreme Command attended ASEAN Ministerial Meetings and Informal Meetings of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, as well as Summit Meetings, on several occasions.

One issue on which cooperation between the NSC and the MFA was notable was that of refugees. On the issue of Indochinese refugees, a clear policy line had been developed by the NSC since 1975. It may be seen that this policy was approved by the Cabinet, although a policy on refugees was not officially approved by Parliament until its inclusion in the Policy Statement of the Government of General Prem Tinsulanonda in March 1980.³⁶ A largely tripartite structure was developed to coordinate Thailand's response: the NSC being responsible for overall policy towards refugees; the MFA (through its Department of International Organizations) responsible for international political actions, particularly with protecting the national image abroad and obtaining the necessary political and material support from the international community; and the Ministry of the Interior, and to a lesser extent the Armed Forces, as the main implementing agencies on the ground. This was widely seen as

one of the most effective forms of interagency cooperation seen in Thailand, one that ensured a common position to be maintained, such that this tripartite decision-making was also applied on refugee questions within ASEAN and in other international fora.³⁷

Also within the Prime Minister's Office was the Department of Central Intelligence (DCI) whose role has remained shrouded in relative secrecy but which was also charged with coordinating central intelligence.³⁸ As part of its normal functions, it compiled news summaries and intelligence estimates for presentation to the Prime Minister and top policy-makers, including on developments within ASEAN. As such, it has a role in the foreign policy decision-making process. However, during the period under study it has been criticized for being "concerned with gathering information, primarily about opposition groups and only secondarily about Communist movements inside Thailand. The government's sources of information about surrounding areas seem scarce and not reliable."³⁹

As for the other bureaucratic agencies, certain Ministries also played a role in external relations in accordance with their specific responsibilities. These included the Ministry of the Interior regarding refugee issue, and the Ministry of Commerce on multilateral trade negotiations. Despite the cooperation between the MFA and the Ministry of the Interior, the strong line of the latter on security issues was reinforced by the fact that the Minister of the Interior in this period was usually a military officer (Field Marshal Prapat Charusathiara up to 1973), or a person connected with military circles. The centralization of the Thai polity since the 1880s had meant that the provinces

fell directly under the control of Bangkok and that the provincial governors reported to the Ministry of the Interior. As such, the impact of the Interior Minister on foreign affairs was often controversial, particularly when it is considered that nearly half of Thailand's provinces bordered on foreign countries. One episode of this was seen in Interior Minister Samak Sundaravej's statement of 8 December 1976 that Hanoi would launch an invasion of Thailand in February 1977 in response to unrest among Vietnamese refugees, an action which raised tensions appreciably on Thailand's borders with Laos and Cambodia.⁴⁰ With regards to international economic questions, the Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Thailand, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) and the Bureau of the Budget guided the main lines of economic policy, aided by a significant interchange of personnel in the 1960s and 1970s. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, which became the Ministry of Commerce, built up a specific expertise on international trade. Despite this informal consensus on economic issues, a frequent complaint was that Thailand lacked adequate coordination mechanisms on economic affairs, such as on questions of primary commodities, whereas certain other countries in the region, such as Malaysia, had specific ministerial-level mechanisms for this purpose.⁴¹ As will be seen, such problems were to continue to plague Thai economic diplomacy for some time to come.

With foreign policy questions touching on the responsibility of other key agencies, the ultimate onus of coordination was formally resolved at the level of the Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister or a Deputy Prime Minister. Thus, while the

MFA played a major role in the formulation of policy, the Cabinet or the National Security Council became arenas where the work of the MFA was reviewed and debated upon before being approved by the government as a whole. Accordingly, the foreign policy autonomy of the MFA was limited in particular issue areas. Nevertheless, the Cabinet itself was unwieldy due to its large size and was not therefore utilized extensively for policy purposes. Indeed, when embarking upon measures it was often possible merely to inform the Cabinet instead of seeking its approval. According to a scholar of Thai diplomacy in this period, it was “essentially a consensus institution, in which members deferred to issues brought forward by colleagues so that they in turn would not face opposition when advancing their own proposals.”⁴² However, as clearly seen during the democratic period of 1975-1976, while the Prime Minister was away on goodwill visits to ASEAN countries or attending the Bali Summit, updates on his progress were sent to the Cabinet Secretary so that Cabinet members could at least be informed of the path of his diplomacy. Thus, to a certain extent, the principle of collective responsibility was gradually built up within the scope of the Cabinet, although the subsequent record on this matter, as well as observance of the important principle of transparency, has proved patchy at best.

The period of the 1960s and 1970s may therefore be summed up as an era when the dividing line between diplomacy and other branches of the bureaucracy was particularly blurred. At times, this parallel structure has caused friction and confusion, particularly during the mid 1970s when various military leaders within and outside the Cabinet appeared to take a line different

from that of the civilian leaders who were trying to disengage Thailand from strict alignment.⁴³ As Foreign Minister Pichai Rattakul was forced to clarify in 1976:

Strictly in foreign policy-making, the very plurality of our present society as well as the network of multiple centres of decision-making inherited from the past may at times lead to varying pronouncements on foreign policy matters. This is a reflection of our free system. It should not be mistaken by anyone that when a final policy decision has been made that it is not official or binding or represents the firm stand of this nation.⁴⁴

Moreover, despite the general lack of politicization within the MFA as opposed to other government agencies due to the limited scope of action for interest groups within the existing diplomatic framework, it was also shown that the MFA was not always above the vagaries of domestic politics. During the Tanin Government three of the most senior MFA officials, including Permanent Secretary Anand Panyarachun and Director-General for Political Affairs Kosol Sindhavananda, were placed under investigation for actions taken under previous administrations, particularly in relation to the fostering of contacts with communist countries, but then subsequently exonerated.⁴⁵ Such incidents, while admittedly rare, nevertheless reflected the political problems faced by Thai diplomacy, and highlighted the difficulties with which relations with neighbouring states were carried out.

A certain degree of secret diplomacy may also be said to have marked the 1960s and early 1970s, arising out of the

dominance of one group, the military, over the political direction of the nation. This may be seen to have been a significant factor in the conduct of foreign relations. It has been revealed that the initial negotiations on the establishment of US bases in Thailand was carried out by the military in 1963-64 without the participation of Foreign Minister Thanat and the MFA. Moreover, the fact that such negotiations even took place was not revealed to the public until much later.⁴⁶ The major participants in such negotiations were US Ambassador Graham Martin with Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Thanom Kittikachorn and Supreme Commander Air Chief Marshal Thawee Chullasapya.⁴⁷ When he returned from the post of Thai Ambassador to Washington to become Foreign Minister in 1959, Thanat Khoman's role appeared to have been that of a crucial conduit between the military group and the US. However, as time wore on, the US dealt increasingly directly with the military, forcing Thanat to devote his energies to other areas. Thanat's exclusion from the Thanom-Prapat-Thawee axis may have resulted in his insistence on his involvement in the subsequent negotiations on the use of the U-Tapao airbase in March 1967.⁴⁸ Prior to the U-Tapao Agreement, there had been no instrument regulating utilization of such bases by the US, which in fact suited both sides particularly as the Thai Government did not want to formally admit to the stationing of US forces on Thai territory.⁴⁹

The coordination problems caused by secret diplomacy were often further compounded by personality clashes and failures in communication within policy circles. The MFA was not immune to such personal differences and rivalry. On the

occasion of President Johnson's announcement of the US bombing halt in Vietnam in October 1968 there was considerable consternation within Thai policy-making community, and recriminations spread. The Thai Ambassador to Washington, Bunchana Atthakor, a political appointee, complained to Bangkok that he did not receive prior notification: it was subsequently alleged that Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman did not recommend that the US State Department inform the Ambassador.⁵⁰ While this revelation reflected personal differences between the two personalities, this was also another illustration of the fact that during these years US authorities preferred to deal with the leaders in Bangkok directly, instead of through normal diplomatic channels, given that the US governmental presence in Bangkok at that time was one of the most substantial in the world.

In his direction of Thailand's foreign relations, Thanat eventually faced opposition within the Cabinet, ironically by persons such as Bunchana who had been recalled from Washington to become Minister of National Development in August 1969. Such personality clashes were also linked to domestic politics, as certain opposition members in the National Assembly such as the Democrat leader MR Seni Pramoj had also by the late 1960s become increasingly vocal against the tendency of over-dependence on the US. As seen in Ambassador Bunchana's memoirs, at this time Thanat was already close to the Democrat party and there was even talk of Thanat replacing MR Seni as Democrat leader. Taken together with Thanat's existing doubts about the strength of US commitment to Thailand, this may also help to explain Thanat's increasingly

vocal anti-US position.⁵¹ The Foreign Minister's apparent revisionism became such that in due course it became necessary for the Prime Minister's Office to issue statements clarifying the official position, such as on the state of negotiations with the PRC.⁵² Eventually Thanat was edged out of office following the November 1971 coup d'état which instituted a military-dominated National Executive Council (NEC) to replace the existing Cabinet, due partly at least to his opposition to the deployment of Thai troops in Cambodia, the pace of his pro-active China policy and his increasingly vehement anti-US comments. That approaches to the PRC were continued after Thanat's departure does, suggest, however, that personality played a greater part than policy in his departure. Thanat's conflict with Bunchana within the Cabinet, as well as his frequent differences with Prapat, appeared to have been crucial. Thanat, moreover, continued to remain influential, particularly on issues of regional cooperation. Despite complaining that: "some of my thoughts and ideas have not always been shared by my colleagues," in the months after relinquishing the post of Foreign Minister he continued to maintain that ASEAN was "an area where I can continue to serve my country...the closer we get together the easier it will be for us to work with the outside world."⁵³ From this illustration, it may be said that major lines of policy had to be concordant with the interests of the dominant group in power, which in the early 1970s remained alignment with the US. A conclusion may be drawn that while it may be said that Thanat and the generals shared some of the concerns regarding Thailand's exposure within Southeast Asia, they interpreted the commitment to the US differently. There may be said to have been a difference

of perception between Thanat the pragmatic, hard-headed lawyer and diplomat, and the generals, more inclined to believe in the substance of US assurances given the *material* nature of the commitments and benefits and the *personal* nature of the relationship with US Administration spokesmen and generals. It is even suggested that the Thai generals did not excessively concern themselves with antiwar sentiment in the US not only due to their belief in US Presidential assurances, but also partly by inclination, due to the relative powerlessness of dissenting voices within Thailand.⁵⁴

Could the question be posed that did the creation of ASEAN concretize, at least temporarily, a division of roles, with the military and national security establishment being occupied with relations with the US and immediate neighbours, while the MFA handled relations with ASEAN and the rest of the World.⁵⁵ The argument seems persuasive, seen from the viewpoint of constructive policy options open to the MFA. Certainly, ASA and ASEAN marked the launch of Thai diplomatic activity in a geographical area which thus far had been of minor interest to Thailand compared to Indochina. However, it could be seen that the MFA also fought hard to assert a role in relations with the US and policy towards the Southeast Asian region as a whole. It has been shown that a peculiarity of the Thai situation was that ministries were able to run their own policy independent of one another, although the executive and the military often ran a parallel policy. Individual ministries scrupulously attempted to keep to their own domain and to protect their fiefs, but when policies overlapped, this led to some confusion, which was demonstrated in policy towards Southeast Asia. As it will

be seen, MFA attempts to formulate policy on Indochina ran into opposition from military circles who were committed to the concept of forward defense of Thai security as well as active cooperation with the US in neighbouring territories. Moreover, even in regards to relations with ASEAN countries, it has been shown that the ambassadorships until the early 1970s were dominated by military officers, while close relationships were entertained by certain military officers with their counterparts in ASEAN countries.⁵⁶ Rather, if there was any division of responsibility, it was the military which preferred bilateralism whereas the MFA held out greater hope for multilateral institutions. An ASEAN approach to Indochina could therefore be interpreted to a certain extent as an attempt to multilateralize certain exchanges with Indochina and thereby gain some leverage for the MFA. A scholar of Thai foreign policy has thus observed that: “The history of modern Thailand shows that foreign policy has always been employed by various ruling elite groups not only to defend the nation’s sovereignty but also to ensure their own political survival.”⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the MFA has been described as: “an institutionalized safeguard against penetration,” and that it was the agency that kept up a front for Thai independence, making the degree of cooperation between Thailand and the US seem far less than it was.⁵⁸ As the guardian of the national image, the MFA therefore had a strong interest in disseminating a positive view of Thai foreign policy. Care thus has to be taken in interpreting MFA statements as enshrining the entire substance of Thai policy, much of which was conducted by the military behind the scenes and in relative secrecy. Indeed, there was some convergence of interest between the MFA and the

military. This was fostered through contacts and networks formed through common membership of the National Defence College which sought to forge consensus among high-level cadres on the security perspective. Most importantly, it is pointed out that the military shared with senior MFA officials a belief that foreign policy should be managed by an elite and not placed in the public arena.⁵⁹

It is often alleged that there has been a relative lack of interest by legislative organs in foreign affairs. However, it may be seen that this was due less to a real lack of interest than to restrictions in parliamentary mandate and opaque decisional structures. For much of the period the National Assembly was unable to launch debates on security issues. Though on occasion foreign affairs were formally included in parliamentary discussions, as seen in the 1947 debates against the Government of Luang Thamrong Nawasawat or the 1957 no-confidence debates against that of Pibulsonggram, such debates proved to be rare, particularly during the period concerned. The holding of elections in 1969 brought out the first discussions on foreign policy since 1958, with the demand by certain opposition politicians for a more flexible policy vis-à-vis the US.⁶⁰ However, the growing accommodationist reputation of Foreign Minister Thanat also led to attacks against him in Parliament, including in a celebrated incident in September 1971 when he was accused of “carrying out policies favourable to communism.”⁶¹ At the same time, within Parliament the political balance was also often tilted by the predominance of military officers and bureaucrats appointed to the Senate over the elected members of the House of Representatives, such that Parliament as a whole failed to

emerge as a major political force. By the end of the period, however, business personalities were becoming more and more active in political activities, such that by the early 1980s, it was striking that leadership of the three main parties, Chart Thai, Social Action and Democrat, were increasingly dominated by representatives of big business.⁶² With the onset of the Kampuchean issue, policy towards Indochina became a source for much internal discussion, including within Parliament. Nevertheless, suspicions regarding the usefulness of parliamentary debates on foreign affairs remained within the bureaucracy and government, such that in the late 1980s, Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila spoke out that: “care should be given to debates on foreign policy issues to prevent them from being exploited for partisan politics or personal glory. Every member of Parliament should also cooperate to deny foreign foes any opportunity to take advantage of our honest political differences.”⁶³

With respect to ASEAN affairs there were few binding instruments constituting items of vital national interest and falling under the scrutiny of Parliament. In fact, none of the ASEAN instruments prior to the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 1976 were actually treaties, and thus did not need to be ratified by the appropriate national organs. The Bangkok Declaration of August 1967 was a joint declaration of the five Foreign Ministers, and while sufficient was a founding Charter and as a declaration of intent, it was not regarded in national terms as a formal legal instrument.⁶⁴ Moreover, under most of the Constitutions in force during the period, only those treaties affecting Thai sovereignty or changing Thailand’s territorial boundaries needed to be

submitted to Parliament, and none of the ASEAN instruments did, which meant that parliamentary debate on ASEAN was extremely limited. The debate on the 1967 Bangkok Declaration and the 1976 TAC was probably limited to the Cabinet only.⁶⁵ Another means by which Parliament could have exerted its power was the provision under which domestic legislation had to be passed to bring certain multilateral instruments into force, although this only applied to those that affected the civil rights of Thai citizens or those that were against existing law, which again involved no ASEAN documents.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Thai parliamentarians were eventually given the opportunity to learn more about the ASEAN process through the Thai National Assembly's membership of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) which was set up by the five national parliaments on 2 September 1977. However, AIPO itself while complementary to the ASEAN process has had little contact with regular ASEAN structures and its policy impact has remained limited. ASEAN business during the period studied has been only indirectly affected by legislative scrutiny, highlighting the role of the Executive and the bureaucracy in determining the nature of Thailand's participation.

The contribution of extra-bureaucratic circles to Thailand's foreign policy decision-making remained limited throughout the period under study. Thailand's press for a long time has been regarded as one of the most free in Southeast Asia, although considerable self-censorship was exercised. The published media was largely Bangkok-based and catered to urban concerns and interests.⁶⁷ Prior to 1973 there was a generally passive press, and with the prevailing fear of communism there was little comment

on Thailand's policies in Indochina. Nevertheless, after certain incidents, various foreign correspondents were singled out for official criticism, as demonstrated in the celebrated 'Karnow Affair'.⁶⁸ However, with the overthrow of military rule the press became more vocal and diversified. This largely compensated for the lack of independent coverage from the state-controlled radio and television networks.⁶⁹ Thus, in the mid 1970s, large sections of the press became prominent advocates of an independent foreign policy, maintaining an appropriate distance from the US, and promoting closer ties with the countries of the region. In this perspective, however, it will be seen that ASEAN was often considered by such circles as a politically reactive instead of progressive organization, although its popular image improved after the Bali Summit with the intensification of intra-ASEAN economic cooperation and the official adoption of a policy of reconciliation towards the countries of Indochina by the Organization as a whole.

Academia was usually excluded from policy formulation throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. Individual academics who were recognized experts in certain fields were consulted on particular issues of foreign policy, such as on the important subject of relations with China, as shown by Dr. Khien Theeravit and Dr. Sarasin Viraphol of Chulalongkorn University. However, there generally remained some distrust of academic influence on most aspects of government policy during this time, for policy determination was regarded as a professional bureaucratic preserve. For example, few external studies were commissioned by the MFA, including on regional cooperation as a whole. Foreign policy thus remained out of the arena of academic

discussions until the 1980s, when it was felt that the quest for new directions required a wider range of inputs.

On external issues there may be said to have also been a lack of general interest within the public, except when questions of national sovereignty and independence were touched. For a long time, the student movement was closely controlled by the government leadership with Thanom Kittikachorn as Rector of Thammasat and Prapat Charusathiara as Rector of Chulalongkorn, the two most prominent universities based in Bangkok. Nevertheless, with the expansion of higher education there emerged an increasingly important student movement. The accession of Sarit had heralded the attempt to create an indigenous middle class which saw an expansion of university education from 95,000 students in 1960 to 186,000 in 1970 and then to 868,000 in 1980.⁷⁰ Student activism contributed to the founding of the National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT) in 1968, and culminated in the protests which led to the overthrow of the Thanom Government in October 1973. During the civilian governments which followed the overthrow of military rule, the students promoted a demand for policy independence and open diplomacy, and partly as a result subsequent governments were forced to take a greater account of public opinion. The general demand for greater accountability was eventually reflected in the Constitution of 1974, which specified that military agreements needed the approval of Parliament under Section 195. Student power was also shown in the vocal demonstrations in rejection of external influences in Thailand. Thus, demonstrations were organized against the Japanese economic presence in the country, with a boycott of Japanese goods in late 1972 and demonstrations

against visiting Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka in 1974, and against foreign military bases during the course of 1975-1976. It was only after the October 1976 incidents which led to the humbling of the student movement that the reestablishment of closer ties with the US was more easily permitted.

Nevertheless, popular mobilization was not limited to the proponents of a 'liberal' foreign policy, for the mid 1970s were marked by an extreme degree of political polarization. The mobilization of right-wing groups such as *Navaphol* and the Red Gaurs in defence of the central institutions of Nation, Religion and Monarchy led to the burning in effigy of Foreign Minister Pichai Rattakul and Permanent Secretary Anand Panyarachun in 1976 for their supposedly capitulative policies towards communism. Perhaps more significantly, a scholar of the role of the military in Thai politics has observed that voter turnout in the two elections following the overthrow of the military regime in 1973 did not in fact increase, and that the masses were generally unaffected by the politicized atmosphere of the moment. Instead, many of the new people brought into the political arena was mobilized by right and left-wing groups for specific purposes.⁷¹ Nevertheless, during this period ASEAN issues appeared to have activated little public interest which on matters of national security was often focused in a different direction, namely towards Indochina. Only when ASEAN and Thailand became inextricably involved in the Indochinese question after 1978, and hence in a question of national security, was public awareness of ASEAN, and more particularly its political role, enhanced at the national level.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FORMULATION OF POLICIES TOWARDS ASEAN

As the main organ of foreign policy, the MFA played a major role as coordinating agency for ASEAN affairs. This was further enshrined in a 1968 Cabinet decision to have the National Coordinating Committee on ASA also deal with ASEAN and ASPAC affairs.⁷² Accordingly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs acted as Chairman of the National Coordinating Committee on ASEAN and was the chief Thai delegate to the annual ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM). The different ministries and agencies thus formally came under one national umbrella to assign responsibilities and coordinate positions on ASEAN, although as it will be seen coordination worked better on paper than in reality.

Initially, the Heads of Government played a small role in the ASEAN. They were not present at the 1967 Bangkok Meeting, but became increasingly important within ASEAN as the result of bilateral discussions between each other, and especially after the 1976 Bali Summit. In contrast to other ASEAN countries, it could be asserted that the influence of the Thai Prime Minister on ASEAN policy in this period was generally passive and reactive, though not without significance. In the case of Thailand, Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn gave a lot of leeway to Thanat Khoman on issues of regional cooperation, even appointing him as Special Envoy to the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November 1971 and to the 6th AMM in 1972 although he was no longer Foreign Minister at that time. It may be seen that while potentially influential, the Prime Minister

was often uninterested in the minutiae of policy, and indeed, was frequently preoccupied with other pressing matters, and therefore for Thailand ASEAN affairs was usually delegated to the Foreign Minister and the MFA. Moreover, it may be said that personality contributed some way towards accounting for the leverage exercised by Thanat over his military colleagues. Despite the MFA's being overshadowed by the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces over crucial issues, on those issues relating to regional cooperation, Thanat using his personal relations with the Prime Minister was often able to obtain a sympathetic hearing such as in signing the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) Declaration in November 1971.⁷³ Indeed, it may be said that Thailand's participation during the first 4-5 years of ASEAN was driven by its Foreign Minister and his close aides, with little or only occasional participation by the Prime Minister.

It was of some significance that the 1967 Bangkok Declaration gave the primary role to the Foreign Ministers, who were its main architects. Pending the creation of a central secretariat, the Bangkok Declaration further provided for the creation of ASEAN National Secretariats as coordinating units within the Foreign Ministries of each of the member countries, which were later to become the respective Departments of ASEAN Affairs. In the case of Thailand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is organized into various functional departments, which are further sub-divided into divisions and sections. Central to the policy-making circle are the Directors-General who head the individual departments, and it is from the level of the department that positions are formulated and organized into statements of

policy. Within the departments are the various desk officers responsible for the general implementation of policy, including the maintenance of international contacts and the collation and analysis of information and intelligence. It was within this framework that the ASEAN National Secretariat of Thailand (ASEAN-Thailand) was set up within the Department of Economic Affairs, whose Director-General had already been given a leading role in fostering regional cooperation since the 1967 Bangkok Meeting in the person of Somchai Anuman Rajadhon. In fact, the Director-General of Economic Affairs had already acted as the head of the ASA National Secretariat, revealing another element of continuity from ASA to ASEAN at the national level. As we have seen, Thanat Khoman recognized the importance of foreign economic policy within the wider scope of external relations, and had himself been Director-General of Economic Affairs in the late 1940s. It was thus that ASEAN matters were initially considered as part of the purview of the Department of Economic Affairs, and Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul, who had played a role in drafting the Bangkok Declaration, became the first head of the ASEAN National Secretariat of Thailand soon after the Bangkok Meeting.⁷⁴

Accordingly, it was indeed possible for Thailand to outwardly stress the economic and institutional elements of ASEAN cooperation as were ostensibly the sole aims of the founding Bangkok Declaration, for the Department of Economic Affairs as its main subordinate agency dealing with ASEAN cooperation had no obvious political or security function.⁷⁵ It was probably of some significance that ASEAN matters were not placed within the Department of International Organizations which dealt with the UN and its agencies, as were SEATO Affairs

for some time.⁷⁶ This internal assignment of bureaucratic responsibility within the MFA further meant that formal regional cooperation was largely considered as an integral whole, at least for an initial period. This was because the respective National Secretariats for the various regional organizations of which Thailand was member were officially the same organ within the Department of Economic Affairs, being referred to as “the National Secretariat for ASA-ASEAN and ASPAC Affairs.” ASEAN-Thailand had internal and external functions: its internal functions laid with coordinating participation in ASEAN activities with the individual national agencies; and its external functions in representing Thailand at various meetings, including meetings of the ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC) and meetings of the Secretaries-General of the ASEAN National Secretariats. However, the lack of sufficient personnel and resources within ASEAN-Thailand also meant that initiative on technical issues, including on political questions, came from somewhere else, leaving it with general organizational responsibility within the scope of the meetings of the Secretaries-General of the ASEAN National Secretariats and those of the ASEAN Standing Committee which were directly under its purview. The situation may nevertheless be contrasted with Indonesia, whose ASEAN National Secretariat under Brigadier-General Soenarso, a military officer intimately acquainted with the regional reconciliation process and the negotiations for ASEAN, initially reported directly to President Suharto. As such, channels to the military, as first established during the 1966 Indonesian-Malaysian talks, remained strong and was a feature which enhanced its influence within the bureaucratic structure.⁷⁷

Within the MFA, the Southeast Asia Division of the Department of Political Affairs which handled Thailand's bilateral relations with other countries of the region dealt with political questions concerning ASEAN. The Southeast Asia Division through its country officers had already played an important part in the founding of ASEAN by helping to bring various parties together at the 1967 Bangsaen and Bangkok Meetings and in uncovering the specific concerns of the individual delegations so that a formula that was acceptable to all parties could emerge. After 1971, the Department of Political Affairs handled issues such as the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) proposal, which became an important preoccupation for the Organization.⁷⁸ This formal distinction between the political and the economic/organizational dimension of ASEAN cooperation has continued right up to the present, and is an arrangement common to most of the member countries. This was reflected in the composition of Thai delegations to the respective meetings. For the regular ASEAN Ministerial Meetings at which all subjects could be discussed, the work of coordination was carried out by ASEAN-Thailand and delegates could come from a wide range of agencies, typically including representatives from various branches of the MFA, the economic ministries, as well as from the Ministry of Defence and different economic and political agencies within the Prime Minister's Office. By contrast, delegates to the largely political Informal Meetings of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, and the respective Senior Officials' Meetings (SOM), were limited to the Political Department of the MFA and National Security officials, and it was rare for officials of ASEAN-Thailand even to attend.

Delegations to the SOMs were headed by the Director-General of the Political Department, or the Permanent Secretary himself or a deputy. While this distinction has ensured that national interests were firmly defended on vital political issues, it also meant an additional level of coordination had to be ensured within the MFA itself, and helped to confound attempts to give greater internal coherence to ASEAN in later periods.

Although economic and planning officials from technical agencies had been present at various ASA and ASEAN meetings from the very beginning, their representation was largely limited to the officials level. This had contributed to a situation whereby there was little high-level support within other agencies for ASEAN beyond short-term and technical issues. As economic issues became more important within the ASEAN process after 1975, however, other agencies outside the MFA began to play a greater and more active role, including at the Ministerial level. These included: the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB); the Ministry of Commerce; the Ministry of Finance; the Bank of Thailand; the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives; the Ministry of Communications; and the Ministry of Industry. In Thailand's case there was no Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) as in Japan or a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as in Australia. This meant that the Ministry of Commerce has taken usually the lead in international economic negotiations within the ASEAN framework, particularly after the institutionalization of the ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meetings (AEM) as from 1975, although it was initially hampered by a lack of qualified personnel. Given its formal responsibilities, the Ministry of

Commerce eventually built up its own expertise on ASEAN affairs through an ASEAN Division. The AEM process led to a rapid increase in the activities of other agencies, with a higher frequency of meetings than the annual AMMs coordinated by the Foreign Ministries.⁷⁹ In subsequent years, on the other hand, within Thailand there has been increasing resort to coordination of economic affairs at the national level by a Deputy Prime Minister, as seen in the person of Sunthorn Hongladarom in the Kriangsak Governments and Boonchu Rojanasathien by the time of the 1st Prem Government, which contributed towards greater coherence in national decision-making on economic issues. However, the generally dispersed decision-making structure has meant that initiatives to foster a wider ASEAN cooperation had to come from the highest echelons of power to be fully effective, and hence the demands for a Summit meeting.

With the expansion of economic cooperation activities, the MFA gradually assumed a subsidiary role in the work of the various ASEAN permanent committees, and was able to concentrate more on national coordinate and on the work of the ASC. Meanwhile, some 11 ASEAN Permanent Committees and 9 Ad Hoc and Special Committees had been created between 1968-1972, which had developed by 1976-1977 into the five economic committees and the four functional committees that have come to characterize the structure of ASEAN cooperation during the 1970s and 1980s.⁸⁰ Specific national agencies were appointed focal points for dealing with the technical subjects under the purview of these committees. However, the MFA's national coordinating functions and the important role of the ASC within the structure of the Organization meant that it

remained the primary national interlocutor for ASEAN affairs, although such functions have often been belittled as being like little more than those of a postman at times. It may also be seen that within this framework the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta played a distinctly peripheral role and that national priorities determined the pace of ASEAN cooperation. The separation of political, economic and structural issues has also perhaps prevented greater coordination and limited potential spillover effects. Nevertheless, as Antolik suggests, this had certain benefits:

The ASEAN process has utilized compartmentalization to control disputes... From its foundation, its members tried to effect an apolitical image, concentrating on economics and culture. Even when they are at odds bilaterally, members can rally to the ASEAN organization and the cooperative ideals it promotes; bilateral problems are kept out of the ASEAN context. Such problems do not appear on an ASEAN agenda, nor are they handled by the ASEAN divisions within the governments' foreign ministries.⁸¹

At the same time, very few personnel are seen to be involved with ASEAN business on a day-to-day basis, although there is a relatively large and dispersed network of respondents, constituting an embryo ASEAN community within Thailand.

By contrast, non-bureaucratic and private sector inputs were limited, especially in early years. However, with expansion of ASEAN's political and economic activities it became necessary to involve other organs in the cooperative process so as to provide

additional inputs. Such entities included academics in the Bangkok-based Institute of Security and International Studies (ISIS), which constituted part of an ASEAN network of Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) which formally emerged in the 1980s, though in Thailand ISIS was not headed by those with ready access to the political leadership.⁸² By contrast, the Jakarta-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) led by Ali Murtopo and then Jusuf Wanandi was one of the most ardent advocates of ASEAN cooperation in Indonesia, with strong links to the military and the government. Thailand's ISIS, which constituted part of the Faculty of Political Science of Chulalongkorn University, remained strictly academic in focus and lacked the clout of CSIS, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore or perhaps ISIS in Malaysia. Such a situation reflected the lack of input by academic circles within Thailand as regards policy issues, but also the relative independence of such organs. It may thus be said that Thai academic institutes played a smaller policy role to certain of their ASEAN counterparts. There has been a perceived lack within Thailand of idealogues in non-governmental or semi-governmental institutions, particularly in non-economic spheres, who could plead for the cause of regional cooperation, although many of those involved with ISIS, such as Vinita Sukrasep, Kusuma Snitwongse and MR Sukhumbhand Paribatra, have written regularly on ASEAN and Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, since the onset of the Kampuchean problem in 1979 ISIS-Thailand has played an active role in stimulating debate on policy towards Indochina, and in particular towards Vietnam, through writings such as that of MR Sukhumbhand Paribatra.⁸³

Since the time of ASA, initial consultations between each of the national chambers of commerce had been launched with a view to encouraging private sector cooperation in regional terms, although Thai business groups appeared relatively slow to organize themselves with respect to ASEAN. This may have been because concrete plans for long-term ASEAN economic cooperation did not crystallize until at least 1971-1973, so that business circles did not realize the opportunities offered by ASEAN until quite some time. Certain business personalities did nevertheless advise Thai policy-makers on aspects of economic cooperation. A prominent industrialist, Mr. Tavorn Phornprapa, was present at the 3rd AMM in 1969 as an advisor to the Thai delegation. Such consultations with the private sector, however, did not occur on a regular basis in the first years, with the result that business participation in the ASEAN process was occasional and arbitrarily guided. Nevertheless, following the institutionalization of the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASEAN-CCI), formed out of the national chambers of commerce and industry of the five ASEAN countries in 1972, the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking (JSCCIB) participated in the ASEAN process as the representative of the Thai private sector. Composed of 3 private sector organizations: the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Thai Industries and the Thai Bankers' Association, the JSCCIB represented the major business groups within Thailand. As will be seen, the private sector's role was to have an important bearing on the path of ASEAN economic cooperation.

The MFA has thus led Thailand's participation in ASEAN cooperation, and *a priori* appeared to be the agency with the most positive attitude towards the cooperative process. However, even within the MFA the emergence of regional or supranational sympathies may be seen as having been more problematic, for frequent professional reassignments meant that a national perspective was largely maintained by the officials involved. Indeed, in the more recent period academics and in particular economists, as well as certain business circles, have emerged as ardent advocates of ASEAN cooperation. For much of the period concerned, however, it was to be bureaucratic impulses and attitudes which dominated.

CONCLUSION

The study of Thailand's policy-making process reveals the perpetuation of a hierarchic policy structure through the policy transformation since the 1930s. This structure was dominated by the bureaucracy, and characterized for much of the period studied by the influence of the military. Prior to 1973 decision-making remained largely restricted within the elite, with few public discussions. If discussions did take place, they could largely be ignored by the government and bureaucracy and thus there were few domestic constraints on policy. The seemingly authoritarian structure, nevertheless, was not monolithic although the forms rather than the practices of democracy appear to have been observed. Subsequently to 1973, and particularly after 1975, extra-bureaucratic inputs became more influential, although the transformation towards democracy and greater transparency was tentative and gradual.

It may be concluded that foreign policy did indeed reflect the overall development of the Thai political system. In terms of policy-making, the period under study was marked by a certain degree of dominance by one group over policy, the military. Given the relative ideological consensus at the top, differences thus frequently arose from institutional and personal rivalry, rather than actual political differences. While the MFA remained the traditional organ of foreign policy, its role was rather limited in the period up to 1973. The primary importance of national security over other concerns meant that policy formulation on a large number of security-related issues was dominated by the Prime Minister and those connected with the military. Yet it may also be concluded that despite the fact that the MFA was not completely autonomous and had to compete with other agencies regarding the formulation of foreign policy, it possessed substantial flexibility on certain issue areas. This was particularly marked in the field of regional cooperation, as long as it was deemed not to encroach on the security preserve of the military. ASEAN in this period remained largely the preserve of the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the member states as provided by the 1967 Bangkok Declaration, and this framework was reflected to a great extent in Thailand. Particularly under the direction of the influential Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, the MFA played a key role in formulating Thai positions on a broad range of ASEAN issues, and thus Thai policies within ASEAN during this period tended to reflect the MFA line. However, the subordinate role of the MFA within the national power structure tends to support the view that ASEAN as a possible policy option was also subsidiary at the beginning,

although the MFA may be seen to have tried to create a positive role for itself in the promotion of regional cooperation. At the same time, poor coordination and the existence of multiple centres of power within the military-dominated framework meant that there was the possibility of multiple tracks in foreign policy. With the reassertion of MFA influence in the 1970s, greater importance could be placed on policies promoted by *Saranrom*, including cooperation within ASEAN, although the policy options available to Thailand did on the whole remain limited relative to its partners in ASEAN. As will later be seen, MFA dominance over decision-making on ASEAN perhaps promoted a cautious and incremental attitude by Thailand to cooperation, as well as a tendency to regard issues in largely political terms. Participation in decision-making widened beyond the MFA to include other agencies in the late 1970s as ASEAN economic cooperation intensified, but even in 1979-1980, it was still limited to bureaucratic and certain business sectors. Moreover, some inherent contradictions in Thai policy were to be found in policy determination and implementation. Meanwhile, broader public awareness of ASEAN or Thailand's role within it remained sketchy. Within the wider community, however, the resurgence of the Indochina question in the late 1970s served to highlight the role of ASEAN to the Thai public as well as to the world, such that it became much more of a household word than ever before.

The formal internal organization of the Thai bureaucracy on ASEAN also reflected the official image initially sanctioned by all the member countries of the Organization as being primarily a non-political enterprise. At the same time, it revealed

the complexity of the wider ASEAN structure, incorporating formal and informal aspects of cooperation between the member countries, frequently in an ambiguous juxtaposition. In a reflection of official concerns about outside perception of the role of the Organization, as well as the national priorities of Thailand, there was a clear separation of political and economic or organizational functions within the MFA between the Political Department and the ASEAN National Secretariat. Thus, compartmentalization of ASEAN may be seen not only at the level of the Organization itself, but also at the national level, with the latter probably helping to reinforce the tendencies of the former. It is challenging to speculate whether had the respective ASEAN National Secretariats, namely in Thailand, been delegated the authority to formulate political initiatives instead of being restricted mainly to the formal fields of ASEAN endeavour, cooperation in this field and national confidence in such initiatives would have been further stimulated. As it was, political cooperation was hived off to agencies which had as their main focus bilateral aims, and particularistic emphases. The same considerations may also be said to have applied to cooperation in the economic field, albeit to a much lesser extent, and remained more problematic with regards to implementation.

The foregoing discussion supports the conclusion that in operational terms, Thai positions on issues of ASEAN cooperation represented Thailand's wider political and economic concerns, and did not merely involve specific responses to the Organization's regular activities. Moreover, the ASEAN National Secretariat of Thailand did not become an entirely autonomous unit within the MFA until 1982, and for a long time was

dependent on the Department of Economic Affairs. This meant that its members, consciously or unconsciously, had wider concerns to pursue. By consequence, the structure was unwieldy and led to difficulty in the formulation of long-term projects for ASEAN cooperation. This dispersed structure of decision-making was compounded by meagre resources on the part of the Thai bureaucracy, which nevertheless failed to prevent it from exerting a long-term influence on ASEAN practices. On the other hand, the Thai example was not unique and a similar situation was also reflected in many of the other ASEAN National Secretariats, which helps to explain the extent of national bureaucratic resistance to the expansion of the functions of the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta following its establishment in 1976.

CHAPTER

5

THAILAND'S ROLE
IN ASEAN
POLITICAL COOPERATION

In this Chapter, Thailand's role in ASEAN political cooperation is investigated. It is shown how ASEAN political cooperation helped to fulfill Thailand's security goals and thus elevated Thai interest in regional cooperation beyond the mere desire for greater linkages and regional solidarity within Southeast Asia that was often outwardly expressed. From the beginning, Thailand appeared to give more weight to ASEAN political cooperation, although it was keen to separate such activities from ASEAN's regular functions. Political cooperation also reflected the key role of the MFA in formulating Thailand's ASEAN policy, and was a major factor in sustaining Bangkok's commitment to the Organization throughout the period concerned.

GENERAL UNDERPINNINGS

Central to the Thai role in ASEAN political cooperation in the period under study was Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman's concept of Collective Political Defence. The Thai position which arose from this concept of comprehensive cooperation was that all items of 'mutual benefit' to members should be discussed within the ASEAN framework. This position was constantly maintained even though the 1967 Bangkok Declaration specifically failed to mention political cooperation. Much has been written about the political role of the organization despite the fact that the formal structures were designed for economic, social and cultural cooperation. It may be seen, nevertheless, that an overriding aim in the creation of the Organization was to produce a political entente among the countries of Southeast

Asia. For this purpose, sufficient room was provided by the prescriptions for regional order and by Operative Para. 2 (7) of the Bangkok Declaration under the aims and purposes of the Organization for political activities and that the members would explore “all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.” In this regard, there was recognition of the linkage between political cooperation and the overriding aim of security. At the same time, although policy-makers realized the importance of mutual consultations and cooperation, they were careful not to project ASEAN as a political bloc for fear of arousing opposition from other regional powers. This reflected the primary importance of China and Indochina as an external factor in determining the direction of ASEAN’s development. As such, Thailand believed that the ASEAN member countries should collaborate on political affairs within the ASEAN group, though not necessarily within the 1967 organizational framework. Such activities were regarded as ‘extra-curricular’ and set apart from the regular activities of the Organization. Moreover, it was political issues which had impeded cooperation within ASA and MAPHILINDO, and SO understandably, some of Thailand’s ASEAN partners were reluctant to emphasize political cooperation. Malaysia, in particular, appeared insistent on a ‘functional’ route.

Despite the initial reservations, Thailand was one of the first ASEAN countries to break the reticence on political cooperation, convinced that it was that the Organization should serve the practical aims of member states above all other considerations. In this regard, an important precedent had already been set by the call for an Asian settlement of the

Indochina issue launched by Thanat Khoman in his Opening Statement at the 3rd ASA Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok August 1966. On that occasion, Thanat justified himself by stating that economic and social achievements would have little meaning if they were to be swept away by the destruction of war, and hence the countries of the region should not “abdicate responsibility” for safeguarding peace and leave it to distant nations.² However, the then Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tun Razak quickly responded that as such statements were political in nature, they were ‘outside’ the framework of ASA.³ Indeed, a reluctance to admit that political cooperation was an integral part of the ASEAN programme characterized the general ASEAN approach during the first tentative years. Notwithstanding this reticence, certain Thai leaders wanted to enhance this aspect of cooperation rapidly, including Deputy Prime Minister and former Foreign Minister Prince Wan, who looked forward towards the emergence of ASEAN and ASPAC as a “Collective Political Defence Organization.”⁴

An element of continuity throughout the period under study was the strong belief of Thai policy-makers in the maintenance of the Association itself as a primary goal of cooperation. This was a reflection of Thailand’s recognition of ASEAN’s value in sending a political message of the members’ independent policy. It further served as an extension of Thailand’s efforts to maintain political stability to its South to prevent any cause for interference by external powers in the region, as previously seen during 1964-1966. To this purpose, Thailand exerted firm efforts at trying to preserve the unity of the Organization during 1968-1969, at a time when Thai leaders

continued to sustain fully US operations in Southeast Asia. Barely one year after the founding of the Organization, ASEAN activities had been disrupted by the resurgence of the Sabah dispute between Malaysia and the Philippines, as well as tensions between Singapore and Indonesia arising from the former's execution of two Indonesian marines in October 1968 for acts of sabotage committed in 1965 during the period of *Konfrontasi*.⁵ For a period of well over half a year between October 1968 and May 1969, there were no ASEAN meetings at all following the rupture in relations between Malaysia and the Philippines, leading to premature predictions of ASEAN's imminent collapse.

Thai shuttle diplomacy and offer of 'good offices' was a contributory factor in calming tensions between the disputing parties, although it was substantially Thanat's own personal achievement through his good contacts with individual ASEAN leaders. This may be regarded as a thread of continuity throughout the period 1967-1979 and is not a redundant observation for although the other ASEAN members did not have any intention of pulling out from the Organization, none seemed to have exerted as much effort as Thailand in this period in keeping the idea of cooperation alive.⁶ Probably being host to 1967 Bangkok Meeting was influential in this regard: Thailand did not want an organization which it had devoted significant energy to establishing and which was inaugurated in Thailand to fail. Thailand's task was moreover facilitated by the fact that it had no major disputes with other ASEAN members, or border conflicts, save perhaps certain minor differences with Malaysia. Thus, from the beginning the Kingdom saw its role within ASEAN as a bridge between members who had problems with

each other, which may have further induced it not to be involved in controversy itself.⁷ In addition, an interdependence was recognized that bilateral problems between countries in the region could be exploited by external powers such that regional instability results. Efforts should therefore be made to control disputes between countries of the region to prevent them from getting out of hand. That this self-image was of some importance comes out through interviews with various Thai personalities, and particularly Thanat who likened the Thai role to that of a 'gentleman' within ASEAN, being a friend to all and ready to help solving problems.⁸ As Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn proudly announced in May 1968:

Bangkok has become the center for harmonizing actions and resolving intraregional differences. The concept that Asian problems should be solved by the Asians themselves has indeed been implemented.⁹

Subsequently, this image of Thailand standing above bilateral disputes may be seen to have filtered through to Thai positions on specific ASEAN issues. This was the line emphasized at subsequent meetings, such as at the 1976 Bali Summit even if a contributory factor became the lack of a clear-cut policy. The non-controversial nature of Thailand's bilateral relations with ASEAN partners, particularly regarding territorial issues, was maintained throughout the period studied, such as in the successful delimitation of the continental shelf with Indonesia in 1971 and amicable treatment of border issues with Malaysia, even if certain misunderstandings did arise from time to time with the latter.¹⁰

POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS AND COOPERATION

Thailand placed great importance on political discussions within ASEAN as an element of Collective Political Defence. As from the first ASEAN Meetings, it had always held that the coordination of positions on international issues would lend Southeast Asian countries a greater voice in the international arena, even if there was some hesitation in describing such activities as a regular ASEAN function. A short time after the 1967 Bangkok Meeting, Thanat claimed in an interview that:

To use a colloquial expression, we can yell louder, we can shout from the rooftops, and at least try to scare away the potential aggressors. Of course, also we can back on the world public opinion than if we were alone, this is the present meaning of reaching cooperation-in addition to the present aims of economic, social, and cultural development.¹¹

As noted, this was a general position that Thailand took in the regional organizations of which it was member so as to maximize its voice. It is instructive to examine its stance within ASPAC, which may be regarded as parallel organization to ASEAN in the Thai perspective, but with which Thailand could afford to be bolder considering the greater sensitivity among members of the latter.¹² Such a position also reflected the overall aims initially set by the MFA for ASEAN cooperation, that the Organization was an important tool of foreign policy, and accordingly had to serve Thailand's wider foreign policy objectives. As it happened, the pace of regional developments

accelerated soon after the founding of ASEAN, as exemplified in President Johnson's sudden announcement of a partial ceasefire in Vietnam in March 1968, and that he would not stand for re-election. Such drastic developments necessitated a higher pace of diplomatic activity by Thailand than originally envisaged. Thus, while it may be seen that Thailand had foreseen ASEAN's potential in political areas, and that ASEAN was planned partly to meet such contingencies, it is the contention of this study that it was forced to become more active in this area to a greater extent and perhaps earlier than expected, thereby highlighting this aspect of its participation above other concerns. Accordingly, as it became increasingly clear that political consultations and cooperation among the ASEAN countries could prove of value to Thai foreign policy, Thailand as part of a deliberate policy attempted to inject political elements into ASEAN. Initially, this had to be done in a quiet and diplomatic manner for fear of arousing suspicions among certain of its ASEAN partners, as well as third countries.

Political consultations were launched within a year of the founding of ASEAN when the 2nd AMM in August 1968 proposed the holding of informal meetings to discuss political questions of common concern. Within Thailand, an interagency debriefing session later that month chaired by the MFA disclosed that at the AMM, political matters were discussed, namely the attitude of the individual member countries towards the situation in Vietnam. Moreover, it was reported that the Thai delegation had proposed discussions on political issues to be held as necessary, including at the UNGA on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which had been signed by Britain, the US and the Soviet

Union in July 1968, and that such proposals were agreed upon by those present.¹³ One of the first such informal consultations was held on 13 December 1968 in the Thai resort of Bangsaen, which had been the cradle of ASEAN just over a year earlier, to help resolve the Sabah question, and for this purpose was also attended by Paul Hasluck, the Australian Foreign Minister.¹⁴ As such, it was held that the Meeting was outside the scope of ASEAN, and although the same informality was sustained in later meetings, there was increasing confidence in admitting the fact that the ASEAN Ministers did indeed meet to discuss political affairs. Subsequently, such informal meetings were regularized as from the Singapore Meeting following the 5th AMM in April 1972 and joint statements issued. As Thanat reported to Prime Minister Thanom following the Singapore Meeting, he gave his support to such moves as they gave importance to the Thai position which was for greater political cooperation among the member countries from the very beginning.¹⁵ The MFA's radio station, the Voice of Free Asia, described the Singapore decision and the subsequent deliberations at the Manila Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July 1972 as:

An implementation of the concept of collective political defence...This has always been an implicit ingredient in the comprehensive policy of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. This concept calls for a broader range of cooperation than that envisaged in the various joint undertakings in the economic, social, cultural, scientific and technical fields.¹⁶

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers also met in New York during the annual Autumn sessions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to assess international events and coordinate positions at the UN, and in due course such meetings of Foreign Ministers during the UNGA became a regular fixture. Indeed, they became a major contribution to maintaining intimacy between ASEAN ministers due to their informality of format. Other meetings were held at various ASEAN locations as deemed necessary, and allowed the appearance of confidence during the policy adjustment to the July 1969 Nixon Doctrine, which anticipated a reduction of direct US involvement in Southeast Asia while signaling a commitment to provide ongoing military support, to be turned into reality. Self-reliance, instead of being a mere motto, could be at least partially realized through greater cooperation with like-minded nations. Thailand played an active part in promoting such political discussions, especially after 1971, primarily focusing on the normalization process with China, which led to the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November 1971 and launched the idea of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). During discussions in Singapore in April 1972, Thailand even proposed that a fresh Southeast Asian attempt be made to find a solution to the conflict in Vietnam. This initiative was followed up in July in Manila, leading to an ASEAN decision which was reflected in the Joint Communique: "The Meeting is of the view that ASEAN countries should explore the possibility of making concrete contribution towards the final settlement the Indochina question."⁷ However, in the Paris peace negotiations of 1972 the ASEAN countries were excluded from playing an active role,

which meant that the joint approaches had proved ineffective. Nevertheless, consultations became particularly valuable in discussing ASEAN's own response to the peace negotiations on Vietnam, and following the conclusion of the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973, an ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting to Assess the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam and to Consider its Implications for Southeast Asia was held in Kuala Lumpur on 15 February 1973. It was from this Meeting that several proposals to promote reconciliation with, and stability in, the countries of Indochina were announced by ASEAN, including: a meeting of all Southeast Asian leaders; expansion of ASEAN membership; and ASEAN aid in the rehabilitation of Indochinese countries.¹⁸ It will be seen that Thailand was to play an active part in promoting certain of these proposals. political activities were further institutionalized after 1976 by the provisions in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord and in a wider framework in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, documents which arose out of the Bali Summit. Nevertheless, despite the already significant Thai interest in political cooperation from the beginning as discussed above, it will be shown that after the events of December 1978 which led to fresh instability in Indochina, political cooperation would prove to be of even greater importance to Thailand.

Coordination was shown in the ASEAN policies regarding diplomatic recognition extended to third countries. As has been seen, Thailand has been seen, Thailand had always attached great importance to the primal issue of relations with China. Although Thanat Khoman had brought about a certain transformation in

Thai foreign policy by advocating discussions with Beijing from around 1969, a subject which had formerly been taboo, within the Thai military leadership there were great misgivings about engaging in such a policy, and progress was tentative and slow.¹⁹ However, after the People's Republic of China obtained membership of the UN in late 1971, Thailand earnestly sought to open fresh channels for dialogue with Beijing, although it remained suspicious of ultimate Chinese intentions in the region, and particularly its support for communist insurgency. Nevertheless, despite the attempts at general ASEAN coordination on this matter such as at the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November 1971 and although fellow ASEAN members were kept informed of the process of discussions, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers eventually decided that the normalization process with China should take place at each country's pace due to differences in domestic circumstances. Malaysia and the Philippines, and to a lesser extent, Thailand, were keen to establish relations with Beijing at an early stage in an attempt to reduce Beijing's support for insurgency. However, Indonesia had entertained deep suspicions of Beijing's intentions since the 1966 Gestapu Plot. Given the agreement to proceed on negotiations with the PRC on an individual basis, in July 1975 Thailand for its part became the third ASEAN country after Malaysia and the Philippines to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, although Indonesia and Singapore refrained from establishing formal relations with Beijing from the time being.

A policy of joint recognition, however, was adopted towards the Indochinese states after the events of Spring 1975.²⁰ Previously, the five ASEAN nations had taken a joint stand on

the issue of Cambodian representation at the UN during 1973-1974. Although officially neutral with regards to events in Cambodia after the coup d'état of 1970 overthrowing Prince Sihanouk, the ASEAN nations privately welcomed the prospect of greater predictability in Cambodian politics and the shift in Cambodian policy away from the left. Together with Japan and New Zealand, the ASEAN states proposed that 'no action' be taken on the issue of Cambodian representation in New York. Such attitude which meant in effect supporting the representation of the Lon Nol Government and opposing the recognition of Prince Sihanouk's Government-in-exile, a position that was strongly advocated by Thailand.²¹ Following the Indo-Pakistani conflict in late 1971, joint recognition was attempted over Bangladesh, although Thai actions to encourage this move faced reservations. However, all ASEAN countries had recognized Bangladesh by February 1972, a move hailed as being of some importance in Thailand in indicating a degree of policy flexibility vis-à-vis the US for Pakistan had been one of the Asian partners in SEATO.²² Moreover, as a result of such consultations, prior agreement in principle between ASEAN countries became a basic mode of action in respect of political activities, after which individual or joint actions to implement such understanding could take place as and when deemed necessary.²³

Nevertheless, it may be seen that the ASEAN countries neither attempted to coordinate all their political interactions with third parties, nor was this an objective of Thailand. Controversial issues were also avoided as much as possible to portray the maximum of ASEAN unity.²⁴ One Thai diplomat familiar with ASEAN workings explains that joint positions

were not adopted on all issues of concern in international relations as the member countries wanted to avoid causing difficulties among themselves unnecessarily. A notable case of this was the fact that ASEAN countries did not vote together in the UNGA debate on the admission of the PRC to the UN in 1971, despite an agreement to coordinate on the issue of the diplomatic recognition of Beijing. It may therefore be seen that ASEAN has attempted to avoid contention when possible. Only where there were common interests *and* the possibility of a common viewpoint were joint positions adopted.²⁵

As an illustration of the problems involved in producing a joint ASEAN position on international issues, the issue of maritime jurisdiction may be highlighted. On the archipelago concept advocated by Indonesia and the Philippines, Thailand initially occupied a middle position. Being a continental power, its interests were not as affected as Singapore or Malaysia, and there were no immediate recognizable gains that could be obtained. Meanwhile, Indonesia's stance was strongly linked to its concern for territorial integrity in strategic and economic terms, as well as its vision of a regional order, and hence it insisted on the concept of the archipelago or *Wawasan Nusantara*.²⁶ As will be seen, this was premised on excluding the great powers from the region. In recognition of this view, Thailand was prepared to support the general principle of an archipelagic state, but it also took the position that the interests of other countries affected by such a concept had also to be considered. Indeed, when the issue of the international status of the Straits of Malacca arose, with Malaysia and Indonesia issuing a joint declaration on 16 November 1971 that the Straits of Malacca and

Singapore were not international waters, Thailand was relatively silent, although it was concerned with the potential effects on shipping on its western coast, including its port of Phuket.²⁷ Nevertheless, Singapore and Thailand saw the need for caution on the Malaysian/Indonesian Declaration, fearing involvement in a fresh Sino-Soviet dispute. China had supported the moves towards declaring the Straits territorial waters in reaction to Soviet calls for internationalization, which it saw as part of the latter's design to establish hegemony in the Indian Ocean.²⁸ At the Singapore Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 1972, Thailand thus requested an update on the Malacca Straits issue, and gave some clarification on its plans for the Kra Isthmus, a canal through which would have the effect of providing a sea route bypassing the Malacca and Singapore Straits. However, subsequent developments have more clearly disadvantaged Thailand among its ASEAN neighbours. The extension of territorial waters with the declaration of 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) within the auspices of the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has restricted the scope of Thailand as a fishing nation, for it had maintained a preference for a more restricted 12-mile territorial limit in the South China Sea and the Andaman Sea.²⁹ The differences in the interests of the ASEAN countries placing Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines on the one side, and Thailand and Singapore on the other, have thus meant that there was no joint ASEAN position.³⁰

On other political issues not of vital interest to Thailand, such as over the conflict in the Middle East in 1973, it appeared that Thailand did not take a strong line and was generally satisfied to follow the ASEAN consensus. In formulating its

position on the Middle East, Bangkok took regard of the strong stance taken by ASEAN's Islamic members, over the Arab-Israeli disputes in its concern to maintain friendly relationships with all its ASEAN partners. It may also have borne in mind the clear sympathies of Thailand's substantial muslim minority in the South towards the cause of the Arabs, as well as the need to maintain friendly channels to the Arab states to obtain petroleum supplies. ASEAN was thus allowed to proceed with issuing declarations of position on the Middle Eastern question such as in 1973 and 1977. The example of ASEAN political consultations and cooperation therefore shows that there were substantial trade-offs between the parties involved, and concessions in one area were often exchanged for political support in another area.

THE QUESTIONS OF NEUTRALITY AND REGIONAL ORDER

Thailand's perception of neutrality draws its roots from various factors, such as: its geopolitical position within Southeast Asia; its long diplomatic tradition; the example of the colonial period; and the more recent interwar experience. In the face of these substantial challenges, Thailand had managed to remain independent, and this left a strong legacy such that the preservation of national sovereignty vis- à-vis external powers became an overriding objective. There was an eternal assertion of policy independence even while Thailand was receiving substantial US aid during the period under study. This has become the subject of somewhat of a domestic political debate

since the abandonment of a tight alignment in the late 1970s/1980s and thus far has never been fully resolved.

Firstly, from its geopolitical position, Thailand has developed a sense of vulnerability, especially with its long-exposed borders with its troubled continental neighbours. Secondly, from its long diplomatic tradition, we have seen that Thailand since the 19th Century had also developed a tradition of careful, pragmatic diplomacy, of maintaining friendly relations on an equal basis with all such that a policy of formal neutrality may be said to have been traditionally exercised.³¹ In practice this has meant a balancing of options, and Thai history has revealed constant tension between pressures for alignment or neutrality. Especially during colonial times, when faced with the presence of France and Britain on its borders, it had to balance one country against another to prevent colonial domination.³² Finally, for Thai policy-makers the Second World War served as an important example that neutrality and non-aggression treaties had limited value in the face of overwhelming force exhibited by aggressive powers, this case Japan. In this regard, it is suggested that the feeling of defencelessness in the face of pressure from a major power led Thailand to adopt policies which “parallel closely the policy of the traditionally neutral small European powers-Holland, Belgium and Norway-which, wiser for their proven inability to keep out of great wars, have decided to seek security in NATO.”³³ Therefore, while a form of neutrality was observed by the first postwar governments, the policy was soon rejected in favour of alignment with the most powerful state in the region, namely, the United States. Prince Wan, Foreign Minister at the time of the Manila Conference in 1954,

declared at that Meeting that Thailand could not rely on policies of neutrality.³⁴ Accordingly, Thailand did not become a member of the Non-Aligned Movement despite its participation at the 1955 Bandung Afro-Asian Conference. Prince Wan's successor, Thanat Khoman, also shared that same mistrust of neutrality. Thai diplomats in the postwar period thus refused to concede that the rejection of a policy of neutrality was short-sighted:

Thailand followed a policy of non-alignment in international politics long before neutralism was used by the newly independent nations in Asia and Africa. History and our own experiences, however, teach us not to believe that under the present conditions of today's world, neutralism can protect, less guarantee, our security and independence.³⁵

At the same time, a minority within the elite continued to look nostalgically on the self-styled neutrality exercised between 1945-1947, though this group remained in essential terms politically insignificant.³⁶

Within the context of the Cold War in Southeast Asia, Thailand's reaction to events in Laos and Cambodia in early 1950s was crucial to its subsequent stance. Official anti-communism was combined with a traditional focus on the security of borders. Thailand did not favour the neutralization of neighbouring countries as it saw that such restrictions that would result would prevent their effective defence against communism, and thereby remove the buffers on which Thailand had traditionally relied. With this in mind, Prince Sihanouk's schemes for the neutralization of Cambodia such as in 1964, taken in combination

with the neutralization of Laos as from 1962, were seen in a particularly bad light.³⁷ During the height of the Vietnam conflict, weapons for the *Viet Minh* were permitted by Prince Sihanouk to enter through the Cambodian port of Kampong Som, helping to undermine US efforts at pacification in South Vietnam. Moreover, it was seen that Cambodian neutrality would in turn encourage attempts to neutralize South Vietnam and thereby facilitate a communist takeover in that country.³⁸ In this regard, Thanat Khoman's attitude may be seen in his numerous polemics not only against a policy of neutrality, but also the viability of great power guarantees for such a position. Interestingly, some drew example from Thanat's educational background in Europe in the late 1930s during which he saw neutral Belgium being overrun, and great power guarantees for the sovereignty of Poland and Czechoslovakia turning out to be ineffective. As Thanat later wrote: "events preceding World War Two have shown beyond any doubt that small nations cannot rely on promises and treaty obligations contracted by larger powers."³⁹ Other references drew on Thailand's own unhappy prewar experience with neutrality which had failed to prevent demands being made by Japan that drew a neutral Thailand into the Second World War. Accordingly, he saw a policy of neutralism and non-alignment as having some inherent merits but was not suited to Thailand as it was not a positive one in the circumstances, referring back to the so-called neutrality observed during the colonial period:

The truth...remains that rather than forging ahead
with positive measures and actions, nations in Southeast

Asia in those days were obliged to consider principally negative steps to avoid the dangers and pitfalls of international competition and rivalry...Although Thailand was among the first to practise the concept of neutralism, well before many nations, I do not believe that we would claim that neutralism should be regarded as a positive policy.⁴⁰

At the same time, throughout the 1960s regional cooperation was held up by Thai diplomats as a viable alternative to non-alignment, especially in being proactive and positive, and thus neutralism was referred to as one of the rejected policy options mentioned as open to Thailand. With this in mind, Thanat's vision was that any neutralization, if at all feasible, would have to involve the neutralization of external interference, as well as strengthening of regional solidarity. In this perspective, regional cooperation was seen as an alternative to 'traditional' neutralization such as that proposed by de Gaulle: "On our part we also have a concept of neutralization in the sense of neutralizing external interference either from Communist China, Moscow or Washington...And such a project of neutralization can be successful if the various nations of Southeast Asia can become more independent and united."⁴¹ In practice, however, this has also served to disguise Thailand's actual close alignment with the US behind conscientious attempts to forge regional solidarity.

Nevertheless, despite the official rejection of a policy of neutralism by 1950, there was for some considerable time hesitancy by policy-makers in adhering to binding agreements

with external powers. This was due to a cautious appraisal of the changing international situation, given Thailand's harsh experience during the Second World War, as well as a reluctance to abandon what was regarded as traditional policy flexibility. The regional role of China in fostering revolutionary movements abroad was to prove to be important in determining options for Thai policy-makers, who pointed to the experience of non-aligned countries in 1961-1962 and later during the Cultural Revolution when local communist groups caused extensive disturbances throughout Southeast Asia. Subsequent to these years Thai leaders would constantly refer to the setbacks suffered by India, Indonesia as well as Burma and Cambodia in trying to appease China and yet at the same time being undermined from within by communist agitation instigated by Beijing. Hence Thailand saw that for non-alignment to succeed, it had to be recognized by all parties, including by the great powers:

To play the non-alignment game, one has to have either the explicit or tacit agreement of both sides, that they will not trample upon one. If both or one of the sides are not willing to recognize those who want to stay in the middle, then one is in the line of fire and non-alignment is impossible under such conditions.⁴²

With such considerations in mind, the example of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact countries in 1968 supplied Thai policy-makers with further evidence to justify the rejection of a conciliatory policy towards communist countries.⁴³ At the same time, the attitude of the US as Thailand's major partner was influential in determining the Thai position.

Although the Kennedy Administration had accepted the neutrality of Laos in 1962, Washington remained generally unfavorable to the idea of neutralizing parts of Southeast Asia. A study of the merits of neutralization by a group of American academics in the 1960s did become influential in focusing subsequent discussions on the subject, but the generally negative official attitude by the US to such trends helped to convince their Thai counterparts of the US resolve to remain engaged in the region.⁴⁴

For much of the period, Thailand saw the role of external powers as crucial to Thai national security and the security of the region.⁴⁵ This was consistent with Thailand's general alignment with the US and with its long history of diplomatic interaction with powers external to the region. It could be argued that the primary importance of the regional balance between Britain and France during the colonial period was crucial in serving as a contribution towards the maintenance of Thai independence, particularly at the turn of the Century. In the atmosphere of the Cold War, and given general Thai perceptions of an international system dominated by the great powers, Thai leaders believed that countries of Southeast Asia was militarily weak and could only exercise limited autonomy. Great powers had therefore a necessary, if not also legitimate, role to play in the region to ensure regional security and prosperity. This attitude set Thailand apart from certain of its ASEAN partners, particularly Indonesia with its anti-colonial tendencies which distrusted great powers and increasingly preferred to promote its own concept of National and Regional Resilience based on indigenous power. Malaysia after 1970 under Tun Razak also

became increasingly inclined to a non-aligned position. In its perception of regional realities as at the early 1970s, however, Thailand was generally supported by Singapore and the Philippines. For its part, Singapore had been non-aligned during the period 1965-1966 immediately following its separation from Malaysia, but subsequent to the declaration of British withdrawal from Southeast Asia, it had placed increasing emphasis on the role of external powers in maintaining a regional equilibrium. This was seen in comments by its Foreign Minister, Sinnathamby Rajaratnam:

To state the Singapore view, we accept power politics as a fact of international politics. It has been so for the past thousand years and it will be so for the next thousand years. The *détente* signals not the end of power politics but its remodeling to meet the hazards of a nuclear age. In this vastly shrunken world, small nations must accept the fact of great power influence and even manipulation...The alternative to one-power dominance of the region is free and peaceful competition by a multiplicity of powers. It is good for the nimble footed small nations who understood the game. It is good for peace.⁴⁶

The relative proximity of views between Thailand and Singapore in this regard was often revealed in a comparison of the statements of the leaders of the two countries. Such commonality was also illustrated in the Joint Communiqué issued on the occasion of MR Kukrit Pramoj's visit to Singapore in July 1975:

They believed that the major powers could play a constructive role in the region and thus welcomed any genuine contribution that the major powers could make in this direction, particularly in the economic development of the ASEAN states. Nations in the region should, for their part, pay regard to the legitimate interests of outside powers in the region.⁴⁷

As for the Philippines, close cooperation with the US and the extent of threat from insurgency meant that Manila also valued the continuing presence of US troops within Southeast Asia and generally regarded attempts at their complete removal with some suspicion.⁴⁸

The role of great powers in Southeast Asia centred on the question of foreign military bases, particularly those located in Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore. As has been shown earlier in the study, the temporary status of foreign bases had in fact been an issue within ASEAN since 1967, and before that in MAPHILINDO. Thailand had provided military facilities for the US since the period of 'Escalation' in Vietnam as from 1964, and during the phase of 'Vietnamization' there was in fact a fresh US military build-up in Thailand to provide additional airborne support for operations in Indochina as US troops withdrew from Vietnam, particularly during the course of North Vietnamese Spring Offensive in 1972 which threatened to overrun major cities in the South. At the same time, throughout the period of military rule policy flexibility was limited, though the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine in 1969 permitted the public revival of deeply-felt desires for greater self-reliance.⁴⁹ In the aftermath of

the Cultural Revolution Thanat Khoman did attempt a limited opening to China and Eastern Europe between 1969 and 1971, but the pace was controlled although not abandoned altogether after his removal in November 1971. 'Ping-pong diplomacy' vis-à-vis China was conducted around sports events in 1972 and the Thai Mission to the United Nations in New York was designated as the focal point for official contacts. Deputy Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan visited Beijing in 1973, but a continual sticking point remained the refusal of China to officially abandon the policy of support for communist insurgent movements. However, during Thailand's democratic period between 1973-1976 and considering US disengagement from the region, there was a drastic shift in the official position and it became government policy to work towards the removal of foreign bases. This was due to the perception that the bases became impediments to Thailand's fostering of better relations with neighbours, without necessarily according greater security. Such an evaluation applied in particular to US forces whose activities in Southeast Asia had become strictly circumscribed by the US Congress.⁵⁰ Under the general justification of a new policy of not supporting the deployment of foreign troops in any country, Thailand also withdrew its forces serving with the UN operations in South Korea. At the same time, Thai leaders continued to advocate that the great powers remain involved in the region, with one being quoted as saying:

Our viewpoint as far as the new trend in Thai foreign policy is concerned is let the big powers compete, let them exhibit their wares so that in the end they

balance each other. We would like to maintain equidistance.⁵¹

The withdrawal of foreign bases was specifically mentioned in the Policy Statement of both the Seni and Kukrit Governments, and deadlines were set for the withdrawal of foreign military personnel and hardware and the complete handover of the bases during the course of 1975-76. This extended even to Malaysian forces in 'hot pursuit' of communist insurgents across the Thai border, and caused a certain degree of tension between Thailand and Malaysia throughout 1976. The policy proved nevertheless controversial in domestic terms and was opposed by various elements, particularly within the military which saw it as unnecessarily jeopardizing Thai security and relations with close ASEAN neighbours. It became associated with civilian government leaders and the policy line of the MFA, which advocated a policy of friendship and reconciliation towards Thailand's Indochinese neighbours as a priority. The issue of bilateral military cooperation with Malaysia against communist insurgency was finally rectified during the Tanin Government with the conclusion of a new border operation agreement between the two countries. Moreover, from 1977 onwards and especially after 1978, it was once again highlighted that external powers were indeed necessary to assure regional stability. In particular, it was held that Beijing could play a role in restraining Hanoi while Washington could provide vital military assistance to Thailand, even if greater self-reliance remained a desirable goal.⁵² There was thus a renewed readiness to involve the great powers in the affairs of the region.

Significantly, Thailand's loosening of ties with the US during the middle of the 1970s was accompanied by a greater public commitment to ASEAN. Prof. Sanya Dharmasakdi's 1st Government (October 1973-May 1974), which was appointed by King Bhumibol Adulyadej in the aftermath of the overthrow of the military regime of Thanom, was the first to specifically mention regional cooperation and ASEAN in a Policy Statement, together with a commitment to foster relations with all friendly states and neighbouring countries, even those of different political systems.⁵³ This unprecedented public commitment to ASEAN was made even clearer during Sanya's 2nd Government (May 1974-February 1975), and was enshrined in government policy thereafter.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the *Mayaguez* incident of May 1975 in which US troops launched a mission to rescue the crew of a US vessel off Cambodia using Thai facilities further compounded difficulties in US-Thai bilateral relations.⁵⁵ During the course of the acrimonious diplomatic exchanges which followed between Bangkok and Washington, Anand Panyarachun, Thailand's Ambassador to Washington, announced in an interview that:

I think in the past there has been perhaps too much rhetoric in regard to US policy...it is dangerous if the gap between rhetoric and policy is too wide and this brings in the question of the credibility and...reliability of one's words and one's promises. I think it is also in the interest of this country and (other) countries in Southeast Asia, in particular Thailand, should take the responsibility of defending itself and putting itself in order and of trying to preserve the integrity of our nation.⁵⁶

Increasing self-reliance became a policy objective, with cooperation within ASEAN as a corollary. Indeed, a major feature of the mid 1970s was Thailand's greater emphasis on ASEAN on all policy areas, accompanying a policy of so-called 'equidistance' towards the superpowers. During these years, the relationship with the PRC was still being carefully fostered, while US policy towards Asia was in some disarray following the Vietnam debacle, and thus ASEAN was seen as a logical source of support given Thailand's exposed status. A firm commitment to regionalism may therefore be seen to have evolved within the majority of the government leadership by this period.

THAILAND AND THE ZOPFAN CONCEPT

Considering its previous negative views on neutrality and non-alignment and at the same time a generally positive conception of the role of external powers in the region, it might be expected that Thailand would reject the concept of neutralization that laid behind the idea of declaring Southeast Asia a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) outright. However, it will be shown Thailand saw benefit in the ZOPFAN idea as an additional manifestation of ASEAN's political independence, although it held certain reservations and saw the realization of ZOPFAN as a long-term project, an ideal to work towards rather than an immediate objective.⁵⁷ In this perspective, moreover, ZOPFAN's political message was more important than its substance, for in terms of implementation, Thai policy-makers continued to uphold the traditional view that neutrality did not merely rely on the members but had to

be recognized by others to be effective. Nevertheless, it will be seen that Thailand played an unexpectedly active and positive role in gaining ASEAN acceptance for the ZOPFAN project.

In common with the other ASEAN members, Thailand had already opposed the Soviet Collective Security idea for Asia when it was first proposed by Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev in June 1969 during the Moscow Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties. Thanat Khoman rejected the Soviet proposal for its vagueness, and instead preferred to promote his own concept of Collective Political Defence:

The trouble is that we do not know what shape or form... Soviet suggestion of an Asian Collective Security has... It is very vague just to throw out the idea that Asian nations should develop their own security. We are doing that already by what I call 'collective political security.' But militarily we do not have the military potential. How could we try to set up a new military alliance.⁵⁸

The Soviet proposal was kept deliberately vague as it was intended as a balloon to sound out the response of countries in the Asian region to an initiative from Moscow.⁵⁹ In so doing, the Soviet Union appeared to be attempting to fill the vacuum created by the gradual US disengagement from the region in accordance with the Nixon Doctrine, but more threateningly, the proposal of Collective Security was also accompanied by a rejection of existing Asian organizations such as ASPAC and ASEAN. Acceptance of such a proposal would have also encountered the antagonism of China, whose containment the scheme appeared to favour, and was thus unacceptable to Thai

policy-makers who increasingly placed primary importance on a 'correct' relationship vis-à-vis Beijing.⁶⁰

By contrast, ZOPFAN was an initiative which came from within Southeast Asia itself, and as it did not work against the interests of any single superpower, it was regarded as more viable and worthy of support by Thailand. Moreover, during the course of 1970-71 Thanat Khoman was already placing great emphasis on policy independence. The idea first arose as part of the attempt by Malaysia to throw off the pro-Western tint in its foreign policy and press for the neutralization of Southeast Asia.⁶¹ Malaysia had presented its initial proposals for the neutralization of Southeast Asia to the world in the run-up to the 3rd NAM Summit in Lusaka in September 1970, though the response was lukewarm. It then concentrated its efforts on persuading ASEAN countries to consider the proposal. In response to such initiatives launched by Malaysia, Thailand initially showed a cautious and non-committal attitude. Thai policy-makers held various reservations and pointed to the role of the PRC in supporting insurgency in rejecting neutralization. On 30 November 1970, Thanat had announced: "As far as Thailand is concerned as far as I can see it, I do not look at the question so much as neutralizing Southeast Asia or any part of the world. We have seen no sign of it here in Asia that Peking has changed its attitude towards us."⁶² Notwithstanding this seeming setback, the concept was presented personally to Thai leaders by Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Razak on his visit to Bangkok in December 1970, with Thailand being the first ASEAN country to be approached, followed by Indonesia. However, it was already clear at this stage that Thailand had its own views on the issue.⁶³ The question of

great power guarantees was regarded with some scepticism given Thailand's general historical perception, and particularly that of the failure of the 1954 Geneva Agreements and the inability or unwillingness of the Western powers involved to discharge their obligations. At the same time, it continued to view neutralization largely in terms of neutralizing interference by external powers in the affairs of regional states.⁶⁴

Further clarification on the neutralization proposals was given by the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ismail at the 4th AMM in March 1971, while the subject was again raised during Prime Minister Thanom's visit to Kuala Lumpur in June 1971. Although on that occasion Thanom appeared to have maintained the rejection of a guarantee role for the PRC, it was to be Thanat Khoman who made the first favourable comments on the Thai side: "Thailand welcomed the proposed neutralization of Southeast Asia," Thanat had declared during the visit, "its primary aim is to safeguard the fundamental rights of countries in the region."⁶⁵ It appeared that the position of the PRC was instrumental in eventually deciding Thailand's position, and with indications that the PRC would obtain entry to the UN in late 1971, it was felt that the countries of Southeast Asia had to make some kind of response to this development of overwhelming political importance.⁶⁶ It is commonly accepted that much of the Malaysian move was directed towards China, and equally, Thailand's unexpected activity on this issue may be explained initially in terms of its relationship with China, given that as early as 1969 Thanat and certain policy-makers had identified an accommodation with Beijing as being in the long-term interest of Thailand. In addition, the announcement in June 1971 of

Nixon's momentous visit to China introduced a fear that a sphere of influence deal might be struck between Nixon and Mao Tse-tung, and thus Thailand expressed its concern that any agreement which might result should not "tacitly or otherwise, be implied as recognition of any party's paramount power over a given area as was customary in the past."⁶⁷ In Thanat's view, therefore, there was merit in a stand being made by the Southeast Asian countries reaffirming their desire to maintain peace and prosperity in the region, free from external interference.

On 2 October 1971, in view of the PRC's imminent membership of the UN, ASEAN Foreign Ministers attending the UNGA in New York held political consultations and exchanged views on the role of the PRC in Southeast Asia and possible responses, including Malaysia's proposal of neutralization. The Meeting agreed that ASEAN should broadly declare its position with regards to the changes taking place in the region, and so the Thai Foreign Minister proposed that ASEAN should issue a general declaration to gauge the positions and responses of various countries towards such a *démarche*. It was agreed upon that a consultative meeting should be held in Kuala Lumpur to further discuss such matters and that Thailand would draw up a draft declaration for the members' consideration.⁶⁸ Thanat saw it as the opportunity to make a public assertion of Southeast Asian countries' desire, in the face of regional developments, to assume a greater responsibility for regional order. For this purpose, Malaysia's neutralization proposal was incorporated in a joint declaration on regional order to be produced by Thailand. To ensure the observance of neutrality, he was of the view that this did not necessitate a diplomatic instrument, and drew

attention to the example of Belgium as well as the practical difficulties involved in bringing China, the US and the Soviet Union around the same table to guarantee the neutrality of Southeast Asia. Rather, he saw the value of attracting unilateral declarations by interested countries which might later pave the way for a subsequent UN resolution.⁶⁹ Such a process supports Thanat's subsequent claim that he raised the idea of a joint unilateral declaration at the New York Meeting, so that Thailand was able to produce its own proposals on the subject.⁷⁰

What originally began as an idea for the neutralization of the whole of Southeast Asia thus developed into an ASEAN-sponsored framework for regional relations, the immediate response to which was as important as the longer-term implications of the scheme for Southeast Asia. Following their Meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 26-27 November 1971, the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN countries issued the Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in which they stated their determination 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." Furthermore, the Foreign Ministers also declared that "Southeast Asian countries should make concerted efforts to broaden the areas of cooperation which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship."⁷¹ In this manner, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration was signed because, despite certain individual misgivings, the five ASEAN governments agreed on the need for a public response to the international situation. Although Thanat's signature of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ZOPFAN on 27

November 1971 was as Special Envoy of the National Executive Council (NEC) rather than as Foreign Minister, following the coup d'état of 7 November, Marshal Thanom gave his endorsement to such action by subsequently announcing that the ZOPFAN Declaration "agreed with the policies of the NEC."⁷²

The documents signed in Kuala Lumpur had provided a compromise under which Malaysia's proposal of neutralization could be reconciled with concerns as to the existing role of superpowers in the region. As a scholar of ZOPFAN has noted, neutralization of Southeast Asia as had been proposed by Malaysia was mentioned neither in the operative part of the Declaration nor in the Joint Communiqué which went with it.⁷³ There was no mention of military bases or alliances, and while Thailand and other ASEAN countries continued to host foreign bases, it was clear that the overall objective of ZOPFAN could not be fully implemented. It was an armed neutrality, a fact which Thanat stressed to Thailand's military leaders in order to facilitate their acquiescence to the project. Thanat himself stressed on his return to Bangkok after the Meeting that Thailand would maintain its existing defence agreements "until a time when the prospects of peace, freedom and neutrality are completely ensured."⁷⁴ While acceptance of ZOPFAN signalled a move away from the previous Thai rejection of all discussion of neutralization, a thread of continuity from the Bangkok Declaration may be discerned in the emphasis placed on the ideology of regional autonomy free of external interference.⁷⁵ Such concerns also dovetailed with the Malaysian desire to exclude PRC influence on the Overseas Chinese within Southeast Asia.⁷⁶ In many respects, therefore, ZOPFAN represented for

Thailand and its partners as much a balloon as the Soviet Collective Security proposal which preceded it by just over a year.

Within two weeks of the Kuala Lumpur Meeting, Thai delegates at the 1st Commission of the 26th UNGA, as well as certain other ASEAN delegations, spoke in support of the ZOPFAN Declaration within the context of the discussion of the Ceylonese project of resolution of declaring the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace and the project of resolution on the reinforcing of international security which were under consideration in New York. Thailand's comments on the comparison between the Kuala Lumpur Declaration and the Ceylonese proposal, given the admitted similarities in objectives, were particularly instructive in highlighting its views on the ZOPFAN project. Anand Panyarachun, Thailand's Permanent Representative in New York, stressed that the initiative for a type of proposition as the two Zone of Peace proposals had to come from a majority of countries in the region and that the consultations between interested parties must precede a detailed accord destined to the realization of the objectives.⁷⁷ Moreover, at a later meeting Anand pointed out that Thailand was fully aware that the ZOPFAN project could not be applied immediately, and that the cooperation of Southeast Asian countries and great powers was necessary.⁷⁸ Such comments further illustrated that the Thai aim had been to obtain an understanding in principle in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, and not a detailed agreement containing specifics.

ZOPFAN in fact led to the *ad hoc* institutionalization of ASEAN political activities at the level of permanent officials in the shape of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) set up to study the proposals upon the initiative of Malaysia.⁷⁹ At the same time,

the MFA exercised caution in its participation, given the reticence of many Thai leaders. It is clear from instructions to the Thai delegations to the initial SOM meetings that the Thai delegates were acting in their personal capacities and thus observed a wait-and-see attitude. In fact, the initial approach of the sessions of the SOM was technical and non-binding on the governments, with the aims of studying the proposals and then to submit the results to governments at an appropriate stage.⁸⁰ Yet according to the testimony provided by Phan Wannamethee, then Acting Director-General of Political Affairs and Head of the Thai Delegation, all the other delegations arrived at the 1st SOM held in Kuala Lumpur in July 1972 unprepared for a detailed examination of the implications of ZOPFAN, except for Malaysia as the host, and Thailand. In keeping with its initiative in proposing a joint declaration at the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Thai delegation was able to produce a working paper which became the basis for discussions at the SOM.⁸¹ The MFA's report to the NEC Chairman (Field Marshal Thanom) on the return of the Thai delegation from the 1st SOM in Kuala Lumpur in July 1972 stated that at the Meeting, other delegations were informed of Thailand's special difficulties on the issue considering its existing security commitments, but submitted that Thailand should continue studying the proposal as it could prove beneficial in different circumstances. As for the question of neutrality, the MFA report stated that this was a political decision which had to be taken by the government.⁸² In this lay the crux of the Thai position. Thailand publicly endorsed the idea of ZOPFAN, and continued to maintain its commitment at the technical level of MFA officials within SOM.

However, the final steps as well as the timing involved in such steps required a political decision which laid in the hands of government leaders alone.

The Thai stance as from 1972 as proposed by the MFA, and apparently accepted by government leaders, therefore clearly indicated a preparedness to consider options without prejudicing Thailand's overall alignment, a position which echoed the original approach taken by Thanat in proposing a joint declaration at the 1971 New York Meeting. Accordingly, there was no immediate commitment to neutralization associated with ZOPFAN, as was reconfirmed by ASEAN members in the Press Statement issued by the 1st SOM:

Preliminary views were exchanged on the proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia as a means of establishing ZOPFAN. The Committee recognized that other alternative means has also to be considered.⁸³

Thailand's role was thus a positive one, considering that it had taken a position that neutralization constituted only one option in achieving ZOPFAN. The 1st SOM concretized the shift in approach away from neutralization *per se*, towards making Southeast Asia a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality. The Meeting itself spent much of its time on definitions and only succeeded in producing a common definition of the terms 'peace,' 'freedom' and 'neutrality.' The definition of 'freedom' as freedom from external interference and 'neutrality' as neutrality and non-involvement in external power conflicts while outside powers would not interfere in domestic and regional affairs, preserved

the concerns of Malaysia and also of Thailand, placing a greater emphasis at this stage on the exclusion of external interference through support for insurgent movements than on the obligations of the zonal states.⁸⁴ The type of neutralization envisaged under ZOPFAN was therefore a self-centred one. However, the overall results of the SOM constituted a modest achievement which was of some disappointment to the Malaysian hosts, who had hoped to concretize the idea at the earliest opportunity.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, despite these setbacks Malaysia remained the primary driving force behind ZOPFAN and maintained it on the ASEAN agenda.

The Thai working paper produced for the 1st SOM constituted a key document in understanding the Thai position, both in terms of the general position adopted, and also the rationale behind it. This was despite the fact that it did not represent an official position paper by Thailand, and in common with the other documents of the Meeting was described as a 'technical paper' that did not bind the government concerned. Comprising three parts, each of which appeared to stand alone, the working paper considered not only the theoretical implications of, but also practical uses for, neutralization. In a general introductory Part I, it was held to be "imperative that regional cooperation, in political, economic, social and cultural fields, among the neutralized states of Southeast Asia should proceed unimpeded by neutralization. It is not entirely inconceivable that military cooperation, either bilateral or multilateral, among the neutralized states themselves, may proceed or develop in order to strengthen the internal capability of the region to defend its neutralized status."⁸⁶ This stressed the

idea of an armed neutrality that was so crucial to a policy consensus on the ZOPFAN issue in Thailand, and already constituted some evolution in the Thai position towards a synthesis between the ideas of regional cooperation and neutrality, instead of the two being alternatives. Part II was entitled “A Comparative Study of Austrian Neutrality and Neutralization of Southeast Asia.”, being largely a theoretical discussion on the applicability of traditional ideas of neutrality to Southeast Asia. The most important element was Part III, entitled “Realities and Trends in Southeast Asia and the Neutralization Scheme.” The conclusion and the rationale appeared to lay in the words: “Neutralization has been proposed mainly as a policy option available now and into the future, for the countries of Southeast Asia in the conduct of their relations with outside powers. It is a long-term proposal, which means that its realization may be far off in time and will proceed step by step. Therefore, the respective governments will have several opportunities to review the situation and to make up their minds in the course of time that will be needed to implement the scheme.”⁸⁷ The evidence suggested that this rationale was presented both to the ASEAN members, as well as to the Thai Government as a whole.

Nevertheless, despite official support for ZOPFAN during the course of the Thanom Government, the individual positions of the military leaders remained equivocal. Field Marshal Prapat Charusathiara, Deputy Chairman of the NEC stood for a hard line on security issues, and particularly for the enlargement of external linkages to maintain regional security. On 7 August 1972 he was quoted as declaring that Indonesia, Malaysia and

Singapore were in a position to announce that they were neutral because they were far from the Indochina war, “but Thailand, which has been infiltrated by communist insurgents, is unable to be neutral.”⁸⁸ In the light of such comments, contemporary observers noted that: “there is no one in the inner circle of the Thai leadership today who is sympathetic to the approach,” and described Thailand’s participation in the project as a mere demonstration of ASEAN solidarity.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, Pote Sarasin, the Assistant Chairman of the NEC, in his speech at the 27th UNGA referred to the common goal of ZOPFAN as a subject of long-term interest to Thailand, but stressed that “while wars continue to rage in the region, it is difficult to realize such a regional objective.”⁹⁰ While it is true that Thailand regarded the demonstration of ASEAN solidarity as particularly crucial in this period, comments regarding the scepticism shown towards ZOPFAN within the leadership invariably failed to distinguish the actual constructive positions of Thai delegates at SOM meetings from the cautious remarks of certain Thai leaders up to 1973. The glaring contradictions posed by various different aspects of policy became clear as Thailand came to host an unprecedented number of US airmen during the phase of ‘Vietnamization.’ It was alleged that such presence, as well as the active Thai involvement in Laos, revealed a “striking lack of any authentic neutrality.”⁹¹ Meanwhile, arms transfers to Thailand reached a peak in 1973, the highest level in the period 1970-1976.⁹² Accordingly, it may be seen that Thai credibility on the issue of ZOPFAN was seriously questioned during 1972-1973.

While their mandate was limited, it may be seen that Thai delegates to subsequent SOM meetings after 1972 did not block

discussions on the initial steps to be taken to achieve ZOPFAN, and instead preferred a mediating role. Despite the departure of Thanat Khoman, Thailand's participation in the ZOPFAN process therefore followed to a large extent the scenario set by Thanat and his colleagues, that discussions should be launched with Thailand's ASEAN partners with the view to maximizing Thailand's options. The 2nd SOM agreed on 14 guidelines for relations among states within and outside the Zone, and on the line of action to promote ZOPFAN.⁹³ Such 'initial steps' were eventually decided to include four measures, namely: a treaty of amity within the region; a UN resolution to endorse ZOPFAN; a denuclearization of Southeast Asia; and the conclusion of non-aggression pacts with external countries. Nevertheless, having made a major contribution in preparing the groundwork during the first year, Thailand was not seen to introduce any fresh proposals on ZOPFAN and it may be taken that overall foreign policy flexibility remained circumscribed. To a certain extent, it must be admitted that the non-committal aspect of the Thai follow-up on ZOPFAN reflected both the absence of the driving force of Thanat, as well as the tentative nature of Thailand's move to pragmatism until 1973-75. In typical Thai style, the military leadership did not exclude studies, working groups, and talks on important and pressing issues such as neutrality, relations with China and re-examination of ties with the US, but no substantive commitment was made to concretize an actual shift in policy. In fact, such moves had been noticed by numerous commentators since 1968 but never fully realized, and remained half-measures.⁹⁴ They merely constituted, as the MFA was forced to stress over and over again, options, with only symbolic implications.

As it was, Thailand's basically firm ideas on neutrality did not really change in the aftermath of the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting. It remained opposed to the idea of one-sided neutralization, and stressed that the focus of efforts should be placed on obtaining acceptance by other powers in combination with building regional strength. As Thanat declared at the closing ceremony of the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting: "we shall have to gain wider acceptance and support from other Southeast Asian nations, as well as from the major powers."⁹⁵ Indeed, one of the decisions of the Meeting as enshrined in the Joint Communiqué was that individual ASEAN member countries were assigned responsibility for approaching the other Southeast Asian states for their views on the contents of the Declaration.⁹⁶ Due to these perceptions, the stress on furtherance of ZOPFAN rather than neutralization *per se*. However, subsequent to 1971 there were no longer any public denunciation of neutrality within Thailand. Bangkok's support for the Kuala Lumpur Declaration may be seen as part of a diplomatic offensive, holding out the possibility of the establishment of a working relationship vis-à-vis China and the other regimes in Southeast Asia. While Thailand sought to promote a greater self-reliance, in terms of strategic perception it remained wedded to the idea that great powers had to remain involved in the area to maintain a regional balance. Moreover, as we have seen, the Thai idea of neutrality was put in terms of an armed neutrality, whose basis laid in the rejection of outside powers' interference through support for insurgent movements. In this regard, it may be said that only in so far as there was a rejection of external support for insurgency was there the acceptance of an indigenously-maintained regional order.

Thailand's approach to ZOPFAN subsequent to the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting, at the same time supportive and yet non-committal, may be differentiated from that of the other members. The differences in approach within ASEAN was acknowledged by Thai policy-makers, as seen in an interview given by Foreign Minister Pichai Rattakul in April 1976: "in principle, neutrality is OK. But in the terms of action, I think each country may have a different approach while the ultimate goal remains the same. The Philippines, for example, may adopt an approach not exactly similar to ours in working towards the goal."⁹⁷ The Philippines took a legalistic approach which at first threatened to stall the discussions at Kuala Lumpur, but had been mollified by the decision to further discuss the Summit initiative as proposed by President Marcos.⁹⁸ In the aftermath of the Kuala Lumpur Meeting, the Philippine continued to press for a Summit, linking it to an ongoing requirement to discuss the question of the PRC, as well as formalizing the commitment to ZOPFAN by the ASEAN Heads of Government.⁹⁹ In due course, however, the Philippines as part of its policy adjustment after 1972 modified its policy towards fostering a greater policy independence from the US, and contributed substantially to discussions on various initial measures to implement ZOPFAN.¹⁰⁰ The most extreme position appeared to have been taken by Singapore, which while remaining officially non-aligned sought to slow progress on achieving ZOPFAN to a more cautious pace, seeing the manoeuvres as potentially dangerous and realizing the necessity to maintain a balance of power in the region. Singapore was also suspicious of any scheme which would institute a regional balance in which the Malay states would be

dominant and leave the island-state with little room for manoeuvre.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, even Singapore eventually saw merit in the adoption of particular measures to achieve ZOPFAN. For example, by 1974 it agreed with the conclusion of a non-aggression pact within the region, as indicated by Foreign Minister Rajaratnam: “a non-aggression pact between the countries of Southeast Asia with which I agree would not preclude intervention from outside, but it would preclude outbreak of conflicts within the ASEAN group and Southeast Asia.”¹⁰² Meanwhile, Indonesia which also attempted to promote regional autonomy, gave public support to efforts at neutralization. Indeed, certain Indonesians even saw ZOPFAN as an initiative which had been pioneered by Indonesia. However, Jakarta built its own resistance on the proposed requirement of great power guarantees for Southeast Asian neutrality which it regarded with suspicion and rejected as detracting from its own advocacy of National and Regional Resilience through ASEAN, as well as its sense of regional entitlement which required that Indonesia alone should be responsible for instituting regional order.¹⁰³ This opposition was instrumental to the permanent removal of this feature from the ZOPFAN formula. In a speech to the Press Foundation of Asia Assembly in September 1971, Adam Malik had laid down Indonesia’s position:

It seems to me still a rather distant possibility to ever get the four major powers, given their divergent interests and designs towards the area, voluntarily to agree to its neutralization. Moreover, neutralization that is the product of ‘one-way’ benevolence on the part of

the big powers, at this stage, would perhaps prove as brittle as the inter-relationship between the major powers themselves.¹⁰⁴

By the time of the 3rd SOM in Baguio in June 1973, it was realized by all ASEAN parties that the achievement of ZOPFAN would not be through a sweeping neutralization of Southeast Asia, but by the adoption of various political measures in graduated steps, with the concentration on efforts within ASEAN itself. A total of 6 SOMs on ZOPFAN took place prior to the 1976 Bali Summit, which formally endorsed the Report of the Senior Officials on ZOPFAN and thus the project itself. Over time, the Malaysians toned down their enthusiasm for the project but remained the overall sponsor, while the Philippines and Singapore began to look at the ZOPFAN in a more positive light. Moreover, around 1973 Indonesia began to interest itself with denuclearization of Southeast Asia as a means towards the achievement of ZOPFAN, eventually supported by the Philippines. Plans of action to realize ZOPFAN were agreed upon, but remained private documents of ASEAN with no public declaration of a specific timetable for the implementation of measures. Piecemeal rather than a wholesale and immediate implementation therefore characterized ASEAN's subsequent approach to ZOPFAN

With hindsight, even though progress on ZOPFAN itself was tentative and slow, the overall development of ideas on regional order which was instigated by ZOPFAN proved fruitful for ASEAN in the long term. In this regard, a fresh momentum was provided by the need for an appropriate political response

to the events in Indochina in 1975. Ongoing concerns with the prevention of intra-ASEAN conflict as well as tensions within Southeast Asia as whole, which had been a central preoccupation of Thailand's Thanat Khoman, sowed the seeds for the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) which was signed at the Bali Summit in 1976. The TAC may be seen as the first concrete document for improving regional cooperation in all fields, even before the ASEAN Summit was agreed upon, with widespread support within ASEAN as from the 8th AMM in May 1975.¹⁰⁵ The original idea of a non-aggression pact among the states of Southeast Asia appeared to have been advocated by the Philippines and proposed publicly at the 7th AMM in May 1974.¹⁰⁶ However, the Thais felt that it had negative connotations in the light of such agreements as the Russo-German Pact of 1939 and given Thailand's own unhappy prewar experience with non-aggression pacts, and so a more positive instrument was sought both in name as well as in content.¹⁰⁷ As a senior Thai diplomat pointed out, behind the Kuala Lumpur Declaration (Operative Para.II) was also a commitment to enhance cooperation, although this was not clearly defined. Thai enthusiasm at intensifying cooperation so as to actualize ASEAN's strength and independence contributed to the commitment to enhancing ASEAN cooperation within the TAC, which Thai officials regarded as a successor document to the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, in its general prescriptions to increase cooperation it might not be stretching the point too far as to make an inference between this element of the TAC with the previous efforts to conclude a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation within ASA, which was also seen as a framework

agreement for increasing cooperation. The TAC also furthered the general aims of ZOPFAN and formalized the commitments in a treaty. Once signed by all the countries of Southeast Asia, it would have the effect of committing the states of the region to closer cooperation among themselves, most probably though not necessarily through the ASEAN framework. Certainly, prior to the signing of the TAC, the desirability of signing the document was mentioned in all Joint Communiqués issued during MR Kukrit's ASEAN visits in June-July 1975, revealing it as a priority of the Thai government. The TAC was to contain the elements of a non-aggression pact within the region (Ch.IV), as well as a concrete commitment to cooperation (Ch.III.Art.4). The TAC thus emerged as a composite document, containing elements of interest to individual members, including the conciliation mechanism which was a Philippine initiative given its involvement in disputes with various ASEAN members.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the idea of a dispute settlement organ with its legal implications may be regarded as being, in those days, quite alien to the spirit of ASEAN which relied on self-restraint and informal codes of conduct. Its inclusion in the TAC programme may be attributed to the pressure of Manila with its generally legalistic approach to the implementation of ZOPFAN. Thailand itself has had harsh experience with international arbitration over the Khao Phra Viharn Judgement in the International Court of Justice in 1962 and thus had its own quiet reservations over the desirability of such a mechanism.

In a related development to the emergence of greater enthusiasm for ZOPFAN, Bangkok may be seen to have flirted with the concept of non-alignment during the civilian

governments of 1973-1976, as seen in the Seni Government's declared intention to increase cooperation with the Third World countries.¹¹⁰ This marked a shift towards a more positive perception of the value of association with non-aligned nations, although certain reservations remained.

Deputy Foreign Minister Lek Nana was assigned to foster relations with developing countries in Africa, as well as closer cooperation with the Third World as a whole. The scope of Thailand's foreign relations had already been extensively widened by the establishment of diplomatic relations with many Eastern European countries during the course of 1974-1975 under the advocacy of the MFA. By 1976, the direction of Thailand's foreign trade and political relations was therefore more balanced than it had been since 1945, and now policy-makers felt that some overtures had to be made to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). As Foreign Minister Pichai Rattakul reflected in an interview in July 1976:

As far as non-alignment is concerned, Thailand is now the only country in the ASEAN group that has virtually no connection with it. This group and its influence in international affairs are a reality that can no longer be ignored. Thailand feels that there can be a lot of benefit in cultivating closer contacts with non-aligned countries.¹¹¹

Indeed, Pichai had declared that: "in our basic approach and attitude towards international issues I believe we are already non-aligned," although membership of the Non-Aligned

Movement itself was excluded for the time being.¹¹² Thailand's reserved attitude towards NAM in this regard reflected its cautious diplomacy which seemed to have assessed that it could for the time being depend on its ASEAN allies to represent its interests in NAM, and that it should not risk overly antagonizing old friends such as the US, particularly at a time when international attention was already centred on Thailand's seemingly hasty policy readjustments. However, any discussion of Thai association with NAM was definitively put off by the increasing radicalization of the Organization during the late 1970s with the revival of Cold War tensions. In this regard, evidence was provided in that the ZOPFAN proposal itself, which had been endorsed at the NAM Conference in Algiers in 1973, was subsequently denounced by the delegations of Laos and Vietnam at the Colombo Conference in 1976 and faced difficulties thereafter due to such opposition within the forum, particularly after tensions between ASEAN and Vietnam as a result of the Kampuchean episode.¹¹³

Overall, adherence to ZOPFAN was seen as a useful adjunct to Thai attempts at reconciliation with the countries of Indochina, and as such official enthusiasm for the project seemed to have reached its peak around 1975-78. The Razak-Kukrit Joint Communiqué of June 1975 paved the way for greater cooperation towards ZOPFAN, including through the TAC. During the Seni Government, there was for the first time a public commitment to ZOPFAN as expressed in a Policy Statement, albeit in accordance with the decision of the 1976 Bali Summit which formally endorsed ZOPFAN as ongoing ASEAN project.¹¹⁴ With the complete removal of foreign military bases under the Seni

Government, Thailand also seemed to be fulfilling a major requirement of ZOPFAN. However, Thailand came to see Vietnam's opposition to ZOPFAN as indicative of its hostility towards ASEAN as a whole, and towards Thailand in particular, as seen in Vietnam's advocacy of its own Zone of Genuine Independence, Peace and Neutrality (ZOGIPAN). When Vo Dong Giang, Vietnam's Deputy Foreign Minister, proposed to a dinner of Southeast Asian diplomats in New York on 13 June 1978 the idea of the establishment of its own version of a 'zone of peace,' ASEAN reacted cautiously.¹¹⁵ The 11th AMM held in Pattaya between 14-16 July 1978 subsequently discussed the Vietnamese proposal, based on the report of the Thai Permanent Representative in New York, Dr. Pracha Gunakasem. According to a commentator, the Meeting "noted that while ASEAN countries should react positively to Vietnam's new overtures, the regional organization should exercise caution in not being trapped into a solution whereby a link-up with Vietnam in this case could be construed as association with Vietnam against a particular superpower, China, for example."¹¹⁶ A common ASEAN approach was also adopted on ZOPFAN during Vietnamese Premier Phan Van Dong's visit to ASEAN countries later in the year.¹¹⁷ A generally conciliatory Thai policy, however, was pursued under Prime Minister Kriangsak Chomanan during the course of 1978, and the policy of 'equidistance' was extended into a more positive 'omni-directional' policy by his successor, General Prem Tinsulanonda, by the mid 1980s.

In general terms, the response to ZOPFAN from outside ASEAN has been sceptical. This was particularly the case within the other countries of Southeast Asia as well as among the great

powers whose attitudes Thailand regarded as crucial to ZOPFAN's success. It may also be recalled that an important element for ZOPFAN was to gauge various countries' response to such a proposal, but the response was on the whole not very encouraging. Burma, which already considered itself neutral, was generally non-committal and preferred to distance itself from ASEAN as a whole.¹¹⁸ Cambodia in its statement of 23 November 1971, even before the Kuala Lumpur Meeting began, outwardly supported moves towards neutralization, while the Laotian Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, also lent his support as revealed in his comments in Kuala Lumpur on 16 December 1972, although the position of both countries became negative after 1975.¹¹⁹ As has been shown, Vietnam did not initially regard ZOPFAN favourably, and stressed that the existence of foreign bases in ASEAN countries prevented the achievement of real neutrality.

As for the great powers, whose recognition and respect for the scheme was regarded as crucial, the Soviet Union, for its part, preferred to promote its notion of Asian Collective Security, rejecting a role for ASEAN as a whole.¹²⁰ However, it began to regard ZOPFAN more favourably as the Sino-Soviet conflict hardened, as seen in political moves coordinated with Vietnam during the course of 1978. Accordingly, in July 1978 the Soviet Embassy in Bangkok released an article by an official commentator containing words supportive of ZOPFAN as well as ASEAN, which had "become a reality to be contended with."¹²¹ As for China, which had been the original target behind Malaysia's idea of neutralization and was also a focus of Thai political efforts, Beijing also initially rejected the idea of

ZOPFAN. Nevertheless, it became clear to Beijing that it was increasingly necessary to promote better relations with the ASEAN countries amidst rising Sino-Soviet tensions during the early 1970s, and thus China became the first major power to reveal public support for the project. Phan Wannamethee, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the Head of Thailand's SOM delegations, disclosed on 29 June 1973 after discussions with Chen Ji-sheng, China's Director of Southeast Asian Affairs, that China welcomed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration and that a neutralized Southeast Asia accorded with China's own view.¹²² China did not, however, abandon its support for the communist movements in Southeast Asia which so concerned the ASEAN states, and which served to perpetuate a mistrust of Chinese intentions within certain sections of Thai policy circles for some time. For its part, the US was non-committal, especially with regards to the provision of guarantees for Southeast Asian security. It further communicated to the Thais that the idea had to be accepted by all parties or would become a shield for external interference.¹²³ Thus as a balloon to gauge the great powers' and other regional powers' responsiveness to the assertion of regional autonomy, ZOPFAN proved relatively unproductive, at least until around 1976, and this applied in particular to the Thai concern with external powers' support for insurgency. The general preconditions specified by Thanat remained unfulfilled, constituting impediments to the establishment of ZOPFAN according to the requirements set by Thailand.

In overall terms, ZOPFAN appears as one episode where Thailand helped to broker a project pushed by another power,

namely Malaysia, and attempted to repackage it to suit its own interests, but which also contributed to the project's ultimate acceptance by other ASEAN members. It is crucial nevertheless to stress that from the beginning, Thailand *was not* a major protagonist, and its initial active role in the process reflected its desire to act as conciliator and facilitator. While constructive, it was not to be found among the most prominent advocates of ZOPFAN, owing to its own internal differences. That advocacy was largely left to Malaysia, the originator of such ideas. Thailand's attitude to ZOPFAN may be said to have embodied the Thai view of regional order, and did not imply an automatic acceptance of neutralization. In this view, regional order depended on a certain degree of self-reliance among regional states, which was promoted by the rejection of the use of force by regional states and by the enhancement of cooperation in all fields. It did not, however, completely exclude the superpowers who had legitimate interests in the region and who were intended to extend recognition to ZOPFAN. It merely signified a rejection of external support for communist and other insurgent movements, and for the purpose of ensuring the region's effective defence against such threats an armed neutrality would be maintained. From a different perspective, it may be asserted that the Kuala Lumpur Declaration represented an attempt by Thanat and the MFA establishment to bring the primal issue of relations with the PRC and Indochina into the scope of ASEAN and thus maximize the room for manoeuvre not only for Thailand itself, but also for the project's sponsors in domestic terms. Thai policy on ZOPFAN thus has to be seen on 2 levels: 1) the exploratory level; and 2) the symbolic level. On

both counts, regardless of the positive MFA attitude towards the concept, Thailand's stance was often handicapped by the anti-communist attitude of the military leaders. However, the examination has revealed that at the ASEAN level Thai policy has often been more constructive than as might first appear. Certainly, the view that is commonly held that Thailand "merely held reservations" does little justice to its efforts.

Subsequent to 1978-1979, the reassertion of superpower conflict in the region through the Kampuchean issue dimmed prospects for an early achievement of ZOPFAN in all its aspects. In concrete terms, the value of ZOPFAN and the TAC as instruments for regional order and reconciliation lost their immediacy due to the general level of mutual hostility engendered. Nevertheless, subsequent to 1979 Thailand continued to maintain a public commitment to the ZOPFAN project in opposition to Vietnam's alternative concepts, due to its symbolism of portraying ASEAN neutrality amidst regional tensions and in sympathy to Malaysia's advocacy, although it appeared to remain indifferent towards a rapid implementation. In particular, the so-called Kuantan Principle as enunciated by Indonesia and Malaysia at a bilateral meeting in March 1980, which was seen by its authors as part of an attempt to remove superpower influence in an implementation of ZOPFAN, was seen with a dim view in Thailand with its stance that China and the USSR could play a useful role in pressuring Vietnam.¹²⁴ Moreover, as the then Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee and former political appointee as ambassador, Maj.-Gen. Chan Ansuchote, pointed out: neutrality required the "general will" of the people to be neutral, whereas in Thailand

this merely took the form of an occasional sentiment at the level of the government or political parties, which was insufficient.¹²⁵ Meanwhile, in terms of more recent developments following the end of the Cold War, the very idea behind ZOPFAN and the TAC may be seen to have changed. The stress of ZOPFAN and the TAC have now changed from concentrating on keeping superpowers out of the region to getting all powers involved with Southeast Asia within the scope of the ASEAN-sponsored framework.¹²⁶

THAILAND'S ROLE IN ASEAN SUMMITRY

Despite its advocacy of an informal structure for ASEAN, Thailand was one of the first countries, together with the Philippines, to see the importance of meetings at the Summit level, again for largely political reasons. This position was linked to its enthusiasm to increase ASEAN's activities in the political field, and initiatives favourable to mutual discussions were supported because it saw a need to consult on political issues, both at the Ministerial level and at the level of Heads of Government. When questioned in 1969 as to what projects Thailand was working on within ASEAN, Thanat Khoman replied: "we feel that political consultation is the major realization...leaders of many countries in Asia should meet as often as possible and exchange their views."¹²⁷ As we have seen, ASEAN had through the 1967 Bangkok Declaration limited the level of national participation to the Foreign Ministers' level. This had been despite the provision for meetings of Heads of Government in the Manila Accord of 1963 founding

MAPHILINDO, which was itself formally established by a Summit Meeting in July 1963.¹²⁸ That the ASEAN framework made no formal provision for participation by the Heads of Government reflected the origins of ASEAN as having originated within the respective Foreign Ministries, but may also have been due to deference to President Suharto, who was initially uncomfortable in the international arena and was preoccupied with domestic issues in establishing the New Order in Indonesia. An early Summit meeting also threatened to bring contentious bilateral issues to the fore and shatter the fragile entente, negating its positive impact, which may have accounted for the fact that no Heads of Government were present at Bangkok in 1967. Nevertheless, given the early launch of informal political consultations by the ASEAN states, and considering the regional significance of Nixon's China visit, during the course of 1971 President Marcos of the Philippines called for high-level consultations among regional states.¹²⁹ China's membership of the United Nations in October 1971 contributed to a further reassessment of positions by many ASEAN policy-makers on this matter. As has been seen, the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November 1971 had as a *quid pro quo* between Malaysia and the Philippines led to a decision that the Foreign Ministers would recommend that an ASEAN Summit be held to discuss Nixon's visit to China and other regional questions, possibly in 1972. However, subsequent to that decision, the final agreement by the ASEAN leaders could not be found and the project was postponed indefinitely. Malaysia, for example, remained concerned at its potential divisive impact, and particularly that the question of sovereignty over Sabah

might be raised. It therefore contended that the Summit had to discuss substantial matters so as not to denigrate the Meeting's importance.

Despite the initial lack of ASEAN consensus on a Summit, Thailand saw the need for consultations at the highest level to assess the developments in Indochina and the possibilities for regional reconciliation following the 1973 Paris Accords so as to come to an accommodation with North Vietnam. Possibly at the urging of the Philippines, which had been urging an 'Asian' Summit since the 3rd AMM in 1969, Thailand's advocacy of a high-level meeting was eventually extended to a formal Summit of Southeast Asian countries involving all countries of the region. The Philippines' position drew a thread of continuity from President Marcos' advocacy of an 'Asian Forum' to discuss political issues within the region in the aftermath of Thanat's ASA call for an Asian solution to the Vietnam Conflict in 1966, and may thus be seen to have shared a certain commonality of inspiration with Thailand. Accordingly, the Thai advocacy of a 10-nation regional meeting was publicly supported by the Philippines at the 6th AMM in 1973 as echoing its idea of an 'Asian Forum'.¹³⁰ Such wishes, however, were also not fulfilled largely owing to difficulties in determining a balanced representation from the various national factions in Indochina, reflecting the profound divisions within Southeast Asia.¹³¹

Fresh impetus for a Summit was provided by the tumultuous events of April 1975, during which the right-wing regimes in Saigon and Phnom Penh collapsed, and the Communist *Pathet Lao* gained the upper hand in Vientiane. On his arrival in Kuala Lumpur on 12 May 1975 for the 8th AMM,

Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan declared to the press that Thailand was in favour of holding an ASEAN Summit. While that issue was discussed in Kuala Lumpur, the Meeting merely agreed upon the enhancement of ASEAN cooperation without any firm public commitment to such a Summit.¹³² With this in mind, during MR Kukrit Pramoj's visit to ASEAN countries in June-July 1975, the Thai Prime Minister publicly declared Thailand's advocacy of an ASEAN Summit Meeting. President Suharto's ongoing reluctance was apparently breached with MR Kukrit's visit to Jakarta in June 1975. A Joint Statement released by the two leaders declared that: "it would be useful for ASEAN member countries to hold a summit meeting among themselves to coordinate their thoughts and actions in pursuit of establishing lasting peace in the region."¹³³ However, prior to his departure from Bangkok for his visits to Singapore and Manila in July, MR Kukrit had hinted that it was necessary to obtain public backing from these two capitals as Malaysia and Indonesia still took a position that there was no worthy cause for holding a Summit and wanted informal contacts instead.¹³⁴ Indeed, following this second leg of his comprehensive ASEAN tour, MR Kukrit disclosed that Singapore even proposed Bangkok as the site of such a Summit.¹³⁵ Thai press speculation subsequently concurred that Bangkok was indeed the most suitable place to hold a Summit as it would send a signal to the world that the domino effect would be halted in Thailand.¹³⁶ Perhaps Singapore was wary of such a Summit being dominated by Indonesia with its own agenda, despite Singapore's own view that a Summit was desirable, and thus it promoted Thailand as a 'neutral' party for hosting the talks. The Meeting would also

have symbolic value in external terms in lending support to Thailand as the 'frontline' state. Nevertheless, the crucial role of President Suharto in the ASEAN process meant that Indonesia's weight did indeed take primary consideration, and the First ASEAN Summit was held in Bali in February 1976, and not in Bangkok. Subsequently, programme of action of the Declaration of ASEAN Concord provided that Summit Meetings should be held "as and when necessary," and not institutionalized on a regular basis.¹³⁷

Thailand's participation in the advocacy of Summit meetings revealed that its policy of maintaining a general convergence with the 1967 Bangkok Declaration was not dogmatic and was adapted to suit its own requirements as necessary. A Second Summit was held in Kuala Lumpur in August 1977 on the occasion of ASEAN's 10th Anniversary, and subsequently there were even discussions of a Third Summit. Thai documents seemed to indicate some early MFA enthusiasm for the possibility of such a Summit:

There have been some preliminary discussions as to the holding of a third meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government sometime next year in order to review recent developments in the region as well as ASEAN cooperative relations with external countries... it would only be natural for the leaders of member countries to get together regularly to assess the progress that is being made and to give directions for the continued growth of ASEAN especially in areas of economic cooperation.¹³⁸

However, although extensive ASEAN consultations took place on the Indochina issue after 1978, the idea of a formal Summit was eventually dropped. Instead, bilateral consultations were held between various leaders to coordinate policy to be adopted by the ASEAN countries. Thai sources nevertheless claim that the eventual holding of a Third Summit was the result of a Thai initiative, formally proposed at the 18th AMM in July 1985.¹⁹⁹ Following extended negotiations, Third ASEAN Summit was thus held in 1987 on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN.

Successive Thai leaders have also found it useful to visit all ASEAN member countries upon coming to office, which has become somewhat of a tradition. Perhaps more important for Thai leaders than for their ASEAN counterparts given the frequent changes in government, the ASEAN mini-Summits helped to assert publicly Thailand's commitment to the Organization, as well as assert the regional legitimacy of Thailand's leaders. In so doing such moves also helped to propagate a tradition of bilateral ASEAN diplomacy. Thus, MR Kukrit Pramoj visited Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta in June 1975, followed by Manila and Singapore in July. Even MR Seni Pramoj in his short-lived administration also managed to visit Kuala Lumpur in July 1976. After coming to office in October 1976, Tanin Kraivixien visited the ASEAN capitals during November-December of that year. General Kriangsak Chomanan in turn made an ASEAN circuit in February 1978, 3 months after obtaining power, and held various consultations with his ASEAN colleagues over the Kampuchean issue during the course of 1979. The visits of Thai leaders were frequently reciprocated by their

ASEAN colleagues, and Malaysian and Singaporean Prime Ministers became regular visitors to Bangkok. In fact, it has been found that among the ASEAN members, Thailand has held the greatest number of bilateral Summit meetings between 1967 and 1981, proving the importance it placed on Summit diplomacy and personal contacts in order to achieve policy objectives within ASEAN.¹⁴⁰ It further revealed the interest of Thai leaders in maintaining strong bilateral relationships with individual partners in ASEAN at the same time as more diffuse multilateral relationships within the Organization.

THE QUESTION OF ASEAN MILITARY COOPERATION

Contrary to the expectations of contemporary observers, Thailand publicly opposed turning ASEAN into a military cooperation pact. In fact, there was a general convergence within ASEAN policy circles that overt military cooperation was dangerous for the Organization as a whole, although the various ASEAN members differed as to the extent of non-formal cooperation that was desirable. In this respect, the key factor in determining the respective national positions was perception of the potential reaction of the Indochinese countries, China and the Soviet Union towards such cooperation. Already reluctant initially to admit to political cooperation, there was even greater reluctance by ASEAN to admit to specific security or military cooperation.¹⁴¹ While the former became generally accepted as a regular ASEAN function, the latter was never accepted in the same manner. This fact was spelt out clearly by successive Thai Foreign Ministers, such as by Upadit Pachariyangkun in the

midst of regional speculation on the possibility of Thailand's advocacy of a military role for ASEAN in February 1977:

We do not believe in the merit of having military alliance as such because that will give rise to misunderstanding. What we are aiming at within the framework of ASEAN is to emphasize on the economic and social cooperation...those who try to tell the world that Thailand is attempting to make military alliance among the ASEAN countries in our regional organization are not accurate and I can categorically deny that.¹⁴²

It was with such considerations in mind that at an earlier stage, Thanat Khoman, while upholding the need to maintain all options, believed ASEAN should pursue other forms of cooperation first before discussing any possibility of military cooperation.¹⁴³ There was substantial continuity in this position as the same policy was pursued by Thai delegates within ASA and ASPAC, and thereafter within various ASEAN fora.¹⁴⁴ As has been noted, the Thai military had played a minimal role in the creation of ASEAN, in contrast to their Indonesian and Malaysian counterparts, even if the military usually entertained good relationships with their ASEAN colleagues. This was also fully consistent with a central contention of this study of the Thai perception of ASEAN as a complement to existing multilateral and bilateral military cooperation. Within a wider objective of maximizing Thai security, political and other forms of cooperation within ASEAN could complement military ties with other countries and organizations. For Bangkok, it was more

constructive for ASEAN to concentrate on economic, social and cultural, as well as political, cooperation so as to build a base of regional solidarity first. Moreover, to have engaged in outright defence cooperation would have undermined the peaceful and independent image of ASEAN without perceptibly increasing the security of member states. With this in mind, Thanat promoted the notion of Southeast Asian countries not having enough military force to defend themselves against external threats.¹⁴⁵ In particular, it was stressed that against the military power of North Vietnam ASEAN cooperation in this field could not be expected to count for much. Much of the Thai position therefore had its basis in Thailand's proximity to the points of greatest vulnerability in Southeast Asia. For military capability, ASEAN members instead relied on the forces of other military powers, namely the regional presence of the US and countries of the Commonwealth. It must be underscored, however, that the availability of these facilities did not cause certain Thai policy-makers, conscious of the need to maintain all possible avenues for action, to rule out an ASEAN option altogether at various stages.

When assessing the US withdrawal from Indochina, certain Thai leaders with their overriding security concerns did consider widening the scope of ASEAN cooperation. Nevertheless, it may be seen that in their references to 'security' cooperation for ASEAN, Thai leaders to a large extent really meant cooperation to achieve regional order through an essentially enlarged political cooperation. On the other hand, the process also involved the proposition that ASEAN should have security functions, although no specific military cooperation was

envisaged.¹⁴⁶ This was seen in Field Marshal Thanom's Keynote Statement at the 6th AMM in Pattaya in April 1973:

We should collectively tackle the problems of security that have long plagued the stability of this region. This responsibility should not be left to others or to any nation alone in this region but should be shared by all of us. Let us appeal to the other countries in Southeast Asia to bury the differences and, together, pursue a more constructive course.¹⁴⁷

Thanom's Statement with its references to collective responsibility in the region, as well as to Thailand's advocacy of a conference of all Southeast Asian nations, was fully consistent with the general diplomatic disposition of Thailand at that time. Rather than the *SEATOizing* of ASEAN, there was rather a move to *ASEANize* SEATO during the 1970s, with greater emphasis being given to political consultations, as well as economic and cultural cooperation so as to maintain the usefulness of the Organization to its members and prevent further loss of interest.¹⁴⁸

Concerns about regional order may also have motivated subsequent Thai leaders in the aftermath of the events of Spring 1975. The issue of security again became a concern, and the 8th AMM held in Kuala Lumpur on 13-15 May 1975 was crucial in airing individual responses to the situation in Indochina, although the informal proceedings have remained shrouded in relative secrecy.¹⁴⁹ There was no apparent commitment to military cooperation *per se*. However, although the position adopted was that care had to be taken not to appear provocative towards the countries of Indochina, Thailand advocated close consultations

so that all avenues of cooperation should not be excluded. In this regard, the phrase “all avenues of cooperation” sometimes appeared to be a euphemism for the possibility of including security cooperation. In particular, in keeping with the evolution of its line of thinking on ZOPFAN, it was held that the possibility of such cooperation among the states of the zone as an ultimate measure should not be ruled out so as to maintain adequately the region’s neutrality, although forming a pact with outside powers was deemed undesirable. That such themes remained a concern was revealed by comments by MR Kukrit Pramoj on his visit to Manila in July 1975:

The future development of ASEAN cooperation should be widened and intensified to cover fields which, in past, we had not considered. Among the fields which we did not consider in the past is the security field. This will have to be discussed with member nations before we ever come to a conclusion.¹⁵⁰

Such declarations, however, again point to the often deliberate vagueness of references to security, with no specific mention of military cooperation. They also have to be seen within the context of the consideration of a general widening of cooperation, and taking into account the relative inexperience of an incoming civilian administration with regards to sensitive issues of ASEAN cooperation. In any case, given the public fear of an alignment with foreign powers by executive fiat in the aftermath of the events of October 1973, the Constitution of 1974 specified that military pacts had to be approved by Parliament. However, the Constitution of 1974 was suspended after the coup

d'état of October 1976, and the Constitution of 1978 which succeeded it, had no provisions to this purpose.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, internal documents relating to the Summit meetings revealed there was substantial internal consensus within Thailand on a line of thinking which excluded formal ASEAN military cooperation. Even the Thai military in the months leading up to the Bali Summit agreed that ASEAN as an organization should not formally cooperate militarily.¹⁵² Notwithstanding such reservations, some elements within the ASEAN defence community did envisage scope for greater bilateral or trilateral cooperation among member countries. Various measures were advocated short of the conclusion of a formal military cooperation agreement, such as the standardization of armaments within ASEAN.¹⁵³ It is also clear that discussions on security cooperation did take place at the Bali Summit as there was a provision for cooperation "on a non-ASEAN basis between the member states on security matters" in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord. Discussions on security cooperation, however, were not pursued on an ongoing basis after Bali, although there were again instances when the question was raised, such as at the Kuala Lumpur Summit in 1977 and again during the course of 1979.¹⁵⁴

During the course of the period under study, certain ASEAN members did reach agreement on enhancing military cooperation on a bilateral basis. Bilateral military exercises have been held between Thailand and certain ASEAN countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia.¹⁵⁵ Enhancing bilateral or trilateral cooperation may be seen as becoming more important by the Thai military, particularly after the phasing out of SEATO exercises by 1977. There was an agreement for the exchange of

military information between Indonesia and Singapore in November 1976, followed by an agreement between the latter and Thailand in December 1976. Following an Indonesian initiative, *Kursus Istimewa-KISTA* (Special Training Courses) were held on rotation between ASEAN countries for security officials as from 1974 so as to acquaint them with the security and defence policy of fellow ASEAN member countries.¹⁵⁶ Care, however, had to be taken that such activities appeared non-provocative and remained largely informal, for the benefit of outside observers.¹⁵⁷ Since the signing of the Agreement of 1968, Thailand has also promoted military cooperation with Malaysia on the Thai-Malay border to combat communist insurgency from the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) and the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). Joint military operations were launched by Malaysian and Thai forces during the course of 1977. In that respect, therefore, it may be said that ASEAN fulfilled an important security function for Thailand.

A study of the list of Thai delegates to ASEAN Meetings reveals that Thai military and national security representatives attended the initial ASEAN meetings, such as the 2nd AMM in 1968 and the various informal Foreign Ministers' Meetings held to discuss political issues.¹⁵⁸ This doubtless helped to feed the speculation that Thailand was trying to foster ASEAN military cooperation. This perception was particularly strong in the run-up to the Kuala Lumpur Summit in 1977 and focused on the activities of Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien, who was pursuing an active anti-communist policy in domestic terms. In fact, it was Indonesia which was one of the foremost exponents of some form of military cooperation by ASEAN countries. Indonesia

was motivated by strategic concerns over the large size of its territories in comparison with the capability of its armed forces, and by the belief that military cooperation could strengthen national and regional resilience.¹⁵⁹ Yet in Indonesia also there were certain differences between the perception of the military and the civilians. Indonesian Minister of Defence General Panggabean came out at times with statements strongly supportive of formal military cooperation, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was forced to limit such provocative moves in its attempts to uphold the 'free and active' legacy of Jakarta's diplomacy.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Foreign Minister Adam Malik did not rule out limited cooperation among the ASEAN states, including bilateral measures, altogether:

Regarding suggestions about multilateral military exercises among ASEAN countries, Indonesia has no objection against joint military exercises as long as these exercises are held in a bilateral or even trilateral basis but not in the framework of ASEAN...such exercises on a bilateral or trilateral basis would be good for creating close harmony on national resilience.¹⁶¹

As for the other states, the Philippines was keen to engage in ASEAN military cooperation as by the mid 1970s it had become uncertain as to the extent of US commitment to Southeast Asia. Singapore remained ambivalent as it wanted to ensure that the US remained engaged militarily, and was generally suspicious of any Indonesian-dominated regional order, although it welcomed greater coordination on security questions. Only Malaysia maintained its consistent position since 1970 that

any extension of multilateral security cooperation within the region was undesirable. It continued to hold that the main threat facing ASEAN was that of insurgency, and any formal defence cooperation would be misdirected.¹⁶²

Differences among as well as within ASEAN countries as to how much military cooperation was desirable may be illustrated by an examination of the respective positions taken on the issue of military aid to Cambodia in 1970. Following the Lon Nol coup in March 1970, the military situation in Cambodia had deteriorated, causing concern among its neighbours. In an attempt at an Asian solution to the issue, Indonesia hosted the Jakarta Conference on Cambodia on 16-17 May 1970 at which 11 nations participated, including all the ASEAN countries. The Indonesian military proposed the sending of troops to support the Cambodian regime of General Lon Nol, but were forced to withdraw before the objections of Foreign Minister Adam Malik.¹⁶³ According to Malik, "The communists are just waiting for arms to be delivered to escalate their activities in Cambodia," and he sought to ensure that the Jakarta Conference made no arrangements to this purpose.¹⁶⁴ Malaysia contented itself with providing anti-insurgency training. As for Thailand, in late May Deputy Prime Minister Prapat Charusathiara visited Cambodia and announced that Thailand would supply military provisions to Phnom Penh. Between late May and mid July, Thai military leaders also held talks with South Vietnamese leaders about the possibility for joint aid to Cambodia, including the possible conclusion of an alliance.¹⁶⁵ The military led by Prapat wanted to send Thai troops to Cambodia, to be justified in terms of forward defence of Thailand's own security, but were resisted by

Thanat and certain civilian Cabinet members for fear of reaction by the PRC and Vietnam. In this case, there was an apparent contradiction between the two basic doctrines upheld by the military: that of 'fighting the enemy outside the country is better than inside;' and 'don't bring enemies home.' Between May and July 1970, the official Thai stance appeared to see-saw between the two opposing positions, and consequently the Thai stance appeared ambivalent. Much appeared to hinge on whether the US would be prepared to back in financial terms any proposed despatch of Thai troops to Cambodia, a course of action which was formally restricted by recent Congressional moves.¹⁶⁶ Finally, the 'official' Thai view was expressed by the MFA spokesman during the course of Lon Nol's visit to Thailand between 22-23 July 1970:

Lately, there have been unfounded press speculations that nations on the mainland of Southeast Asia, including Thailand, may be planning to set up a new military alliance to meet growing communist threats...Thailand has been asked to cooperate with and assist three nations, not otherwise. However, this does not mean that those nations have decided to establish a new military alliance which cannot possibly make sense between parties with only low or nonexistent military potential and capability.¹⁶⁷

Such re-iteration not only reaffirmed Thailand's readiness to provide bilateral support for the regimes in Indochina, but at the same time a rejection of plans for military pact in the region. In due course, Thailand adopted a policy of 'neutrality'

with regards to the regime in Phnom Penh, a policy which was maintained until April 1975.¹⁶⁸

In fact, Cambodia remained the focus of the debates on multilateral ASEAN military cooperation throughout the period, given its proximity to Thailand and its resultant effects on ASEAN security. Following the Vietnamese intervention in what was now known as Kampuchea, in November 1979 there was an exchange of correspondence on a statement by the Spokesman of the Thai Prime Minister's Office on the desirability of organizing a meeting of defence ministers of ASEAN, specifically mentioning that it was a "Thai initiative." Apparently Prime Minister Kriangsak indicated that the idea of a meeting of ASEAN defence ministers could be explored, but he said that such a meeting could only be for an exchange of ideas and not for discussing military ties which would violate ASEAN principles.¹⁶⁹ The generally poor response within ASEAN to such an initiative meant that it was not pressed with any vigour, and was eventually abandoned.

Thailand's reluctance to engage in formal military cooperation within ASEAN thus showed substantial continuity. Thailand's position in 1980, at the end of the period under study, remained the same as at the beginning: that the costs would far outweigh the benefits, even if the Kingdom was searching for greater security. There were occasional departures from this official line by certain prominent individuals, but the general policy was maintained. Overall, it could be said that while there were more pressures on Thailand to encourage cooperation in this field than on other countries, there were important offsetting considerations. Indeed, by choosing to obtain military

support on the Kampuchean issue from the United States and China and depending on ASEAN mainly for political support, Thailand could claim with some conviction that it was not necessary for it to try to turn ASEAN into a military organization.

THE INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION

An element of continuity on the issue of ASEAN institutions was that Thai policy-makers may be seen to have favoured practical cooperation, instead of visible superstructures. Bearing in mind that Thailand favoured the greatest informality and the highest degree of flexibility for the Organization from the beginning, it did not favour an overarching administrative structure for ASEAN. Hence its advocacy of gradualism and informality at the 1967 Bangkok Meeting. This is shown by the study of the respective national positions taken at the Meeting. In drafting its initial proposals for the founding of ASEAN, the Philippines had in fact used the term 'Charter for peace and progress' for the founding document. By contrast, the Thai secretariat and Malaysia wanted a less ambitious title and preferred the format of a joint declaration for the Foreign Ministers, which eventually prevailed.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, considering Thanat Khoman's claim that he sought an example in the European Community, it can safely be said that further institutionalization was not excluded by the Thai side in the long run. As we have seen, the informality of ASEAN was drawn from certain members' previous experience in ASA, which was transmitted to the new body. In this regard, Thailand's stance was consistent with its previous position on ASA, in which it

had promoted informality whereas at the beginning the Philippines and even the usually modest Malaya favoured a grander design, complete with a central secretariat.¹⁷¹ Such an attitude may not have been necessarily unique within Asia as a whole which favoured informality and a step-by-step approach to cooperation, but may be opposed to Western contractually-based formality in multilateral institutions. Informality was also characteristic of the Thai stance on ASPAC. At the founding meeting of ASPAC in June 1966, Thanat recommended the practice of ASA of rotating the secretariat among member states, and stated that his country would not oppose some kind of permanent machinery and would bear its share of the expense, if necessary, but warned against permitting such machinery to become big and cumbersome.¹⁷² A similar stance was also seen on the issue of concluding an ASPAC Charter which was raised by South Korea in 1968.

It may be seen that the 1967 Bangkok Declaration involved minimal legal obligations for Thailand, with ASEAN being essentially a 'free association of states.' The Bangkok Declaration did not specify a legal status or specific legal powers for the Organization, which had to be identified by implication. In fact, under Thai law, ASEAN did not have, and continues to lack, its own legal personality, which required separate legislation to be passed by Parliament. In a recent study of ASEAN's legal status, the MFA's Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs concluded that according to widely accepted criteria ASEAN was "a permanent association of states, with lawful objects, equipped with organs," but that there was no "distinction, in terms of legal powers and purposes, between the organization and its member

states.”¹⁷³ This, for example, distinguished it from the European Community in which the European Commission was granted extensive powers to negotiate on behalf of the member states. Despite the limitations of the Bangkok Declaration, however, Thailand’s position as formulated by the MFA was always that the Declaration was *necessary* and *sufficient* as a founding charter for ASEAN. Therefore, it need not, and indeed should not, be amended or replaced unless absolutely necessary. However, Thailand remained relatively open on the possibility of concluding supplementary agreements which would more clearly define commitments on specific issues. It was President Marcos who proposed the idea of drawing up an ASEAN Charter to place the Association on a more formal footing. As Philippine Foreign Minister Carlos Romulo declared at the 7th AMM: “We are in the process of institutionalization of ASEAN...It requires only the adoption of a Charter to complete the work of institutionalizing the Association fully—a Charter which will bind us formally in full commitment to ASEAN goals and aspirations.”¹⁷⁴ However, it may be seen at the time that the signing of the TAC in 1976 largely eliminated the need for an ASEAN Charter. The TAC bound the signatories to enhance their cooperation in a wide variety of fields, without removing the primary importance of the Bangkok Declaration, for in principle it reflected a wider Southeast Asian perspective.¹⁷⁵

The ASEAN structure as provided by the 1967 Bangkok Declaration was based on that of ASA, a system of intergovernmental conferences. The Foreign Ministers took the lead in the intergovernmental negotiations and met in an annual ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM), whose chairmanship

rotated annually between the five member countries. An ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC) of ASEAN ambassadors accredited to the country chairing the AMM was also instituted to undertake the business of the Association in between the regular annual meeting of the Foreign Ministers. In turn, a committee of the Heads of the ASEAN National Secretariats screened various projects and prepared the agenda and detailed recommendations for adoption by the ASC, as well as performed general coordination functions. Hence the influential role played by the heads of the ASEAN National Secretariats on a day-to-day basis, both at the national and at the ASEAN level. The Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), which had been introduced in 1971, was outside this formal institutional structure due to its origins specific to ZOPFAN, although it was indirectly integral as it was headed by the Permanent Secretaries or Director-Generals of the Political Department, who were invariably more senior than the Secretaries-General of the ASEAN National Secretariat. Such arrangements meant, moreover, that organizational issues were largely a matter left to the discretion of the MFA. This impression is confirmed by a former senior official of the Ministry of Commerce, who admitted that as political decisions were involved on such questions, the MFA took the crucial initiatives on institutional issues.¹⁷⁶ Given the importance placed on political direction, much of the Thai position on organizational issues may therefore be said to have reflected political concerns, as will be seen on issues such as that of a central ASEAN secretariat, organizational structure and membership. Subsequently, much of intra-ASEAN coordination was taken over by the central ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, although the

respective ASEAN Directors-General remained powerful in general terms. Under this structure were the technical committees, ad hoc and permanent, chaired by the various functional agencies of the individual member countries, under which most of the cooperative projects were planned and directed.

It was the Philippines that first initiated plans for the greater institutionalization of ASEAN. As had been the case with ASA, the Philippines supported a substantial structure for the organizations of which it was a member, in keeping with its optimistic regional vision and its more legalistic and formal approach to cooperation than many of its Asian partners. Subsequent to the 1967 Bangkok Meeting, Manila was to be frequently seen to propose ambitious plans for regional cooperation. Thus, at the 2nd AMM in 1968 Narciso Ramos, the Philippines Foreign Minister, proposed the creation of a central secretariat, originally as part of a package of measures involving an ASEAN Fund, central secretariat and Charter.¹⁷⁷ Such interest in a central coordinating body was then raised again publicly at the 5th AMM in 1972. At the same time, the UN Study Group recommended that “the nucleus of a permanent central secretariat, as small as is consistent with providing the necessary services, be set up,” which served to spur further initiatives.¹⁷⁸ Indonesia shared some of the Philippines’ ambitions for ASEAN, given its emphasis on the Organization as the main instrument of its regional policy, and thus it also sought to improve ASEAN’s infrastructure. In particular, Indonesia favoured a more centralized structure which would enable a clearer sense of direction to be given to the Organization, with Jakarta being

able to exert a greater influence.¹⁷⁹ With this in mind, it proposed Jakarta as the site for an ASEAN Secretariat from the time of the 6th AMM in April 1973, at which the decision was taken to form a central secretariat and that studies to this purpose should begin. In turn, Manila was formally proposed by the Philippines in 1974, complete with an attractive package of benefits. A bidding contest appeared to be inevitable, but following extensive consultations between Indonesia and the Philippines, Manila's bid was withdrawn in favour of Jakarta. A decision was then taken by the ASEAN states that the ASEAN Secretariat should be located in the Indonesian capital, with the consensus agreement being enshrined in the decisions of the 7th AMM in May 1974.¹⁸⁰ As from the initial decision in April 1973, however, it may be seen that there were ongoing discussions regarding the shape and form of the ASEAN institutions as a whole.

Thailand's position was relatively slow to emerge, although it was reluctant to see too early an institutionalization, believing as it did that the Organization should first achieve some concrete results. Underlying the arguments was often the unspoken assumption that institutionalization entailed considerable expenses and did not always mean more effective cooperation. By extension, this also suggested that informal intergovernmental consultations on political and economic issues were given greater priority than programme-based cooperation which may require greater secretarial and financial resources, but without necessarily producing clear benefits in the short term. ASEAN officials thus spoke constantly about minimizing expenditure and avoiding any duplication of work. However, Thailand moved towards the idea of a central secretariat during the course of

work of the UN Study Group, and as part of its reappraisal that ASEAN cooperation had to be elevated. The initial ambiguity pressed for by Thailand in 1967 has nevertheless enabled such changes to the ASEAN institutional structure to be made without the need to update ASEAN's founding document.

Thailand for its part had also considered running for the seat of the proposed ASEAN Secretariat, with its pride at Bangkok being the seat of SEATO, ECAFE and other international organizations in mind. However, it also seemed to have possessed political objectives in making its final decision not to run. Jakarta was instead supported by Thailand as Indonesia's friendship was valuable considering its political position as a non-aligned country with good Islamic and Middle Eastern contacts.¹⁸¹ Indonesia was also one of the only Southeast Asian countries with an international stature, having been a member of the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS) after the 1973 Peace Accords in Vietnam. Within Thailand, there was also no great fear of the possibility for Indonesian domination of the Organization. In return, Thailand could be reasonably satisfied with the selection of General Hartono Rekso Dharsono as the first Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat as he had been Indonesia's Ambassador to Bangkok during 1969-1970. Nevertheless, it was forced to acquiesce in his removal in 1978 by Indonesia following his criticism of the Indonesian army leadership during the student unrest of that year. Indeed, Thailand's Foreign Minister Upadit Pachariyangkun as the incumbent ASC Chairman had to undertake the job of formally notifying Dharsono to vacate his post.¹⁸² Moreover, although the post of Secretary-General of the

ASEAN Secretariat was rotated among the member countries, due to alphabetical ordering it was not to be until 1984 that there was a Thai Secretary-General with the appointment of Phan Wannamethee, a senior Thai diplomat.

Although Thailand was keen to endow ASEAN with the greatest effectiveness following the decision to move towards a central secretariat in 1973, its vision was of a limited mechanism for the Association. Most importantly, the position as formulated by the MFA was that any central secretariat should merely be an adjunct to, and not a replacement of, the mechanisms established at Bangkok. Early on in the process, an MFA Policy Memorandum recommended that: “The Central Secretariat should have only the status of an additional permanent body.”¹⁸³ Thailand’s position, as opposed to the grand design of Indonesia and the Philippines, contributed towards the final consensus decision taken by ASEAN on a limited secretariat, with a Secretary-General, an Assistant to the Secretary-General, three Bureau Directors and three professional Officers, as well as a body of locally-recruited staff. In this, it was supported by Singapore, which specifically feared that Indonesia could dominate the ASEAN agenda with a large central secretariat based in Jakarta.¹⁸⁴ Thailand’s position also showed continuity from the stance taken on ASA, as shown in its Working Paper at that time in which it had argued for the administrative machinery to be “kept at a minimum” and that the Association should be an “informal” and “practical” organization.¹⁸⁵ This probably had something to do with its experience in SEATO, with the restrictive wording of the Manila Pact, which had prevented members from reorienting the organization as

Thailand thought was necessary, such as moving to majority rule. A more specific analysis thus tends to give lie to the general comments that Asian states as a whole preferred informality with regards to the structure of regional institutions. While such preferences were indeed expressed, this did not prevent the emergence of divergences based on perception of national interest. Meanwhile, even after the creation of the ASEAN Secretariat, control remained very much in the hands of the member states. Under the 1976 Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Secretariat, the professional staff of the Secretariat were appointed by the ASC upon nomination by member governments, and as such were mostly seconded from various national agencies, retaining a national perspective. Most symbolically, the ASEAN Secretariat was headed by the Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat as merely the 'Head of the Secretariat' with a limited brief, and not Head of the Organization as a whole.

After the restructuring process launched by the Bali Summit decisions in 1976, Thailand also sought as much as possible to maintain ASEAN's overall congruence with the 1967 structure. Initially, in response to Philippine proposals in 1974, it was apparently proposed that there could be instituted a Council of Ministers, together with a small central secretariat.¹⁸⁶ However, following extended discussions within the MFA and between the MFA and other agencies, it was deemed suitable to attempt to preserve as much of the 1967 structure as possible. The basis for this position was that Thailand did not have a single Minister who could oversee economic cooperation comprehensively. Thus, it was important to have a mechanism

at the ministerial level to oversee the wider ASEAN cooperation and to avoid the non-proliferation of committees. Moreover, it was again deemed suitable to preserve the Bangkok Declaration as it did not only specify the organizational structure, but also the basic political commitment to cooperate in the various fields. Some have suggested that this preference for the old structure was due to a lack of vision or direction, and this may well have played a part. However, as it had played a major role in the drafting of the Bangkok Declaration, Thailand saw that its interests were comprehensively dealt within the existing format, whereas in a new round of bargaining this might not remain so. It may also be seen that Thailand was ready to support efforts to improve the efficiency of the Organization as a whole, although it saw a need for continued political direction. This position was sustained by the MFA in the aftermath of the Bali Summit, which saw the launch of an enhanced ASEAN economic cooperation, requiring a further review of the ASEAN institutional structure. Alone of the ASEAN members, Thailand sent an MFA representative as its chief delegate to the Ad Hoc Committee of the ASEAN Economic Ministers on the restructuring of Permanent, Special and Ad Hoc Committees Related to Economic Matters held in Kuala Lumpur in December 1976. Nevertheless, the 3rd AEM in January 1977 took a position that the committees of the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) should report directly to the AEM and not through any intervening body not responsible to the Economic Ministers, namely the ASC.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, at their next meeting in June, the AEM in formulating their recommendations to the ASEAN Heads of Government proposed that they should only report to

the Heads of Government and maintained that the ASC be replaced. This position was immediately rebutted by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at the 10th AMM in Singapore in July, as revealed in the comments of the Thai, Philippine and Malaysian Foreign Ministers.¹⁸⁸ Thus on the eve of the Kuala Lumpur Summit in 1977, there was an apparent impasse between the respective positions of the AMM and AEM.

Within Thailand itself there were considerable differences of emphasis between the MFA and the Economic Ministries. The Ministry of Finance, which was responsible for the overall coordination of Thailand's economic policy, argued that it should take a more prominent coordinating function. On this issue, therefore, the divisions appeared to lie between different bureaucratic agencies rather than on country lines, for most of the other countries experienced the same differences, with the exception of Indonesia whose Foreign Minister supported a greater role for the Economic Ministers. Indeed, Indonesian proposals drew heavily on the European example, and advocated abolishing the ASC altogether and to hand over a majority of the coordinating functions to the new ASEAN Secretariat, while a Council of Ministers would remove the monopoly of power away from the Foreign Ministers.¹⁸⁹ A compromise was reached at the 2nd ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in August 1977, whereby the ASC and the Foreign Ministers in the AMM remained the central coordinating body of ASEAN, although the economic committees could report directly to the AEM, and the AEM to the Heads of Government while keeping the Foreign Ministers informed through the ASEAN Secretariat. Notwithstanding this compromise, the subject of an appropriate

institutional structure to facilitate cooperation and maximize effectiveness proved to be a source of ongoing debate within ASEAN. This was seen in the creation of the Task Force of officials and businessmen, which presented its Report to 16th AMM in 1983, in the Report of the ASEAN-CCI Group of Fourteen of 1987, and in the discussions leading up to the 4th Summit in 1992.¹⁹⁰

THE QUESTION OF ASEAN'S ENLARGEMENT 1967-1979

Thailand regarded the issue of ASEAN membership as important from the beginning, seeing it as determining the place of the Organization in regional terms. Although it had pressed for the establishment of ASA at the earliest opportunity, even with a restricted membership, it came to see that membership was one issue which had helped to doom the Organization, which turned out not to be viable in regional terms with only three members. Indeed, Gordon observes of the founding of ASA that: “had officials of the three states not been so concerned with finding a ‘neutral’ fourth member of the proposed group, ASA would very likely have been established months sooner.”¹⁹¹ From the start, therefore, Thailand encouraged the widest possible membership for ASEAN, and indicated that the new Organization should eventually encompass all the countries of Southeast Asia. Thanat Khoman’s speech at the Closing Ceremony of the 4th ASA MM in Kuala Lumpur in August 1967 constituted a good recapitulation of the Thai position:

Ultimately, I also hope that even those who have shown hostility towards us will also see the benefits of cooperation instead of seeking to expand and dominate. It may take ten years, twenty years or more, but the time will come when they will sit with us, work with us, for their own good as well as for our mutual benefits.¹⁹²

It is also useful to recall that an important element in the discussions at Bangkok in 1967 was that of membership, where the position of Sri Lanka was discussed and then dropped.¹⁹³ However, under the Bangkok Declaration, ASEAN was merely “open for participation to all States in the Southeast Asian Region” which subscribed to the aims, principles and purposes of the Association, and there was no mention of “entitlement” as in Art.IV of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).¹⁹⁴ Thus it was up to interested parties to make formal applications to join ASEAN by subscribing to the Association’s basic documents, after which it depended on the discretion of the existing members to decide on the expansion of membership on the basis of consensus.

Thailand saw the expansion of membership as increasing ASEAN’s regional relevance and bringing greater balance to the Association. With this in mind, between 1970-1975 it sought to involve Laos and Cambodia as far as possible in ASEAN activities. After 1975, moreover, it saw the offer of ASEAN membership as a symbol of reconciliation in Southeast Asia and a willingness to cooperate with all, including past foes.¹⁹⁵ Given Thailand’s past association with US policy in Southeast Asia, Thailand gave its early advocacy of ASEAN’s expansion a

symbolic significance as an aspect of its 'good neighbour' policy rather than considering the practical implications of such a move, such as the possible dilution of ASEAN solidarity or ideological affinity. Through its pronouncements on the desirability for expansion of membership during 1973-1978, it showed a keenness to depart from an anti-Vietnam image in cooperation with the Philippines, and generally supported Malaysian moves to increase ASEAN membership. At the same time, it was a distinctly political position, in maintaining that ASEAN was "The logical framework for establishing peace, progress and stability in the region," instead of paving the way for a new inclusive organization specifically designed to cater for the Indochinese countries, much as ASEAN was initially designed to cater for Indonesia's entry into regional cooperation.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, in a conciliatory speech reminiscent of Abraham Lincoln, Prime Minister MR Kukrit Pramoj announced in July 1975 that: "peoples and nations are reaching out, or trying to reach out, to mend the fences, to settle the differences that at one point in time had the fervour of a struggle between good and evil. Reality dictates that we must think anew because the times are new. We must disenthral ourselves from old prejudices and evolve a policy which is rational for our own time."¹⁹⁷ In advocating expansion of membership Thai policy-makers may have also borne in mind the consideration that with the inclusion of Burma and Indochina within ASEAN, Thailand would most probably be projected into the forefront of the Organization, becoming the geographical and political core of the enlarged body instead of its frontline.

By contrast, Indonesia and Singapore generally harboured suspicions of the effects of an expansion of membership on ASEAN's integrity. In 1969, Singapore had spoken out against the possibility of South Vietnam's membership in ASEAN, stating that ASEAN should concentrate primarily on economic cooperation and not burden itself with the ideological complexities of the region's military and security problems.¹⁹⁸ This position was maintained so that as late as 1978 Singaporean Foreign Minister Rajaratnam took a line that: "we are still a little bit weak in the knees...any extra partner is a burden, so I don't see any immediate plans or the possibility of expansion," which clashed with Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak's advocacy of an 'open door' policy regarding membership.¹⁹⁹ As for the Indonesian position, it appeared that at the beginning Jakarta had been so sympathetic to a broadening of membership to stress the non-aligned nature of the Organization as to even speak of involving the two Vietnams.²⁰⁰ However, this had by 1975-1976 changed to a concentration on ASEAN solidarity as a building block of regional order, rather than making ASEAN all-inclusive. It was thus receptive, to a certain extent, to enhanced cooperation within ASEAN on the one hand, and bilateral or less formal cooperation with Indochinese countries on the other.²⁰¹ This line of thinking was explained by General Ali Murtopo of the State Intelligence Agency (BAKIN), who was close to the Indonesian President, in the influential journal *Indonesian Quarterly*:

A policy of cooperation should not necessarily mean the immediate inclusion of the countries of Indochina into the membership of ASEAN as some have

suggested. Perhaps for certain reasons it would not even require their membership into the association, not just a matter of timing, it needs to be stressed here that the membership of ASEAN as well as on the possibility of future cooperation between the two groupings of Southeast Asia is by no means to prejudice the possibility of cooperation between the member countries of ASEAN on the one hand and the countries of Indochina on a bilateral basis.²⁰²

At the same time, Thailand also qualified its stand by taking a position that ASEAN had to be seen to work, and that the Organization should not one-sidedly solicit additional membership for that action might indicate a sense of weakness and insecurity. Other countries which were interested in membership should instead make the first positive moves. Such a position reflected the belief that ASEAN should maintain a certain reserve so as not to create an impression of alarm at regional developments. Again, the question of image was important, and Thailand wanted to show to third parties that ASEAN was indeed the vibrant and viable organization as it had maintained all along and would not be destabilized even without the membership of Indochinese countries, leading again to some contradiction in its policy. Indeed, a study of ASEAN statements and declarations reveals that official ASEAN calls for other countries to join the Association were generally limited, considering the differences in emphasis between the various members. It was up to particular member countries to lobby potential applicants on an individual basis, most notably during their tenure ship of the chair of the ASEAN Standing Committee.

Joint ASEAN calls were nevertheless made in the aftermath of the Paris Peace Accords ending the conflict in Vietnam, such as at the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting in February 1973 in which a meeting of all Southeast Asian nations was called for and expansion of membership was stated as desirable. Thailand for its part may be seen to have concentrated its efforts on enticing countries on the continent, namely Burma and the Indochina states. As has been shown, an associated move was the attempt to organize a meeting of regional states. In this regard, Thailand was successful in its efforts at lobbying delegates to the 6th AMM in Pattaya in April 1973 to obtain an ASEAN agreement on "the desirability of convening a conference of all Southeast Asian nations at an appropriate time." Prime Minister Thanom explained the Thai move in a speech in May 1973 in which he declared that:

Thailand firmly believes that all countries in the region of Southeast Asia must assume primary collective responsibilities in contributing to efforts towards the establishment of a condition for political stability, economic and social enhancement, and genuine peace in the region. Our proposal to convene a Conference of all Southeast Asian nations is intended to serve no other purpose than this. It would serve first to remove existing misunderstanding and suspicions and then pave the way to productive and peaceful cooperation among the countries of the region.²⁰³

A similar reasoning was also seen behind Deputy Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan's numerous comments on this

initiative between 1973-1975. However, the idea eventually faded away as it failed to obtain sufficient support among the parties concerned, and was superseded in priority by advocacy of an ASEAN Summit.

While the other countries of Southeast Asia did not formally apply for membership of ASEAN, a certain degree of interest was shown by various governments in the progress of the Association in the years prior to 1975. Such tendencies were actively encouraged by Thailand, pending final decision on membership. Observer status, formal or informal, at the annual ASEAN Ministerial Meetings was the intermediate solution offered by ASEAN. Laos sent observers to ASEAN Ministerial Meetings in 1973 and 1974, Cambodia between 1970-1974, and South Vietnam between 1969 and 1972. After the Indonesian occupation of East Timor in 1975-1976, and especially after observer status became associated with accession to the TAC, association with ASEAN became even more a form of regional non-aggression agreement, as seen in the case of Papua New Guinea which attended AMMs as an observer in 1976, and after 1978. Likewise, Brunei Darussalam, which had opted out of the Malaysian Federation in 1963, became an observer as from 1980 until its full membership upon achieving full independence from Britain in 1984.

In fact, regardless of its advocacy of expansion of ASEAN membership and in contrast with its good bilateral relations with the ASEAN countries, Thailand's relations with its other neighbours were problematic. As has been shown, prior to the creation of ASEAN, the state of bilateral relations with the other countries of Southeast Asia was not very smooth. Subsequent to

1967, its efforts to promote ties on the continent remained relatively unfruitful, and it had to go through Indonesia as an intermediary to extend an invitation to North Vietnam to attend the 7th AMM in Pattaya in 1973.²⁰⁴ It was a reflection of its negative image with its hosting of US bases that such invitations were not accepted. Following the 1970 coup d'état in Cambodia, bilateral relations between Bangkok and Phnom Penh improved markedly, although there was no ASEAN consensus on Cambodian membership. Meanwhile, after 1975 various differences continued to separate the new communist states from ASEAN. Despite the officially declared policy of being on friendly terms with all, Thailand was seen as an ASEAN 'hawk' in the period 1976-1977 and after 1979. Even before the formal creation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, there were problems on the Mekong by late 1975, which continued into 1976 under the Tanin Government, leading to the closure of the border and severe economic disruptions on the Laotian side. By contrast, Malaysia's initiatives in Indochina seemed to have encountered greater success, particularly in view of its declared neutrality after 1970, its offer of technical assistance and the goodwill visits made by Foreign Minister Tunku Ahmad Rithauddeen in 1978.²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, Vietnam in particular preferred bilateral relations with the ASEAN countries and rejected formal membership of ASEAN, as indicated by comments by its Deputy Foreign Minister, Phan Hien:

Since the end of the war in Indochina, a new situation exists in Southeast Asia. Why should we be absorbed into an already existing organization whose

past is known...when it is a question of the cooperation of nine Southeast Asian countries a new formula has to be worked out to assure equality between the five ASEAN members and the four other nations.²⁰⁶

It may thus be seen that a failure of perception between the two sides was at issue. By the 1980s, however, with its opposition to Vietnam's intervention in Kampuchea, Thailand's stance on ASEAN membership had somewhat altered. In face of arguments for renewed regional reconciliation, particularly between the ASEAN countries and Vietnam, Thailand revealed itself to be cautious, contrast to its previous conciliatory position towards the Indochinese countries prior to the crisis.

Thus, while there was some concern in various quarters at the potential effects of expansion of membership on the unity of the Organization, it is perhaps misleading to state that ASEAN was always "cautious and reserved" regarding the issue of membership.²⁰⁷ This negative perception has arisen largely as a result of regional tensions during the course of the 1980s. Moreover, there were differences in the respective national positions taken by the ASEAN countries, though it may be said at this stage that there was not a widespread perception of any inconsistency between Thailand's efforts to foster relationships on the continent and its membership of ASEAN, at a time when the question of membership remained largely politically motivated and not yet tinged with economics as in the 1990s. However, while it is true that ASEAN's membership did remain remarkably stable throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the accession of Brunei Darussalam in 1984 and Vietnam in 1995 has not appreciably affected ASEAN solidarity.

With regards to participation in other regional bodies, Thailand has always remained rather pragmatic and flexible. It has been shown that Bangkok in reflection of the traditional MFA line constantly sought to juggle its foreign policy options to maximize their effectiveness. At the time of its founding in 1967, ASEAN did not have particular priority among other regional cooperation options. When ASEAN was in difficulties during 1968-1969, Thai policy-makers sought to emphasize involvement in ASPAC. As seen in the rhetoric of this period through the speeches of policy-makers, 1969 probably marked the heyday of wider 'Asian' solutions. However, when ASPAC itself became redundant after 1971 and a liability by 1973 following the PRC's UN membership, the importance of ASEAN was stressed instead. Already by the time that Thailand came to chair the ASPAC Standing Committee again in June 1973, it was agreed that the annual Ministerial Meeting of the Organization should be postponed. Australia and Malaysia had failed to send representatives to the Meeting, and it emerged that Australia and Japan which had already accorded diplomatic recognition to the PRC and were always wary of the ideological leaning of the Organization found it difficult to maintain any relationship with Taiwan through ASPAC.²⁰⁸ Speaking before the start of the Standing Committee Meeting held in Bangkok, Klos Visessurakarn, Thailand's ASPAC-ASEAN Director-General, thus announced of the annual Ministerial Meeting that "its definite postponement might mean the end of ASPAC."²⁰⁹ Following such difficulties in even organizing meetings, ASPAC ceased to have any meaning, including for Thailand, and the Organization was formally wound up by its members in 1975.

At the same time, Thailand continued to participate actively in the various functional regional organizations which existed in Southeast Asia. However, such organizations tended to remain encapsulated and limited in their scope, and thus of limited political value. Such was the failed dream of the Mekong Committee, which was set up to harness the energies and resources of the Mekong River to benefit the development of the riverine states, comprising Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam, as well as donor countries. As W.J. Van de Oord, its Executive Agent, wrote: “so few people realize that Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam together are almost exactly the same size as the original European Common Market, 1 million square kilometres.” In his view, cooperation in hydroelectricity and irrigation could be as powerful a tool for regional integration as coal and steel in Europe, and yet political differences meant that cooperation was kept at a purely practical level.²¹⁰ Nevertheless, cooperation between Laos and Thailand was maintained even during the worst regional tensions through the purchase by Thailand of electricity generated by Laos’ Nam Ngum hydroelectric dam, revealing the cooperative potentials provided by resource-sharing. Although the activities of the Mekong Committee lapsed after the events of Spring 1975, by July 1977, there was already an agreement by Thailand, Laos and Vietnam to revive its operations in an Interim Mekong Committee even if Kampuchea remained outside in its self-imposed isolation.

Thanat Khoman has often referred to what he described as the ‘natural selection’ process governing the survival of regional organizations. His position was that since it was not possible to

have one overarching regional organization because of regional differences arising out of the Cold War, then it was necessary to have two or more.²¹¹ During the midst of the Sabah dispute in 1968, Thanat Khoman commented: “which will do better, ASEAN or ASPAC, we don’t know yet. In the future, one or the other may drop out. Or they may merge.”²¹² However, he also mentioned that while it was good not to have all ‘eggs in same basket,’ meaning membership of only one organization, there were also problems, to use a Thai saying, of *Jab Poo Sai Kradoang* (putting crabs in same basket), with various states constantly seeking to withdraw from membership of a regional organization as if they were a group of busy crabs.²¹³ Despite the best efforts exerted by Thailand in trying to hold together the members of various cooperative schemes, a range of alternatives was therefore maintained by Thailand, whose policy was defined in terms of concentric circles of cooperation, with ASEAN as the core behind such ventures:

Regional efforts can complement and are supplementing the broader frameworks or arrangements of such organizations as the United Nations and SEATO...Thailand for one envisages that sub-regional organizations, like ASEAN, should serve as the core or the inner ring, supplemented by a larger body, like ASPAC, which is in turn complemented by international organizations with wider membership.²¹⁴

Thailand certainly did not allow sentimentality to delay necessary actions in withdrawing from organizations it deemed redundant, although it continued to seek to maximize its options.

An internal decision was taken in Thailand on the future of SEATO in early 1975, and the question of SEATO was discussed in Thai-Philippines discussions during Prime Minister MR Kukrit Pramoj's visit to Manila in July. In the bilateral discussions on the future of SEATO, the Thai position was that every ASEAN country had links to allies: the Philippines with the US, Malaysia and Singapore with the Commonwealth, and Indonesia to a certain extent with NAM and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), while Thailand only had the vague assurances under the 1954 Manila Treaty, and thus, it wanted to keep the Treaty whether it worked or not. Meanwhile, the Philippines was anxious to remove all vestiges of SEATO as it wanted to obtain observer status in NAM, but Thailand wanted, as a senior diplomat put it, "to keep the door ajar."²¹⁵ Following the discussions, an announcement was nevertheless made that the Asian parties wanted the Organization to be dissolved, although as a first compromise the Organization was to be wound up gradually, and not immediately as the Philippines originally wanted. At the final 20th Meeting of the SEATO Council in New York in September 1975, the Thai position remained to keep the Treaty, and although the other four countries agreed with Thailand and were prepared to publicly reaffirm that the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty remained in force, owing Philippine reservations a compromise was reached in which the understanding would be recorded, but not publicly referred to.²¹⁶ Accordingly, a formal decision was taken by the contracting parties for the dissolution of SEATO by July 1977, with the informal understanding that the Manila Pact would remain in force.²¹⁷ This did not stop SEATO's last

Secretary-General, the Thai diplomat Sunthorn Hongladarom, lamenting what he called the “premature decision” of the political leaders, claiming that: “ASEAN is five nations which are comparatively weak; they can help one another but there is a limit as to what they can do. In SEATO we had four highly developed countries which are in a much better position to help.”²¹⁸ SEATO was therefore disbanded largely on the decision of the regional states, with the external powers effectively on the sidelines.

Accordingly, by 1977 ASEAN was the main body for regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, and was widely accepted as such. It also meant that for the first time, Southeast Asian cooperation became the dominant theme for inter-governmental cooperation in the region. Thailand has been relatively silent on the issue of Pacific economic cooperation, although by the early 1980s Thanat Khoman was actively advocating the Pacific Basin concept, believing that participation in a larger group would help enhance ASEAN bargaining power and that hesitation about dilution should not prevail.²¹⁹ Despite the talk of a wider Asia-Pacific cooperation, however, with the demise of ASPAC such themes remained muted for a long time and failed to get off the ground at the inter-governmental level until the late 1980s with the launch of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), primarily under Australian inspiration.

CONCLUSION

Despite officially stressing the benefits of economic cooperation and thus the functional basis of the Organization,

it became clear that from the start Thailand regarded political cooperation as being central to ASEAN's range of activities. It is the contention of this study that the comprehensive Thai approach to regional cooperation, as revealed through the advocacy of Collective Political Defence, made political activities an integral part of Thailand's original aims for the Organization. It did appear, on the other hand, that the relative importance of such themes was magnified subsequently, contrary to expectations, due to the unfavourable turn of regional events. Overall, Thailand may be seen to have played a generally active role in ASEAN political cooperation throughout the period under study, and it is the contention that it came to see the greatest potential benefit in this field. In this regard, its emphasis tended to differ slightly from its colleagues in that it appeared less interested in intra-ASEAN political relations than in the external implications of ASEAN political cooperation vis-à-vis third parties. Of primary concern was that ASEAN political cooperation should *support* the wider scope of Thai foreign policy, though not necessarily lead. In this sense, ASEAN cooperation was shown to be subsidiary to national concerns and a first conclusion may be made that political cooperation within the Organization was driven by the MFA which constituted a major factor in sustaining Thailand's commitment to the Organization in this period. The MFA regarded the Organization as primarily a tool of foreign policy, and thus ASEAN cooperation was utilized to further Thailand's wider foreign policy goals.

Given the members' hesitancy at including all questions within the scope of ASEAN, political cooperation was necessarily

ad hoc and issue-oriented. ZOPFAN did provide a sort of roadmap with which to work towards, but considering the reservations of the individual member countries, progress towards that goal was slow. Thailand's policy towards ASEAN political cooperation was driven by the realization that a joint approach to issues of mutual interest to the five member countries limited Thailand's political exposure arising from its wider policy concerns, and enabled it to obtain broader support than if it acted alone. Such joint approaches allowed informal coalitions, to be formed around the Organization on particular issue areas, and increased Thailand's bargaining power in the most concrete manifestation of its own concept of Collective Political Defence. Thailand therefore tended to play a pro-active role in initiating ASEAN political actions. In the midst of the rapidly changing international and regional situation, political consultations enabled Thailand to coordinate its policies of external adjustment without appearing diplomatically isolated, particularly with reference to the primal issue of relations with China and Indochina. As an illustration, political consultations with other ASEAN leaders enabled a useful exchange of views on the policies adopted towards China and Indochina, which allowed Bangkok to modify the pace adopted towards the relevant negotiations as necessary. In particular, ASEAN political cooperation served increasingly to backstop Bangkok's gradual assertion of policy independence vis-à-vis Washington during the course of the 1970s. During the course of the period 1975-1979, however, Bangkok also came to recognize the limitations of ASEAN political cooperation. Hence as the situation in Kampuchea deteriorated in 1978, it began to look increasingly

to Washington and Beijing as sources of support. Nevertheless, ASEAN political cooperation demonstrated how the complementary function of the Organization with regards to alignment and collective security in time was transformed into a firmer commitment to regionalism.

The field of political cooperation revealed how concerted political efforts were exerted by Thailand within ASEAN to show to the countries of Indochina in the post 1973 period that the Organization and its individual member countries posed no threat to them, despite ideological differences. The distinct impression was that Thailand attempted not only through bilateral means, but also through ASEAN, to establish a *modus vivendi* with Indochina. However, national efforts to strengthen Thailand's security through increasing military capability and the internal suppression of communism, as seen particularly during 1976, largely negated such efforts. A more positive image seemed to have emerged from the Thai position on ZOPFAN, which was more refined than as might first appear from Thailand's political alignment and previously held views on neutrality. Even though there were differences of opinion within Thailand regarding the usefulness of such an exercise, a fairly consistent approach at the working level may be seen to have been adopted on ZOPFAN, which was accepted as a useful manifestation of ASEAN independence. While there was an initial reticence at the top levels, in view of internal political adjustments ZOPFAN was increasingly stressed after 1973 and promoted by Thailand at all levels. However, it may be seen that ZOPFAN's significance to Thailand laid more in its symbolism and political message rather than in its substance and thus it did

not actively press for speedy implementation. This symbolism was directed primarily at China and Indochina, and a further conclusion may be drawn that many ASEAN issues were regarded with a political dimension by Thailand and thereby further politicized and given added symbolic value. Much of the Thai stance within ASEAN was given to symbolism, as shown on issues such as membership, ZOPFAN, TAC, and even political consultations and joint approaches. Moreover, Thailand's support for ZOPFAN depended on a particular interpretation of neutrality: one based on a rejection of external interference in the form of support for insurgent movements, rather than any links that zonal powers may have with external ones. The perspective of national interest and security therefore remained uppermost in the minds of policy-makers.

At the same time, and contrary to contemporary expectations, Thailand did not support the institutionalization of military activities in ASEAN for fear of antagonizing China and Indochina. It did, however, participate in discussions regarding the possible expansion of ASEAN cooperation to involve security issues so as to maximize its options. It is the contention of this study that the questions of politics and security were closely intertwined within ASEAN, and were also a function of the domestic relationship between the military and diplomatic circles in the member countries. The Thai position showed clearly that the Organization acted as a supplementary mechanism to regular security linkages. Security issues were normally treated outside the format of ASEAN, initially through Thailand's close relationship with the US, although important bilateral cooperation against insurgency and joint exercises also

took place with ASEAN partners, particularly with Malaysia. Reliance was placed on great powers such as the US and China to provide the necessary political guarantees and military hardware for Thailand's defence. ASEAN's role as stressed by the MFA was mainly to provide additional political support, and in years where military concerns were not in the fore, this multilateral avenue of action was maximized.

Overall, ASEAN's increasingly political activities were concordant with Thai policies in the region, and in general terms Thailand seemed to have encouraged the development of this active political role for the Organization over and above the initial reticence of certain other members. The analysis revealed that Thailand has shown a fairly consistent approach on such questions while trying to maintain maximum room for manoeuvre. Whereas Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore had other multilateral fora such as NAM and the Commonwealth in which to put forward their political views, and/or possessed bilateral and multilateral military ties, Thailand was relatively limited in this regard for various historical and ideological reasons. It thus attempted at the beginning to maintain the greatest flexibility in its general regional cooperation policy, juggling concurrent membership of as many regional organizations for as long as possible to maximize the range of policy options. When this proved increasingly difficult to maintain, Thailand came to stress the primary importance of ASEAN as a multilateral foreign policy tool, and gave importance to an ASEAN position within the wider international organization of the UN. Nevertheless, this reliance on ASEAN as the main organ for regional interaction came later on, for Thai

policy-makers retained wider alternatives up to the middle of the 1970s. This attempt to maintain flexibility was also transmitted to the organizational level, where informality was preferred, and strong efforts made to retain the primary importance of the 1967 Bangkok Declaration, which remained suitably vague and yet sufficiently inclusive for Thai purposes.

CHAPTER

6

THAILAND'S ROLE
IN ASEAN ECONOMIC
AND FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

It is not the intention here to discuss fully ASEAN economic cooperation. This function has been extensively carried out by numerous scholars and official & semi-official working groups, particularly in the months preceding each stage of ASEAN restructuring, such as prior to the 1987 Summit and prior to the Summits of 1992 and 1995. Rather, the aim of this Chapter is to elucidate the nature of Thai participation and the background to its stances on various economic matters within ASEAN, and thus a political economy approach is taken. Considering that economic development was one of the main domestic and foreign policy goals of Thailand, it could be expected that this would form one focus of Thailand's regional cooperation policy. However, it is shown that despite initial enthusiasm for the possibilities of cooperation in the economic and technical fields, Thai policy-makers in similar fashion to their ASEAN counterparts found it more fruitful to concentrate on national ventures. Meaningful economic cooperation therefore remained tentative until 1976, and continued to encounter problems thereafter. During much of the period under study, due to the force of regional developments Thailand preferred to concentrate on political activities within ASEAN, although it also saw the need to promote economic cooperation for the solidarity of the Organization as a whole. Meanwhile, social, cultural and scientific cooperation in various fields, which is referred to overall as 'functional' cooperation, found itself relegated to 'technical' status, lacking sustained political support for more far-reaching measures.

DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS AND ANTI-COMMUNISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In the economic plane, it may be seen that there was a convergence among the states of Southeast Asia arising out of the need for development in the nation-building process. From the time of independence, one of the key problems facing the emerging states of Southeast Asia was that of communist insurgency. Burma faced a communist revolt in 1947; Indonesia in 1948 and 1965; Malaysia and Singapore in the 1960s; the Philippines from 1948; and Thailand in the Northeast, particularly from 1964-1965. For its part, Thailand had erected its first Anti-Communist Act in 1933, repealed it to obtain membership of the UN in 1946, and then introduced a new Act in 1952, strengthening such measures subsequently. There was recognition that there was a firm connection between security and development, hence the linkage of developmentalist ideology with policies of anti-communism.¹ Internally, the solution was sought in modernization of the economy to provide welfare and prosperity for the population.² Each country promoted internal order and economic development to win over the population and prevent communist ideology from taking hold among the excluded and disadvantaged. Nowhere was this more important than in Thailand, as seen in a 1967 speech by the Minister of National Development:

The common threat of communism has precipitated a spontaneous feeling all over the region that the free people of Asia need not only to strengthen

their national defence collectively but also take concerted action on regional economic and social development... Peace, security and progress are all interrelated. Our peoples are convinced that development works, both regional and national, must be related to all three fronts simultaneously.³

It has been seen that anti-communism was a major driving force behind the rationale of many Southeast Asian leaders involved in regional cooperation, such as Tunku Abdul Rahman in Malaysia and Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. additional concern was also fear of ethnic communalism affecting the ethnic minorities within each of the Southeast Asian states, and development efforts sought to integrate the various disparate communities into the national polity. For Thailand, this element was particularly important for its southernmost provinces bordering on Malaysia, where there was a significant Malay minority, as well as in the Lao-dominated Northeast. Meanwhile, for Malaysia and Indonesia, the concern focused more on the relationships between different tribal groups as well as between the indigenous populations and the substantial Chinese minority.⁴ Such concerns thus converged with the subsequent promotion of National and Regional Resilience within ASEAN, a concept which was initiated and developed by Indonesia. Internal order became a corollary to economic development, and the states involved in this process also possessed a strong authoritarian profile and governments which had an ideology of revolution or renewal.⁵ This led to the establishment of so-called developmental states in Southeast Asia: as seen in the

New Order under Suharto in Indonesia, the regimes promoting the New Economic Policy (NEP) in Malaysia as from 1970, the New Society under Marcos in the Philippines from 1972 as well as Sarit's revolutionary order in Thailand as from 1958.

In discussing Thailand's conception of economic cooperation within ASEAN, it is useful first to recall the economic background of its long-serving Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman. Research reveals that the Foreign Minister's economic credentials and political contacts were quite extensive, making him well-qualified to implement various ideas. As Ambassador to Washington, he had been a key policy advisor to Sarit in the run-up to the 1958 coup d'état. Thanat had also been a lecturer in economics at Thammasat University, and became a Deputy Minister for National Development under Sarit in 1963, and thereafter continued to have special responsibility for economic development in the South. As well as foreign affairs, it may therefore be said that questions of national development were also close to Thanat's heart. At the same time, it is of some significance that it was in this early period of the revolutionary order that individual technocrats such as Bunchana Atthakor, Sunthorn Hongladarom and Puey Ungphakorn first obtained official recognition. The comprehensive nature of the idea of Collective Political Defence should also be noted, for its scope included economic development as a priority. It was thus that one of Thanat's long-time aides observed that the Foreign Minister intended ASEAN not to be "the bulwark of the free world against communism, but for economic development under the capitalist system against a centralized economic system."⁶ It will be seen that the position held throughout by the MFA was

that economic cooperation constituted an integral part of ASEAN cooperation, which itself was a key component of Thailand's foreign policy. Clear expectations of economic benefit underlaid the desire for regional cooperation among the developing countries of Southeast Asia. Moreover, economic cooperation served other foreign policy objectives, particularly with respect to fostering bilateral relations with ASEAN member countries. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should act as coordinator of all aspects of ASEAN cooperation and receive detailed information for purposes of coordination from the other agencies involved in implementation.

Regional economic development was concordant with Thailand's general policy goal of modernization. At this stage, it is useful to remind ourselves of a little Thai economic history which may be seen to have had a significant bearing on subsequent developments. Prior to the 19th Century, the Siamese Crown had derived a significant portion of its revenues from the control of trade, both in terms of royal monopolies as well as taxes on commerce. The Kingdom's trade laid mainly with China, but with the onset of colonialism Britain effectively dominated the Kingdom's economic activities and the royal monopolies were removed.⁷ During the colonial period, it may be said that Siam had maintained its sovereign status, but at the expense of fiscal autonomy and other economic restrictions. A prominent economist has even written of the Bowring Treaty of 1855 concluded with Britain, the first of the so-called 'unequal treaties,' that: "it can without exaggeration be said that (the treaty) set the pattern of economic life for the next 80 years or so until the outbreak of the Second World War."⁸ Despite these

constraints, Siam obtained reasonable success as an exporter of primary commodities, including rice, natural rubber and tropical timber. The revisions of the so-called 'unequal treaties' in 1926 permitted a first upgrading of tariffs from the previous maximum of 3%, but with the complete removal of restrictions on Thai financial policy autonomy by 1938, import tariffs were imposed on a comprehensive basis for the first time in the modern period under Pridi Banomyong as Finance Minister.⁹ In the years after 1945 Thailand remained primarily a commodity exporter with its resources being concentrated in the agricultural sector, and economic development was boosted by the commodities boom which accompanied the Korean War. There were, however, early attempts at industrialization, and in the 1950s the Thai government became a major economic player in national terms with its promotion of state enterprises such as the National Economic Development Corporation (NEDCOL), although economic growth as a whole was not spectacular during the Pibulsonggram years and the state enterprises were largely unsuccessful in economic terms. There is a consensus that a qualitative leap was made with Sarit's accession to the premiership. Indeed, one recent work boldly suggests that "the Sarit coup brought into line the strategic interests of the US, the dictatorial aims of the Thai military, and the commercial ambitions of domestic capital."¹⁰ It was in reaction to this earlier period of state capitalism that the stress on market-driven strategies was adopted by Thai governments.¹¹

It is crucial to stress the key role in national development of the 1960 World Bank report on economic development in Thailand, leading to the formulation of the first five-year

National Economic Development Plans.¹² This coordinated approach to development planning, as administered by the newly-created National Economic Development Board (NEDB), initially focused on economic development, although it eventually covered both the economic and social spheres, and maintained the focus of development at a national level.¹³ The 1st National Economic Development Plan covered the period 1961-1966 and aimed at the provision of basic economic and infrastructural services. At the same time, it was also marked by a concentration on import substitution industrialization (ISI) as a strategy for industrial development. According to Hewison, the experience of the Second World War and the accompanying shortages had convinced many prominent Thais of the value of ISI in reducing dependence on foreign imports.¹⁴ A national perspective was also important in the process, as seen in the writings of Sarit's chief ideologue, Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn:

A policy of nationalism is necessary for small and weak states as small states have to focus on self-sufficiency before all else, and whatever happens such small countries will never have enough power to aggress anyone. Instead, self-sufficiency would help to safeguard political and economic independence.¹⁵

In this regard, the cult of national development initially contained a strong element of nationalism, with a degree of belief in the usefulness of self-reliance. A Ministry of National Development was created, grouping 12 agencies involved with development activities, including the Department of Irrigation,

the Department of Royal Highways and the Department of Mineral Resources. Apart from adopting a national approach to development, the 1st plan also marked a switch from support of the public sector and state corporations to that of private enterprise as the motor of economic development.¹⁶ Foreign Investment was made welcome, and in 1959, the Board of Investment (BOI) was established, and an Investment Promotion Act and other promotional measures followed. However, it is pointed out that a purely governmental focus on development in Thailand is misleading, being one factor that differentiated the country from the four Asian Tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore), for in Thailand “policy-as-implemented differed substantially from policy-as-written in the five-year plans. It evolved from a subtle mixture of government vision and business ambition-banks played the role, which governments played in the Tigers, of allocating funds to high-potential sectors.”¹⁷

The Sarit regime’s efforts were to prove to be the first major steps in development planning, despite its general *laissez-faire* attitude towards private business. External economic aid also played an important role in supporting Thailand’s rapid economic development throughout the 1960s, during which the economy grew at an average rate of 8.5%. Industrialization gathered pace, with the production of cement, glass, iron & steel and labour-intensive manufactures such as textiles being among the major investments.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the national emphasis on production meant that only later was there a definite move to export-oriented production.¹⁹ Growth was primarily based on meeting the demands on an expanding local market. This also

had wider effects and meant that regional ventures became only an adjunct to such national efforts. Despite the existence of cooperative schemes with neighbouring countries such as through the Mekong Committee, the emphasis of development planning as well as questions of ideology meant that joint utilization of resources with either the continental countries of Southeast Asia or those further south in the archipelago was limited. At the same time, despite the economic achievements of this period, Sarit often revealed dissatisfaction over the treatment accorded to Thailand by erstwhile allies, and the US in particular, although some of his criticism may have been aimed at obtaining greater leverage over the Americans. On the other hand, it has been revealed that more of Washington's economic aid did seem to have gone to non-committed countries, rather than to committed allies, suggesting that some of the Thai concerns may have been justified.²⁰ Moreover, Sarit's efforts to promote economic development has had contradictory effects in ultimate terms. Meant to promote social and political order based on the restoration of 'traditional' Thai values and the notion of hierarchy, and thereby combatting the rise of socialist and communist ideas, economic development served in practice to undermine the existing order by introducing new economic and political demands by the emergent urban middle classes.²¹ Such demands propelled popular forces which eventually led to the overthrow in October 1973 of the Government of Thanom Kittikachorn, Sarit's successor. Nevertheless, this developmentalist trend continued under subsequent governments and has been instrumental in the recent economic transformation of Thailand.

THE PERTINENCE OF A REGIONAL MARKET IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The idea of a regional market in Asia has had a long and erratic history. Economic cooperation within Asia had first been debated following the end of the Second World War, such as within the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) and other regional bodies, with the focus on facilitating postwar economic reconstruction.²² An important role was played by India in stimulating the initial discussions, with its wide Asian perspective being supported by Indonesia, but with the relative failure of its ventures and Indian leaders' increasing concentration on domestic issues, this active role was seen to decline.²³ By the late 1950s, however, there were fresh moves to promote greater economic cooperation in Asia, this time driven by the development requirements of newly independent Southeast Asian countries, particularly the need to reduce dependence on developed countries.²⁴ Such moves were seen particularly within ECAFE, such as in March 1960 when most delegates to the 16th Session of ECAFE in Bangkok expressed the view that some form of regional arrangement was necessary to respond to the effects of the EEC's common external tariffs and agricultural policies.²⁵ It may thus be seen that wider moves for regional economic coordination was launched at the same time as preparations for the founding of ASA. The ECAFE Meeting passed a resolution that the regional countries should undertake suitable measures for increasing intra-regional trade and explore the possibilities of promoting regional cooperation, a decision that was described as "a landmark in the history of economic

cooperation in Asia” as it allowed ongoing discussions on economic cooperation to be launched.²⁶ As an illustration of subsequent follow-up, a study of “Regional Market Arrangements with Reference to the ECAFE Region” was discussed at the ECAFE Trade Committee Meeting in Bangkok in January 1961, and there were talks of sectoral or partial integration similar to that of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), including the establishment of joint industries combined with a preferential tariff scheme.²⁷ Similar concerns were also seen in the follow-up to the 1st Ministerial Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation held in Manila in December 1963, which was yet another effort at promoting economic development in Asia.²⁸

The dominant geographical area of discussion in the early years was therefore Asia as a whole, rather than the more restricted market of Southeast Asia. Indeed, the development needs of the countries of Asia were seen as common to the entire region. A certain commonality of interest therefore drove the advocates of economic cooperation in this period, influencing ideas of regional organization within Asia. One Thai delegate at the 17th ECAFE session in New Delhi in March 1961 went as far as to declare of the plans for ASA: “The establishment of the proposed Association stems from the intention to translate into a practical and concrete measure the recommendations made in this regard at the 16th Session of the ECAFE... In case this Association should be set up, all countries of the ECAFE region will be most heartily welcome.”²⁹ However, the issue was also related to the generally poor response to the attempts by Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand to secure a wider membership for

the proposed body beyond the initial sponsoring group. Subsequently, such as at the Conference of Asian Economic Planners in New Delhi in September-October 1961, the three countries, as well as certain others such as Burma, expressed the view that cooperation would be more feasible among a smaller group rather than on a full regional scale.³⁰

In discussing economic development, the question of trade expansion was seen as crucial. The example of the EEC and the moves towards regional trade liberalization in other areas such as in the Latin American Free Trade Area (LAFTA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) were also important in maintaining a momentum for such discussions within the region. However, many of the governments involved feared that such commitments could weaken their respective economies while only benefiting the most developed and competitive among them, and the promising rhetoric of the early years was never fulfilled. Nevertheless, considering that the idea of a free trade area was always regarded by theorists of regional cooperation as the first step towards greater cooperation, such aspirations continued to be harboured by regional policy-makers. As Ernst Haas notes:

Of all issues and policy areas the commitment to create a common market is the most conducive to rapid regional integration and the maximization of a spillover... Organizations with an economic mandate short of creating common market or a free trade area have great difficulty in influencing the policies of their members.³¹

It may therefore be concluded that there were strong arguments by the early 1960s for greater regional economic cooperation, with trade liberalization being regarded as a main tool. A frequently held view was that import substitution on a national basis had reached its limits in certain sectors, and intra-regional trade cooperation would mean the extension of import substitution to a regional scale.³² Thailand was at the centre of many such discussions on economic cooperation as the host country of ECAFE, possibly enhancing its receptiveness to such ideas. As will be seen, it was again to be ECAFE which with its contribution to the UN Study entitled *Economic Cooperation Among Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations* was to launch ongoing discussions on trade liberalization within ASEAN. However, with the consolidation of Southeast Asian regional organization, trade liberalization would take place within a more restricted circle rather than within the broad framework of ECAFE-ESCAP. This trend, already apparent by the time of the Special ECAFE Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation in 1963, would be made clear by the time of the subsequent Ministerial Conferences at Kabul in 1970 and at New Delhi in 1978.

THE ASA-ASPAC EXPERIENCE

As has been noted, the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) was founded in July 1961 as an association for economic, technical and cultural cooperation within Southeast Asia. Despite ASA's short lifespan, various development projects had been undertaken within the ASA framework to enhance

cooperation between the three member states. A well-publicized measure was the creation of the 'ASA Express' linking Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur by regular rail links. There were also proposals for the pooling of resources such as in an ASA airline, inspired by the example of the Scandinavian Airline System (SAS) in Northern Europe. However, as the negotiations progressed it emerged that each of the countries in Southeast Asia were fostering their respective national airlines, and even sub-dividing in the case of the Malaysia-Singapore network. In Thailand's case, the state-owned Thai Airways International had an existing cooperation agreement with SAS, which restricted its room for cooperation with regional partners.³³ An additional constraint was the shortage of capital on the part of the countries involved in making the required investments. Despite an agreement on mutual scheduling arrangements, such pooling of resources was therefore stillborn, although the idea was taken up at other levels. Meanwhile, to promote greater exchanges, including through tourism, 1963 was also announced as 'Visit ASA Year,' and an agreement was concluded between the ASA members to abolish visa requirements for officials and waive visa fees for normal travellers.

In order to foster greater mutual trade and commercial contacts, the idea of concluding a Commerce and Navigation Treaty between the members was also extensively debated. According to a former senior official of the Ministry of Commerce, such an idea arose from the fact that of the ASA members, at that time only Thailand had a treaty of amity and friendship with the Philippines dating from 1949, and thus it was necessary to put trade relations between all the ASA members

on a more formal basis. It was also expected that the Treaty would encourage trade expansion and mutual trade between the signatories, paving the way towards greater cooperation.³⁴ The political impetus behind such moves was shown by the active role of Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman and his Assistant, Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul, in the process.³⁵ Nevertheless, progress on the negotiations proved to be slow, and deteriorating relations between Malaysia and the Philippines delayed the project indefinitely until 1966.

In connection with such moves, during the first year of ASA, there was talk of regional free trade, such as within the committee of experts set up to study trade liberalization.³⁶ With news of possible British entry into the European Community for the first time during the early 1960s, there was renewed action, with the proposed Treaty of Commerce and Navigation being regarded as the first step in the creation of a common market.³⁷ Philippine Foreign Minister Narciso Ramos spoke of the Philippines' ambitious projects for regional economic cooperation, highlighting the two themes of trade liberalization and harmonization of national development plans which were to become Philippine preoccupations within ASEAN:

we would like to view the expansion of trade as only the first step towards the ultimate, although still far-away goal of the integration of our economies. For we believe that the results we can expect from the liberalization and expansion of intraregional trade will be severely limited unless we take steps to make sure that we can exchange products profitably and move to make

our individual economies complement one another through the harmonization of our development plans by various means.³⁸

On behalf of Thailand, Thanat Khoman played a role in promoting trade liberalization within ASA, albeit in more practical and cautious terms through a scheme of tariff preference. As a first step, he formulated a proposal to the 3 member countries to select 5 items each and then to lower tariffs on these products between each other. The preliminary talks went ahead and agreement was reached to launch the tariff preference venture, but it was discovered that each of the members proposed goods of little value.³⁹ Moreover, with the transfer of ASA projects to ASEAN in 1967, it was discovered that the list of items was no longer practical due to different membership, and the proposals merged into discussions of ASEAN trade liberalization. With the lack of progress on even this limited proposal, the experience led to some disillusionment on the part of Thai leaders, including Thanat Khoman, as to the future prospects for trade cooperation. At the same time, industrial cooperation within ASA was largely stillborn, although Dr. Puey Ungphakorn, Thailand's Central Bank Governor and Board of Investment (BOI) Secretary-General, when interviewed by Bernard Gordon in July 1963 argued for a regional "specialization of labour" and regional industrial specialization, with a few exceptions.⁴⁰

Considering the relative paucity of concrete projects which were implemented, opinions have often been harsh as to the success of ASA economic cooperation. In a detailed study

of regional economic cooperation, Suriyamongkol even asserts that: "During its six-year existence ASA did not achieve any tangible results that could be cited as evidence of regional economic cooperation... ASA may therefore have represented unrealistic aspirations rather than the non-political pragmatism which its leaders proclaimed."⁴¹ However, considering the political disruptions over much of ASA's life it was perhaps already a substantial achievement that many studies were begun, particularly after its reactivation in 1966, although subsequently its fate became intertwined with that of ASEAN.

Subsequent to the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) in 1966, there were also concrete moves to promote greater economic cooperation within a wider Asia-Pacific framework. Thailand, which saw the political benefits behind ASPAC, also attempted to give ASPAC economic substance as it would serve Thai economic goals as well as bind the other less enthusiastic members to the Organization. It thus proposed the creation of an economic coordination centre, which Thanat announced as having the potential to lead to the establishment of a common market in Southeast Asia, as well as a technical coordination centre. Such proposals were made after the establishment of the Cultural and Social Centre (CULSOCEN) in South Korea and the Food Fertilizer Centre in Taiwan.⁴² The Thai proposal was agreed upon at the 5th ASPAC Ministerial Meeting in Wellington between 17-19 June 1970 and led to the setting up of the ASPAC Economic Coordination Centre (ECOCEN) in Bangkok in 1971. ECOCEN acted as a clearing house for information and conducted useful studies of regional economic trends. It may be seen that ECOCEN, which was

associated with Thailand's NEDB, played a much-forgotten role in supporting regional cooperation by helping to form a group of regional-minded economists and regional planners, such as Dr. Amnuay Virawan and Dr. Narongchai Akrasanee, who were to motivate Thailand's increased regional role in subsequent decades. Accordingly, it had an influence which extended beyond the modest contemporary impact of the body. Moreover, in a more significant move, a framework for informal consultations during the UNGA was also eventually agreed upon by the members of ASPAC to enhance their bargaining power, which echoed similar developments within ASEAN. With a view to longer perspectives, at the 2nd ASPAC Ministerial Meeting in July 1967, Thanat further advocated those studies be made of the possibilities for cooperation:

it might be useful for ASPAC to devote some attention, some study, to the problem of, or to the question of, economic cooperation and economic integration in the Asian and Pacific area. I would not call it a common market, for a common market is a rather complicated machinery composed of delicate, intricate and complex measures. But it would do us no harm if ASPAC...Were to begin studies of this question of economic cooperation and integration to see what measures can be usefully and beneficially adopted by some of our nations, if not all. If some measure which may be the ingredient to the component part of the ensemble called the common market may win the approval of our respective governments and nations, so much the better.⁴³

By late 1971, however, the political impetus behind ASPAC had dissipated, and with the lack of political consensus the economic elements of cooperation became piecemeal and uncoordinated ventures, and the Organization itself dissolved by 1975.

Despite the limited results of economic cooperation within ASA and ASPAC, it is the contention that the promotion of regional economic cooperation engendered by these bodies helped to promote an awareness of the possibilities, as well as the limitations, for ventures within the ASEAN framework. A feature of the early years of regional cooperation was a certain optimism and ambitious, if vague, aspirations with regards to overall prospects for regionalism. As shown above, the ideas of 'common market' and 'integration' were frequently mentioned by the leaders of various countries, including Thailand, apparently without concern being paid to their long-term implications for national sovereignty. With this hard-earned experience, what was to mark ASEAN was a greater degree of pragmatism. Nevertheless, as an integral part of the ASA and ASPAC structures, trade and finance officials were already playing a role in the numerous working groups, for example as part of the ASA Joint Working Party, forging valuable contacts within the region.⁴⁴ It may be seen that the integral participation of technical officials at an early stage of discussions in ASA helped to facilitate subsequent cooperation within ASEAN.

THE GENERAL UNDERPINNINGS OF ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Although the ASEAN states shared a common interest in economic development, it may be seen that there was less consensus on the means towards such development. Just as there were alternative visions for a regional political order within Southeast Asia, so there were alternative visions for a regional economic order. In practical terms, formulating a plan for ASEAN economic cooperation necessitated a reappraisal of national versus regional interests, together with the issue of absolute versus relative gains, problems which ultimately proved difficult to resolve.

The first 2-3 years of ASEAN were dominated by the assimilation of ongoing ASA projects and by the formulation of short-term and low cost projects to start the process of cooperation going. However, ASEAN had also realized that meaningful economic cooperation had to be comprehensively planned, and took advantage of an offer by ECAFE to conduct a study of economic cooperation possibilities. This Report of the UN Study Group, which became known as the Kansu Report after the name of the project leader, had been commissioned by ASEAN following the relaunch of cooperation at the Cameron Highlands AMM in 1969. A Preliminary Report of the UN Study Group was reviewed at the 4th AMM in Manila in March 1971, and the final Report was submitted in April 1972 and made public in 1973. The Study Group proposed three methods of economic cooperation: 1) cooperation through selective trade liberalization; 2) industrial complementarity agreements; and 3) 'package deal'

allocation of industrial projects to various member countries.⁴⁵ As will be seen, although the three methods were accepted in principle by the ASEAN countries, there were differing views on whether the programme could be accepted as an integral whole, as the UN Study Group proposed, or on a piecemeal basis and prioritized according to perceived requirements.⁴⁶

The debate came to centre on the relative merits of trade liberalization versus industrial development.⁴⁷ As will be seen, this brought into question national priorities and the important issue of the level of economic development and economic structure of the member states. For example, Singapore as a regional entrepot favoured a trade-led approach whereas Indonesia felt its needs laid not only in securing cooperation on commodity exports to markets outside the region, but also on industrial development within. Most of the other countries occupied intermediate positions on this crucial debate, although all were significant exporters of primary products and thus felt the need for securing commodity exports and industrial development, including Thailand. In this perspective, Indonesia saw the question of free trade within Southeast Asia as largely irrelevant, as Minister of Trade Sumitro declared in 1970:

Our problems are (not) basically those of intra-Asian trade, but the formulation of a united trade policy towards the rest of the world. If we cannot have joint marketing, let's have a joint approach to the market so we cannot be played off one against the other price-wise. This would help more in terms of stable export earnings- and therefore in currency stabilization.⁴⁸

The subsequent debate within ASEAN would be as to what form of economic cooperation would be best suited to the requirements of the member countries. The two opposing viewpoints of a trade-led approach and an industry and commodity-led approach was to tax the minds of policy-makers, as well as the unity of the Organization itself, over many years.⁴⁹

As for Thailand, which generally took a middle line between the competing approaches, the general principles guiding economic cooperation within ASEAN appeared to have been: 1) to make a success of ASEAN so that the members would gain through greater stability and development, which could be achieved through enhancing ASEAN's voice and bargaining power in international arena; 2) to ensure that the Organization was tied together well through economic linkages, particularly between the member countries; and 3) to support national economic development. It may further be said that a derived objective was also to show to the other countries of Southeast Asia the logic of cooperation and the benefits arising therefrom so that they would be less hostile or even engage in membership. What seems to be striking is that apart from trade and development objectives, an underlying aim seemed to reveal more general political motives regarding the internal and external dynamics of the Organization. What should be noted is that the determination of policy on economic and technical cooperation within ASEAN was not entirely turned over to the technical agencies upon the founding of ASEAN, even if the task of implementation was. The MFA attempted to preserve a say in the planning of economic cooperation up to a fairly late stage in ASEAN's development. However, as will be seen, numerous

agencies became involved in the formulation and implementation of economic cooperation, making a holistic approach difficult to sustain in the absence of a national master plan.

THE CONCEPT OF FREE TRADE IN ASEAN

On Thailand's part, Thanat Khoman had already spoken of the possibility of a regional common market while promoting ASA back in 1959-1961, but seemed to have been discouraged by the response.⁵⁰ He was therefore cautious about the prospects for free trade during the formative years of ASEAN, as revealed in a 1969 comment:

I have made the suggestion that, before we try to establish a Common Market, let us take the simple step of each nation choosing five items of its export and asking the other nations to give them preferential treatment. But even this suggestion has not met with any success. How then can we dream of setting up a Common Market?⁵¹

The example of the breakdown in economic cooperation between Malaysia and Singapore following the 1965 Separation Agreement did not also bode well for regional trade liberalization. Upon the founding of ASEAN in 1967, given the ASA experience and the inclusion of Indonesia and Singapore in the new Organization together with the accompanying disparities in size and level of development, it was assumed that the move towards free trade within ASEAN, while a desirable aim, would be gradual and incremental.

One may recall the Singaporean attempt to include free trade in the agenda of the 1967 Bangkok Meeting. While this proposal was not accepted at the Meeting, it did not mean that the issue was completely excluded, it was merely regarded as premature. On Thailand's part, Thanat never claimed that a common market for ASEAN was impossible in the long-term, but instead insisted on practicalities. Nevertheless, he was seen to make several proposals for regional trade liberalization during ASEAN's first months, although he seemed to have had in mind a wider framework than ASEAN, for ASPAC was then already active. As early as late 1967, Thanat was thinking of an Asian Payments Union which he described as a step towards an Asian or Asian-Pacific common market.⁵² At the same time as the ASEAN negotiations in Bangsaen, Economic Minister Sunthorn Hongladarom also discussed with newsmen several ideas which could be implemented "short of immediately set up an Asian Common Market."⁵³ Interestingly, at the 4th ASA Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, which took place a few weeks after the founding of ASEAN, the Philippines continued to press for the adoption of various measures which had for a long time been discussed under the auspices of ASA, such as an ASA Free Trade Area, a Commerce and Navigation Treaty and an ASA Fund.⁵⁴ In fact, the ASA programme of cooperation would be reviewed within ASEAN to ascertain which projects should be adopted within the ASEAN format. Similar moves towards promotion of economic cooperation within the wider Asia-Pacific region were also seen within ASPAC, some of which were destined to be implemented within the ASEAN framework. In a reflective article in the MFA's academic journal, Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul,

Secretary-General of the ASEAN-ASPAC National Secretariat of Thailand, also made some proposals of his own, including that apart from cooperation on issues such as regional freight rates:

Regional cooperation in development of certain industrial projects also deserves our careful consideration and support...In the wider field of trade expansion and liberalization considerable amount of study and further work await us. The possibility of establishing a regional or sub-regional preference for trade in some selected commodities deserves our attention. The experience of ASA may also be studied.⁵⁵

Thus from the early days, it appeared that Thai policy-makers had in mind in terms of priorities industrial cooperation as well as trade liberalization, including the possibility of a regional tariff preference scheme.

In 1967, Thailand was recognized within ASEAN as a high tariff country, together with Indonesia and the Philippines, with Singapore having the lowest tariffs in the Organization and Malaysia occupying an intermediate position. However, it may be seen that this high level of protectionism was a relatively recent development for Thailand. Many Thai scholars assert that Thailand has always been an open economy, highlighting the importance of foreign trade in the Thai economy, particularly the role played by exports of rice.⁵⁶ Since the 1930s and the recovery of Thailand's tariff autonomy, the Kingdom had remained relatively open to trade, though import tariffs had become an important source of government revenue. This was such that import tariffs supplied 30% of total government revenue

in 1977.⁵⁷ However, tariffs and other forms of import control were also used as instruments of trade policy to manage Thailand's trade balance. As a commentator wrote in the 1950s: "The import policy of the Thai government is almost dictated by the balance of payment or foreign exchange situation, which in turn is determined by the prosperity of export trades particularly rice."⁵⁸ More significantly, by 1961 mild tariff protection had been instituted to provide protection for industries established under Thailand's new investment promotion laws. In motivating such policies, the overall logic of ISI constituted a powerful factor, as was the role of powerful business interests with links to the current regime in demanding a high level of protection for domestic businesses which aimed at the production of consumer goods for the Thai market.

Despite the fact that Thailand remained essentially an open economy, according to a former senior official of the Ministry of Commerce, many in Thailand failed to realize the benefits of free trade until late on. This applied even in respect of those products in which Thailand proved to have a competitive advantage, both in absolute and in comparative terms. As an illustration, Thailand was the most important exporter of rice, but yet excluded rice imports, and a similar situation applied to sugar. This was due to the domestic political imperative of maintaining high and stable prices for Thai producers of such major commodities. The role of powerful industrial and agricultural lobbies was important in this regard, as well as the general reluctance of the Ministry of Finance to reduce tariffs, which would reduce a sizable portion of national revenues.⁵⁹ The orientation of production towards the domestic market was also

reinforced by the prevailing macroeconomic orthodoxy. Throughout the period, it may be seen that Thailand continued to observe conservative fiscal and monetary policies under the direction of the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Thailand. While leading to economic stability and sound investment conditions, such prudence had its effects on the overall economic structure: the strong Baht tied to the US Dollar did not provide particularly firm incentives for an expansion of exports, and export-led production did not become truly predominant until after the crisis of the early 1980s, despite early rhetoric towards an expansion of exports. Nevertheless, by the early 1970s manufactured exports expanded from commodity-based products to include textiles and labour-intensive manufactures, and despite such seemingly contradictory economic policies, there was strong industrial growth during the period concerned based on domestic demand.⁶⁰

As has been noted, with the adoption of ISI policies by the 1950s, a tariff structure had been instituted which provided high protection against consumer imports and low tariffs on capital goods, so as to promote domestic industry. Tariff escalation was a notable feature, for the emphasis was on domestic production of finished products, particularly of consumer goods. Tariffs and quantitative restrictions were directed at beverages and tobacco, natural oils and fats as well as on machinery.⁶¹ In 1966-67, it was calculated that 55% of total duties were collected at higher than 30% *ad valorem*, and yet three-quarters of this high-tariff revenue came from the categories of products mentioned above, which were also those produced by government monopolies, or concerned crucial energy resources,

consumer luxuries, or in the case of man-made fibres and motor vehicles, protected infant industries.⁶² Yet it may be shown that high tariffs need not exclude a commitment to trade liberalization, for the Philippines with its high tariff levels and yet relatively industrialized economy was an ardent advocate of free trade, although it also had numerous effective lobbyists arguing for regional trade liberalization, such as Gerardo Sicat, Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority, and Vicente Paterno, Chairman of the Board of Investments. Such technocrats did face resistance from various industrial lobbies which had grown powerful under ISI, which led to the rather anomalous position of the Philippines being an ardent advocate of free trade within ASEAN and yet heavily protected by tariff and non-tariff barriers. The complicated nature of decision-making on regional trade liberalization, as opposed to political decision-making, has led Thambipillai and Savaranamuttu in their study of ASEAN negotiations to assert that:

Surprisingly, it is not the political but the economic or technical issues that seem to face more obstacles. For example, a political issue whether or not to support the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea was of concern, it appeared, only to a core of political leaders in each country, limited perhaps to the executive and foreign offices. However, economic issues, such as the expansion of regional trade, may have its supporters and opponents in various related sectors of each country.⁶³

The nature of economic decision-making thus led to more nuanced positions on issues of economic cooperation than might appear from the generally positive speeches made by individual leaders in advocacy of ASEAN economic cooperation.

Moreover, it may be seen that despite the general high level of tariff protection, the amount of Thailand's trade with ASEAN countries was relatively high. In the postwar period, the legacy of British dominance over Thailand's economic activities from the 19th Century meant that initially, much of Thailand's economic exchanges were with former British colonies, namely Singapore and Malaysia, as well as Hong Kong. Thailand exported food and agricultural products to Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, and in return it imported oil products which were refined at Singapore. Some industrial products were also traded between Singapore and Thailand, making the city-state Thailand's most important trading partner within ASEAN. By contrast, trade with the Philippines remained limited.⁶⁴ Throughout this period, Thailand had a surplus in trade with all the other ASEAN countries, and yet its trade did not constitute a part of ASEAN's four major trade flows. Such flows were constituted by exports from Singapore to Indonesia, exports from Malaysia to Singapore, exports from Indonesia to Singapore and finally, exports from Singapore to Malaysia, contributing 75% of all ASEAN trade flows. In addition, Singapore's trade with Thailand added a further 10% to the previous figure.⁶⁵ Crucially, trade in petroleum products constituted a major factor in intra-ASEAN trade, and in Thailand's trade with ASEAN, for Thailand was generally energy-deficient and also possessed insufficient oil refining capacity. At the same time, it has been noted that the

share of ASEAN countries in Thailand's imports had been declining since the 1950s, owing to Thailand's fast expanding requirement for intermediate and capital goods which was increasingly provided by Japan, but as a group ASEAN was second only to Japan in terms of Thai exports.⁶⁶ Despite these flows, total intra-ASEAN trade remained at a low level, at around 15% of the ASEAN countries' total trade with the world, and if the trade in petroleum was excluded, the figure fell even further.⁶⁷ The ASEAN market was thus of significance for Thailand in purely sectoral terms, although it should be noted that the sectors with the greatest exchange with ASEAN, namely rice and petroleum, were of the utmost importance to Thailand throughout this period.

In terms of overall trade performance, Thailand suffered increasing deficits in merchandise trade throughout the 1960s, although this was balanced by inflows from US economic aid and receipts from US troops on Rest & Recreation visits in the country, as well as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).⁶⁸ The US accounted for the largest portion of capital inflows, followed by Japan, although by 1973 the latter had overtaken the US.⁶⁹ After relatively strong growth during the 1960s for Thailand's economy, the early 1970s were marked by a series of economic and political shocks. The falling away of external aid with the withdrawal of the US, structural economic problems and increases in production costs and in the cost of imports arising out of the First Oil Shock helped to fuel inflation. Although the commodities boom of the early 1970s helped to shield Thailand from the worst effects of the Oil Shock, the increasing trade deficits since 1969 continued to preoccupy decision-makers. The

need to reduce the price of imports and to a lesser extent to stimulate exports motivated a reduction in tariffs in 1974 on 306 items, and may help to explain Thai receptiveness to arguments for free trade in the mid 1970s.⁷⁰ Seeing as Thai trade with the ASEAN countries was generally positive, it was thought that there was great potential for increasing exports to the region. Nevertheless, there were important differences between the positions taken by the various economic agencies, such as between the Ministry of Industry which persisted longer in its support of ISI policies and the Board of Investment (BOI) which increasingly promoted export-oriented production.

Despite such domestic concerns, an important factor governing the pace of ASEAN trade cooperation was the different levels of economic development between the ASEAN countries. The Philippines and Singapore were relatively industrialized by the early 1970s, while Indonesia after the Sukarno years lagged behind the rest. It is thus important to note the sensitive position of Indonesia as the weakest ASEAN state in terms of economic competitiveness. It was easier for Thailand to cooperate with the Philippines in stimulating ASEAN economic cooperation as they were at a similar level of income, Thailand having caught up with the latter in terms of GNP per capita as from around 1970, although the situation was less clear with Singapore.⁷¹ Competitive national economies in terms of production ensured that national priorities came before regional ones. Even more significantly, there was also a strongly-held belief among many in the region that the benefits from freer trade would fall on Singapore as a free trading state. With the establishment of a free trade area in a situation of unequal

external tariffs, good flowing into the region through Singapore could then be re-exported duty free to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Certain Thai policy-makers seemed to share this negative view, that of a Singapore-Chinese community exploiting other nations throughout its history, and so there was also some caution from the Thai side.⁷² At the same time, a customs union would most likely not be accepted by Singapore because its competitiveness as a free trading state will be damaged in a customs union with common external tariffs, and so there appeared to be strict limits as to what each country was prepared to accept, with the opposing trends being personified in Singapore and Indonesia. Régnier in his study of Singapore has drawn historical parallels from this situation:

The cleft within ASEAN over commercial policy follows the dividing line between Singapore and Indonesia—the pair of countries which stood for many years in diametrical opposition to each other in most negotiations within the group. This opposition—between a city-state dedicated to free trade and a vast archipelago which till recently has been highly protectionist—is merely a prolongation of the old trade rivalry between the British colonies on the Straits and the exclusive Dutch monopolies based in Java.⁷³

Part of the attractiveness of the trade liberalization agenda for the enthusiasts of regional cooperation was that it paved the way for incremental and more intensive cooperation, providing a sort of roadmap. However, for the others the increase in trade was only one means towards the end of development and

economic cooperation, and not a major objective in itself. Between the opposing trends of Singapore and Indonesia, the positions adopted by the other states would help to determine the pace of trade liberalization within ASEAN, and an examination of their roles is instructive. Excluded from the largest ASEAN trade flows, with the important exception regarding certain key commodities, and free from much of the political baggage accompanying interstate relations in maritime Southeast Asia, the study of Thailand's role on the issue of free trade within ASEAN is therefore especially interesting.

Following the rejection of Singapore's proposal of free trade at the Bangkok Meeting in August 1967, ASEAN leaders generally talked in rather modest terms about the possibilities for regional free trade.⁷⁴ In general, the term 'trade liberalization' was used instead of free trade, and it appeared that a 'practical' pace of cooperation was widely seen as desirable in the early years while awaiting a comprehensive assessment of prospects for ASEAN economic cooperation.⁷⁵ From the early 1970s, however, Singapore and the Philippines began sustained moves to promote free trade within ASEAN. Such moves appeared to be motivated by the convergence of a number of factors. The establishment of the New Society in the Philippines in 1972 by President Marcos had set new economic priorities for Manila.⁷⁶ In February 1973, the Philippines had joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to pave the way for the end of the 1955 Laurel-Langley Agreement, which had guaranteed tariff preferences for Philippine exports to the US. Meanwhile, Singapore, which had shown lukewarm interest in ASEAN after the setback to its initial proposals, had following an assessment

of regional changes also reoriented itself to a place greater emphasis on regional cooperation as from 1971.⁷⁷ Singapore, and to a lesser extent, Malaysia, were also concerned at the potential effects of Britain's eventual success in gaining entry into the European Economic Community in 1973 on access for their products to European markets. The UN Study Group on ASEAN Economic Cooperation whose report was made public in 1973 also argued as part of its recommendations that a free trade area should be declared as a long-term objective. To its proponents, the logic for expansion of intra-ASEAN trade therefore seemed undeniable.

At the 4th AMM in Manila in March 1971, President Marcos made a comprehensive plea for new directions in ASEAN economic cooperation, including the creation of a free trade area on a selective commodity basis.⁷⁸ Such moves intensified in response to the publication of the proposals of the UN Study Group. Various committees and working groups were set up in the negotiations leading up to the Bali Summit, and by late 1975, 10% across-the-board tariff cuts for products of ASEAN countries were being advocated by Philippines and Singaporean representatives in various ASEAN fora.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Malaysia made initially positive comments regarding such initiatives between 1974-1975, but also expressed the need for caution.⁸⁰ This more cautious position was increasingly stressed with the emergence of a hard-line Indonesian position against extensive trade liberalization in late 1975, as well as lingering concerns regarding the dominance of Singapore in regional trade.⁸¹ It thus appeared that of the other ASEAN countries, only Thailand seemed to be mildly interested in such proposals, and was

infinitely more cautious than the other two supporters. Nevertheless, although as we have seen Thanat Khoman in the early days of ASEAN had spoken extensively of the possibilities for regional trade liberalization, Thailand remained relatively silent on this issue particularly after his departure. Between 1972 and 1975, moreover, Thailand seemed to be more worried about internal and external political adjustments than with fresh directions in ASEAN economic cooperation. It needed a new government with a firm mandate for change to galvanize activities in the economic field. In response to a slowdown in global trade, Thailand may already be seen to have participated in moves for regional trade liberalization beyond the scope of ASEAN, and together with the Philippines was a signatory of the July 1975 Bangkok Agreement organized under the auspices of ECAFE involving eight Asian countries in tariff cuts on 160 commodities.⁸² Within the ASEAN framework, the Philippines and Singapore seemed especially keen to get Thailand on board in their drive for ASEAN trade liberalization. In this regard, it may be seen that Singapore had problems with promoting trade liberalization due to the perception that it had the most to benefit, while the Philippines' advocacy was hampered by the fact that its exchanges with most ASEAN countries were at a very low level. By contrast, Thailand with a relatively high trade linkage with ASEAN and a moderate degree of industrialization could promote such a process with greater conviction.

The first concrete indication of Thai interest in promoting free trade within ASEAN appeared during the course of Prime Minister MR Kukrit Pramoj's visit to ASEAN countries in June-July 1975, soon after coming to office. The Joint Communiqué

issued by Thailand and the Philippines during MR Kukrit's visit to Manila declared:

it is now timely to take positive steps towards the regional harmonization of plans involving the industrial and agricultural policies of ASEAN countries, as well as steps towards regional economic integration, including, as an initial measure, the establishment of a free trade area.⁸³

The Kukrit-Marcos Joint Communiqué not only contained one of the first references to 'regional economic integration' within the ASEAN context, but also indicated moves towards building up extensive cooperation in a broad range of fields. It further signalled the launch of Thai initiatives to promote regional trade liberalization. Nevertheless, one has a suspicion that MR Kukrit was cornered into making such wide-ranging commitments in a burst of ASEAN euphoria during his ASEAN tour, commitments which he was unsure of being able to deliver considering his unstable domestic situation.⁸⁴ Despite MR Kukrit's commitment to free trade, the policy was not advocated as forcefully by his successors after he left office in April 1976, perhaps even more preoccupied with pressing domestic and security concerns.

On the other hand, MR Kukrit's discussions with the other ASEAN leaders did seem to pave the way for wider agreement on the steps to be taken towards free trade at the Bali Summit in February 1976. As will be seen, Thai negotiators attempted to implement MR Kukrit's commitments but were forced to play a conciliating role between the increasingly divergent trends

within the Organization. Thai policy-makers certainly expected concrete gains from participation in regional trade liberalization, although they recognized that certain sacrifices would have to be made by Thailand. In this regard, Thanat Khoman described preferential tariffs as a double-edged sword which could have positive or negative effects, and with this in mind one must have a give and take attitude.⁸⁵ As a group of economists from the Bank of Thailand's Research Department wrote during the course of 1976:

Thailand has been taking a very liberal view in the consideration of a free trade zone by developing a give and take attitude. Thailand is likely to gain more from trade as its (relative) tariff protection is relatively low, thus enabling it to gain in relative terms from some countries and lose to others. Moreover, its trade distribution is more evenly spread which will ensure a stability of trade and even distributions of benefit and loss.⁸⁶

It may thus be seen that Thailand's generally positive perception of its own position pervaded throughout the 1976-1977 period.

After the Bali agreements, however, in terms of implementation ASEAN trade liberalization encountered serious problems. On his return from the 9th AMM in June 1976, Foreign Minister Pichai Rattakul made an announcement regarding free trade within ASEAN that although Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand took a keen interest in the matter, certain countries were not ready to give their cooperation.⁸⁷ The

further change of government in October 1976 to that of Tanin Kraivixien, however, meant that despite Thailand's ongoing interest, its negotiating position had to be constantly reassessed. On the eve of final negotiations for a preferential tariff scheme to implement the Bali agreements, the Philippines and Singapore maintained their advocacy of a 10% across-the-board tariff cut. At the 3rd AEM in Manila on 20-22 January 1977, President Marcos again advocated an across-the-board preferential tariff arrangement within ASEAN, even if exclusion lists were to be conceded.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, recognizing problems in obtaining the acceptance of across-the-board tariff cuts among all the members, Singapore from early January 1977 proposed that bilateral negotiations should also take place so that concrete progress could be made. Given such impulses, Thailand's continuing interest in regional trade liberalization may be shown in that the Marcos-Lee bilateral agreement of 19 January 1977 on the eve of the 3rd AEM was subsequently followed by the Tanin-Lee agreement during the latter's visit to Thailand on 30 January-2 February 1977 to reduce tariffs between each other by 10% across-the-board. Despite pressure put on Thailand by other ASEAN countries not to accept Singapore's bilateral overtures, the agreement was heralded by Thailand as a symbol of its commitment to regional trade liberalization, albeit with important reservations.⁸⁹ As Foreign Minister Upadit Pachariyangkun put it, the agreement:

amply illustrates Thailand's acceptance in principle of the desirability of establishing a free trade zone in this area. However, we fully recognize that this

is, and can only be, a long-term goal. The disparities in the level of economic development on the one hand, and the similarities in the structure of our developing economies on the other, require that this be so.⁹⁰

Thus, while the commitment to free trade was upheld, it was now stressed that this was only a commitment 'in principle' and that it was a 'long-term goal.' From now on, Thai representatives, while adhering publicly to the long-term goal, also spoke of the need for greater caution.⁹¹ This perhaps suggests some reassessment on Thailand's part, as well as an accommodation to an ASEAN consensus on a slower pace of trade liberalization.⁹²

As previously mentioned, the implementation of the Bali Summit's commitments on trade liberalization were to be via the implementation of a scheme of preferential tariffs between ASEAN members. The adoption of the ASEAN Preferential Tariff Arrangements (PTA) was sealed with the signing of a formal agreement at a Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers in Manila on 24 February 1977, following due consideration and initialling by the Economic Ministers at the 3rd AEM on 18th February. While involving extended negotiations, it may be said that the PTA was largely the result of the original UN Study Group's recommendations and thus constituted merely one part of the interlocking proposals. In practical terms, during the PTA negotiations, Thailand had observed a relatively neutral position between Singapore and the Philippines' advocacy of across-the-board liberalization and Indonesia and Malaysia's preference for a step-by-step approach due to the polarization of positions, even if it tended to favour the former as being more positive in

encouraging mutual trade.⁹³ In the end, however, a product-by-product approach was adopted by ASEAN in 1977, although the advocacy of across-the-board reductions was continued by its many supporters. The Agreement on ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangements specifically emphasized that the PTA would act to strengthen National and Regional Resilience, and placed a priority on basic commodities, the products of ASEAN industrial projects and raw materials available in member states, with only vague references to expansion of intra-ASEAN trade involving other categories of products. Nevertheless, in accordance with the PTA, trade preferences on an initial list of 71 items came into effect on 1 January 1978.⁹⁴ Eventually, wider and across-the-board reductions on items of a certain value, as again advocated by President Marcos at the 8th AEM in September 1979, were accepted by ASEAN. Accordingly, at the 9th AEM in April 1980, it was decided that a general across-the-board reduction of 20%, instead of the normal 10%, would be instituted for the flow of imports of products not exceeding US \$50,000 annually in the trade statistics of each country. At the same time, this provision was effectively undermined by the possibility for exclusion of 'sensitive items' proposed by each country.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, trade preferences continued to be extended such that the PTA covered 4,325 items by the end of the period under study in 1980. Moreover, it also proved that the margin of preference was too low to be truly attractive to exporters in the ASEAN countries, and the initial margin of 10% was improved to 25%. In all, the PTA proved to be of limited practical benefit in the short term in increasing the level of intra-ASEAN trade, and in increasing Thai exports to ASEAN.

On reflection, Thailand's support for free trade may be said to have generally been low-key. In an ASEAN of five members, Thailand could be seen to have been in a sensitive position as it had to place an appropriate balance between two opposing trends: one for free trade represented by Singapore and the Philippines and the other for national protection represented by Indonesia, and to a lesser extent Malaysia. This dichotomy helps to explain why it has been placed on both sides of the debate by various authors. With its keenness to remain on friendly terms with all ASEAN members and to maximize ASEAN unity given its political imperatives, it preferred a general consensus before moving actively on any one particular front, and hence an apparent ambiguity. Thai hesitancy to press ahead on free trade without a consensus was also perhaps explained by its recognition of the importance of Indonesia within the Organization and the need to keep it 'on board.' The episode also illustrated how ASEAN trade liberalization failed to fulfil the promises of the original rhetoric.

Moreover, in practice Thailand continued to place barriers to trade between itself and the other ASEAN countries, not only in terms of tariffs, but also non-tariff barriers (NTBs). In this regard, it was unfortunate that implementation of the PTA as from 1978-1979 onwards coincided with the circumstances of the 2nd Oil Shock, leading to larger current account deficits for Thailand and restrictive economic policies into the early 1980s.⁹⁶ Others have suggested that Thailand's innate cautiousness on regional trade liberalization was often camouflaged by its relative silence and that it preferred Indonesia and Malaysia to speak out.⁹⁷ Even within the PTA scheme, Thailand's tariff cut offers

were not regarded as attractive enough to its ASEAN partners. It offered tariff cuts on a number of wood products not produced by other ASEAN countries and which were not imported by Thailand at the time, which was just about as ridiculous as the Philippines' 10% tariff cut on snowploughs.⁹⁸ When across-the-board reductions were announced in 1980, Thailand proposed a large exclusion list for 'sensitive' items that excluded many highly-traded goods. Was this a question of political will not being translated into action by permanent officials. According to a senior trade official at that time, Thailand saw itself rather as an "innocent" within ASEAN, ready to support initiatives by its partners, without necessarily receiving anything in return, including within the PTA.⁹⁹ In this account, therefore, there was a definite fear of being taken advantage of. According to another senior official, however, following the political agreement by the Ministers, the various officials probably received insufficient guidelines as to how to approach trade liberalization, and thus bargained for maximum national advantage, with the end result that the PTA negotiations on an item-by-item basis produced goods of little value for inclusion in the scheme.¹⁰⁰ In the tariff negotiations, the atmosphere of a zero-sum game appeared to have reigned, including among the Thai negotiators. Moreover, the lack of inter-agency coordination compounded such problems, for while the Ministry of Finance controlled tariff policy, it emerged that non-tariff measures such as import controls were managed by the Ministry of Commerce. Meanwhile, official support was often accompanied by private reservations, making overall Thai support for regional trade liberalization ambiguous indeed. As a study of ASEAN

negotiations suggests: "Preoccupation with delaying the implementation of cooperation stems from the apprehension that the costs of cooperation are amplified in developing countries, where the losses associated with the short-run displacement of labour and capital can seriously threaten political stability. Given that the original *raison d'être* of ASEAN was to counteract the communist insurgency by maintaining stability in the region, the risks of short-run market disruptions for long-term gains were much too great for these countries to overcome."¹⁰¹ In this process, the case of Thailand only reflected the concerns of many of its ASEAN partners and led to the phenomenon of an elaborate tariff preference scheme having negligible effects on intra-ASEAN trade.

Trade liberalization within ASEAN during the period under study, as seen from the point of view of Thailand, has therefore been shown not to have encountered great success. Intra-ASEAN trade did not increase appreciably, nor was there a significant increase within the member countries of an awareness of trade opportunities within ASEAN. Nevertheless, tariff levels within ASEAN did as whole decline during the period 1978-1983, and member states continued to insist on the sub-regional ASEAN format as the most appropriate form of regional trade liberalization.¹⁰² Unfortunately, the downturn in the world economy and the weaker economic performance of the ASEAN economies during the mid 1980s contributed to a subsequent increase in tariff protection. At the same time, however, more serious attention was being paid to the promotion of manufactured exports, with greater competitiveness being promoted by successive devaluations of the Thai Baht in 1981 and

1984 as well as in terms of investment incentives. As will be seen, the question of intra-ASEAN cooperation was to become incidental to the overall growth in the ASEAN economies during the investment boom of the late 1980s as Japan relocated its manufacturing industries to ASEAN sources following the appreciation in the value of the Japanese Yen.

By the end of this period, distinct advocates of trade liberalization in Southeast Asia could already be identified in Thailand. It may be seen, however, that they largely remained outside the centre of power in the academic and technocratic wing and their ideas as to the extent of trade liberalization desirable remained relatively heterogeneous.¹⁰³ The columnist and businessman Paul Sithi-Amnuay was a prominent advocate of regional trade liberalization during the formative years of ASA. Writing in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and other journals, including the *Bangkok Bank Monthly Review*, he saw the need for further cooperation and coordination in the economic field to promote development. Nevertheless, even during this period, a few bureaucrats were also seen to be supporting moves in this direction, e.g. Dr. Amnuay Virawan among the bureaucracy at the Ministry of Finance favoured an orientation towards exports accompanied by regional trade liberalization. Dr. Puey Ungphakorn as Governor of the Bank of Thailand (1959-1971) and head of other key economic agencies also promoted such moves. It has been further noted that a new generation of Western-trained technocrats arriving back in Thailand during the 1970s questioned the domestic-oriented approach, such as Dr. Narongchai Akrasanee who was associated with the Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand (IFCT).¹⁰⁴ A point to note

about the early supporters of a freer trade policy by Thailand is that they were mostly foreign-educated, and had substantial experience in multilateral economic institutions, for example: Dr. Puey in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Dr. Amnuay as Director of ASPAC's ECOCEN (1971-1973), with Dr. Narongchai involved in conducting research for many of the regional bodies, including ECOCEN, the ADB and ESCAP

The discussion of trade liberalization within ASEAN has also tended to ignore the role of the private sector. It has already been pointed out that commercial banks constituted the main barometers of economic activity in Thailand, and were particularly responsive to the interests of the urban economy with their family ties and ethnic affiliations with other entrepreneurs, so that they were able to channel capital from agricultural exports into manufacturing investments. They were therefore the first to advocate government assistance for manufactured exports, followed by textile firms and then by the Association of Thai Industries, a role which became clearer in the 1980s.¹⁰⁵ However, it remained unclear as to how far they supported moves to promote trade liberalization within ASEAN, given the existing inward nature of market orientation and production within Thailand. In fact, tariff rates on textiles remained high at around 35%-60%.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the Chart Thai Party in particular was dominated by industrial interests under the leadership of Police Maj.-Gen Pramarn Adireksarn, who was also a prominent spokesman for the textile industry. In this regard, in their support for a regional orientation business groups did not appear so much interested in reducing transaction costs as in expanding market shares. Their roles in influencing policy-

makers' choices on trade liberalization therefore remained equivocal at best in this period.

At the same time, it is also valid to ask how come Thai policy-makers saw fit to support a more extensive trade liberalization within ASEAN and yet maintain the political structures of the 1967 Bangkok Declaration. Apart from the differences in emphasis between the MFA and other agencies shown above, this was also due to a perception of the primacy of the political message put forward by the Bangkok Declaration. This necessitated that the Declaration be retained in its essentials for it were a sort of constitutive document without which ASEAN would lack meaning. However, a discrepancy remains which further suggests that Thailand's approach towards the issue of regional trade liberalization in the 1970s was not only uncoordinated but also perhaps not fully thought out as a line of policy. Initial political commitments later clashed with economic realities in national terms, as well as wider policy concerns to maintain the coherence and unity of the Organization. It was thus unsurprising that rhetoric and good intentions moved ahead of practical moves in this field.

It may be seen that in the 1980s the original Thai advocates of free trade were to become more vocal and influential. Their initiatives also accorded with a new general mood to promote economic diplomacy, a mood which was stimulated by Thailand's growing economic strength and aspirations to the status of Newly-Industrialized Economy (NIE).¹⁰⁷ Dr. Amnuay Virawan subsequently occupied various key economic posts, and while out of public office, as Executive Chairman of the influential Bangkok Bank he promoted regional trade liberalization in

various fora. Within the business community, Dr. Narongchai Akrasanee also spoke out for free trade within ASEAN. The voice of such prominent persons served to stimulate regional initiatives on Thailand's behalf, particularly from the time of the 3rd ASEAN Summit in 1987, as seen in the membership of both these personalities in the ASEAN-CCI Group of Fourteen. As Anand Panyarachun, at that time Executive Chairman of the Saha Union conglomerate which had significant interests in textiles, asserted in 1986, although it was premature to say whether an ASEAN Common market was feasible, it was possible "to aim at a less ambitious and more practical objective, namely an ASEAN model of a free trade area which would gradually and progressively reduce and eventually abolish, within a fixed time frame, tariffs of all goods of ASEAN origin among member countries."¹⁰⁸ This was seen even more clearly in Thai moves, strongly supported by Singapore, to promote an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) upon Anand Panyarachun's accession to the Premiership in February 1991. The advocacy of the AFTA initiative proved successful and was adopted at the Fourth ASEAN Summit in Singapore in January 1992.

ASEAN'S COOPERATION IN INDUSTRIAL AND OTHER ECONOMIC MATTERS

Thus far in this study, regional trade liberalization has been treated apart due to its own special characteristics, but it also shared various experiences with ASEAN's overall economic cooperation, forming an integral part of the overall programme. In fact, the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord provided that

expansion of ASEAN trade would not only be carried out through preferential tariff arrangements, but also through cooperation on basic commodities, including food and energy, and through participation in joint industrial projects. In general, the various aspects of economic cooperation were stimulated by the impact of the UN Study on ASEAN Economic Cooperation. As previously pointed out, the UN Study Group proposed an extensive programme of economic cooperation based on three mechanisms: trade liberalization, industrial complementation and 'package deal' arrangements. However, since the attention of the UN Study Group was placed on reducing "the dependence of ASEAN countries on imports of manufactures," the focus was on industrialization of the ASEAN economies.¹⁰⁹ The major source of concern was that "with the more rapid economic growth of most of the ASEAN countries in recent years, the growth of imports tended to outstrip the growth of exports... (the trend) if continued, would result sooner or later in deficits which would be too great to be financed by any inflow of aid or foreign capital that is likely."¹¹⁰ Its significance lay in that although the UN Study was not accepted by ASEAN in its entirety, it formed the essential basis behind the negotiations for enhancing ASEAN economic cooperation between 1973-1975.

Since the reactivation of the Organization in late 1969, the various ASEAN permanent and ad hoc committees had already begun extensive studies of the modalities for an enhanced economic cooperation. This process culminated in a Meeting of Senior Officials of Planning Agencies in March 1973 to discuss modalities for cooperation, including the implications of the UN Study.¹¹¹ However, progress towards implementation

remained slow and moves towards greater economic cooperation were definitively boosted by the Summit process which began in the aftermath of the communist takeovers in Indochina in the Spring of 1975. To prepare the ground for the Bali Summit, the ASEAN Economic and Planning Ministers met in a first AEM in Jakarta in November 1975. Subsequent to the Bali Summit, five economic committees were established to replace the existing permanent committees and to coordinate ASEAN cooperation in specified fields, which eventually became known by their final names as: the Committee on Finance and Banking (COFAB), the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Forestry (COFAF), the Committee on Industry, Minerals and Energy (COIME), the Committee on Transport and Communications (COTAC), and the Committee on Trade and Tourism (COTT). Within these committees were organized various working groups and sub-committees dealing with more specific subjects.

As a major commodity exporter, Thailand had long shown an interest in commodity issues, particularly in stabilizing commodity prices and ensuring exports to developed countries. Among the main ASEAN commodity exports, Thailand was a major exporter of natural rubber and tin, together with Malaysia and Indonesia. In 1969, ASEAN production of natural rubber constituted 81.3% of world natural rubber production and 62% of world tin production, and cooperation within the ASEAN framework relating to such commodities was regarded as extremely valuable by the member countries.¹¹² Commodities also accounted for the greater part of Thailand's trade with ASEAN. Thailand was thus a key member of regional and ASEAN initiatives on rubber and tin, which had as the main

objective the stabilization of the price of such commodities. Such joint ASEAN actions included moves against Japan for the purposes controlling synthetic rubber production for the benefit of ASEAN natural rubber in 1973. However, it was relatively clear who the major exporter of each commodity was, namely Malaysia on both rubber and tin. At the time Thailand was the most uneconomic and least developed producer with regards to rubber.¹¹³ Thailand thus tended to follow the line pursued by Malaysia as the major exporter of rubber, and again this supporting role was shown to be dictated, and not merely a matter of choice. The Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries (ANRPC) was set up in 1970 after a meeting in Kuala Lumpur, following the decline in rubber prices, and the Southeast Asian members agreed on joint marketing measures to prop up rubber prices.¹¹⁴ Such moves were coordinated within ASEAN fora, with the setting up of a special ad hoc committee, as well as between ASEAN and third countries. Following a further collapse of rubber prices in 1974, Malaysia had instituted a national buffer stock, and cooperated with Indonesia and Thailand in proposing that the ANRPC set up an international buffer stock, which was finally agreed upon in 1976.¹¹⁵ As from 1974, moreover, Thailand faced declining terms of trade for its primary produce, which put pressure on its balance of payments and stimulated further urgent actions on commodity issues.¹¹⁶ This was seen during Prime Minister Kukrit's visit to Malaysia in June 1975, when the two sides reaffirmed the intention to set up a buffer scheme for rubber.¹¹⁷

Key individuals involved with Thailand's ASEAN policy in the early years also realized the importance of cooperation on

commodities within ASEAN. For example, it may be seen that Thanat Khoman during his term as Foreign Minister placed a special priority on commodity issues within the Organization. A significant part of ASEAN's activities on commodities took place within the framework of the North-South Dialogue, particularly within the forum of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The 6th Special Session of the UNGA in 1974 had led to the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, while UNCTAD IV in Nairobi in May 1976 adopted the Integrated Programme for Commodities (ICP) designed to improve market access, diversify production and improve market strategies for commodity exports of developing countries. On this matter, ASEAN interests accorded with those of developing countries as a whole. Thailand thus joined the advocacy of the ICP and the Common Fund for Commodities within the scope of UNCTAD. This was seen in the speeches of Thai spokesmen at the UN and other fora. At UNCTAD V held in Manila in May 1979, Deputy Prime Minister Sunthorn Hongladarom declared that Thailand, along with its ASEAN partners:

has not only been a strong supporter of a truly effective, viable and meaningful Common Fund but also an ardent advocate of it.¹¹⁸

However, such moves failed to obtain much in concrete terms from the developed countries, although they contributed towards the raising of an awareness of the economic problems faced by commodity exporters. Major developed countries such

as the US expressed the belief that the Common Fund would not solve the commodities issue and were against market mechanisms. In fact, despite generally supporting US policies in the region, on economic issues Thailand could frequently be found with other developing countries in the North-South debate. Thailand has supported the idea of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and played a role as an active member of the Asian Group within the G 77 group of developing countries in promoting acceptance of such a project within the international community, as seen in Foreign Minister Upadit Pachariyangkun's speech at the 32nd UNGA in 1977.

However, Thailand's advocacy of NIEO issues, even when compared to the other ASEAN countries, was again muted. A former senior official of the Ministry of Commerce put it that Thailand was wary of the politicization of such issues in various multilateral fora, and did not have as much at stake as the vocal former colonies, which included its ASEAN partners, who had been marginalized in the existing international economic order. In his view, Thailand's advocacy of NIEO issues thus constituted more a demonstration of solidarity with ASEAN and the Third World than a keen appreciation of the issues involved, while its relative silence was also due to the lack of a large base of trained personnel and negotiators on international economic issues.¹¹⁹ One MFA viewpoint put it that compared to the Latin American countries, ASEAN as a whole was in fact non-confrontational in its approach and preferred to act as a linkage between developing and developed countries.¹²⁰ Another Thai official is supposed to have observed that: "The Thai policy is to attempt to help contain such bargaining within a framework of generally cooperative

relations, rather than a framework of confrontation and hostility,” again pointing to the tendency towards moderation in Thailand’s demands.¹²¹ In this fashion, a generally moderate and non-confrontational approach appeared to have been adopted, which reinforced Thailand’s quiet but constructive conciliating role both within and outside the Organization on a wide range of issues.

Just as Thailand valued ASEAN consultations on political questions, so it valued similar consultations on economic questions, particularly with a view to enhancing its international bargaining power. Particularly valuable were the consultations to coordinate positions regarding the Multilateral Tariff Negotiations (MTN) within the scope of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which also increased Thailand’s visibility in international economic arena. With the end of the Kennedy Round in 1967, ASEAN’s actions in the field of international economic negotiations in its early years were relatively limited and the focus of efforts remained largely on a bilateral basis. However, in the preparations for the new Round of MTN in 1973, it was decided that ASEAN should take concerted action to maximize the leverage of its members.¹²² Joint approaches to multilateral trade negotiations were initially coordinated by the ASEAN Senior Trade Officials, an ad hoc grouping, acting through the respective diplomatic representatives of member countries overseas. To aid this process, the member countries established ASEAN committees in third countries composed of their ambassadors to the countries concerned so as to ensure a greater coordination of position. For this purpose, the ASEAN Brussels Committee (ABC) was established early

on to facilitate dialogue with the EC, while the ASEAN Geneva Committee (AGC) was established in early 1973 to coordinate positions within GATT and the Tokyo Round of Multilateral Tariff Negotiations, including through inter-regional groupings such as the G 77. Thus, by late 1973, trade officials were coordinating ASEAN tactics for the Tokyo Round, and with the official launch of the Round in 1974, such activities became a regular function.¹²³ It may be seen that such consultations held particular value for Thailand, which did not become a full member of GATT until 1982. Moreover, conscious of the value of further consultations, by 1978 Thailand had proposed that the brief of the AGC be extended beyond coordination for the MTN to cover all UN activities in Geneva, so that it became a more comprehensive mechanism for fostering joint approaches.¹²⁴ However, while recognizing the importance of joint economic approaches, Thailand's use of ASEAN in economic diplomacy has been far less than in terms of political diplomacy. The lack of qualified personnel meant that a distinctive and proactive Thai trade policy was only developing slowly in this period.

A key aspect of Thai participation in ASEAN economic cooperation was in resource-sharing with regards to important commodities. This aspect of ASEAN cooperation was enshrined in the programme of action within the Declaration of ASEAN Concord of 1976 which provided that: "member states shall assist each other by according priority to the supply of the individual country's needs in critical circumstances, and priority to the acquisition of exports from member states, in respect of basic commodities, particularly food and energy."¹²⁵ It was also envisaged that rice and fuel would receive tariff preferences

under the PTA scheme and thereby further promote ASEAN trade. Resource-sharing revealed the extent of how ASEAN cooperation was motivated by special interests on the part of individual member countries. The unequal distribution of ASEAN's natural resources was illustrated within the scope of the Committee on Trade and Tourism (COTT) in 1978 when the process of negotiating long-term quantity contracts showed that whereas Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia were interested in sugar and rice, Thailand and the Philippines were interested primarily in fuels.¹²⁶ Such concerns reflected the fact that in general terms, while Thailand was an exporter of foodstuffs, it was a net importer of energy. By contrast, Indonesia was energy-rich and yet food-deficient, and thus sought both to foster cooperation in food, as well as in the development of its abundant energy resources.

Thailand's special position as the main agricultural producer within ASEAN meant that it was central to ASEAN initiatives in this field, which initially took place against a background of world food shortage leading to crisis in 1973-74. As a major world agricultural producer, Thailand's economic boom during the 1960s had been partly financed by strong agricultural growth, particularly in the production of rice, rubber, maize, and increasingly cassava. Indeed, as we have seen agricultural exports formed the largest share of Thailand's export trade with ASEAN, although the main markets for Thailand's agricultural products laid elsewhere, such as in Europe, the US, and South Asia.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, rice was chosen as a priority within ASEAN as it was the most common food item within Southeast Asia, and subject to frequent fluctuations in supply

due to its vulnerability to climatic conditions. Following negotiations within the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Forestry (COFAF), the Agreement on the ASEAN Food Security Reserve was signed in October 1979, being the first food security reserve of its kind in the world. Thailand was key to setting up of ASEAN Food Security Reserve as the major rice exporter, which was nevertheless greatly concerned with the fluctuations in rice prices and international demand, which affected the Thai economy as a whole. As such rice, as well as sugar, were regarded as 'political crops' which had important domestic implications for a country still overwhelmingly agricultural in nature. This was illustrated in the attacks against the Thanom Government prior to November 1970 for the situation of Kao Luea-Kluea Pang (surplus rice-expensive salt), during which part of the solution was said to lie in increasing sales to markets such as the Philippines. The glut in world rice stocks in the early 1970s and low prices was followed in the mid 1970s by widespread shortages and record high prices, coinciding with the world food crisis. Amidst these disruptive fluctuations, Thai rice production dropped by 15% in 1973, leading to domestic shortages and a 3-month ban on rice exports for the first time in the Kingdom's history, which greatly affected Thailand's ASEAN partners.¹²⁸ With such disruptions in mind, Thailand's position was stated by the Deputy Permanent Secretary for Commerce in 1980: "Without basic security in food as well as energy, ASEAN progress towards closer economic cooperation will be hampered and delayed by the constant concern over the question of sufficiency of food and energy for the ASEAN peoples. In the final analysis, ASEAN must be able to eliminate, by its own

common efforts, the upsetting cycle of alternative shortages and surpluses, which has made ASEAN too dependent on non-ASEAN sources and markets.”¹²⁹ Driven by such concerns, Thailand contributed the greatest portion of the Reserve, being 15,000 tons out of the initial total of 50,000 tons, with the Ministry of Commerce being assigned to handle the Rice Reserve on behalf of Thailand.¹³⁰ This was consistent with the general Thai policy of building commodity reserves on a sub-regional basis as a first step towards greater food security.¹³¹ As major contributor to the reserves, Thailand had also provided rice to Indonesia on a bilateral basis in 1973.¹³² In practical terms, the actual ASEAN Reserve of 50,000 metric tons was widely regarded as insufficient in face of crisis, and further reserves such as for maize and sugar were not formally developed. In terms of political capital, on the other hand, it was important, and the scheme was regarded by Thailand as evidence of its commitment to concrete aspects of ASEAN cooperation, at very little cost.

Thailand showed disappointment with the benefits arising from such cooperation in resources, nevertheless, as it did not obtain greater ASEAN cooperation on petroleum supplies after the First Oil Shock of 1973, during which the price of petroleum imports rose enormously. As Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik explained in an interview, Indonesia wanted to help the two energy-poor ASEAN members, Thailand and the Philippines, “as much as possible...but if they expect that we must give them what they demand—what they need—it is impossible because production is too small.”¹³³ Subsequently, Thailand did obtain additional supplies from Malaysia and Indonesia on bilateral basis, and a bilateral Indo-Thai accord for trading rice for petrol

was concluded during Prime Minister Kriangsak's visit to Indonesia in February 1978.¹³⁴ This facility was activated during the Second Oil Shock in 1979. At the same time, the discovery of natural gas in the Gulf of Siam by the early 1980s helped to alleviate Thailand's dependence on energy imports, although it continued to be affected by price fluctuations in the world market. A lack of refinery capacity further hampered Thai efforts at decreasing dependence on energy imports during this period. A formal ASEAN Emergency Petroleum Sharing Scheme was approved in 1977 by the ASEAN Council on Petroleum (ASCOPE), which had been formed by the five national state oil companies, to cater for surpluses and shortfalls as in the rice scheme, although in practical terms there were difficulties in activating the procedures.¹³⁵ However, Thailand continued to place importance on ASEAN cooperation in this field, as seen in a Cabinet decision in April 1980 for government agencies involved with ASEAN to press for implementation of a Petroleum Reserve Security Scheme within the Organization.¹³⁶ Deputy Minister of Commerce Prok Amranand declared in late 1979 that long-term contracts with Thailand's ASEAN partners, namely Malaysia and Indonesia, were the next best thing to striking oil in the country itself.¹³⁷ As the prices of basic goods and services greatly affected the urban masses, the government was forced to pay greater attention to issues such as rice and oil. Increases in the price of oil and derived services such as electricity and transportation led to popular discontent against the government, as seen towards the Kriangsak Government in 1980. Such concerns paved the way for a first Meeting of the ASEAN Energy Ministers in Bali in September 1980 to coordinate

ASEAN activities in the field of energy.¹³⁸ Overall, the experience of such resource-sharing schemes demonstrate that whilst the official ASEAN schemes were of limited practical use, their importance laid in the political message of ASEAN solidarity. Meanwhile, the existence of an ASEAN framework also helped to facilitate more practical bilateral deals, from which Thailand gained tangible benefits over and above the impact of formal ASEAN cooperation.

Thailand showed particular interest in finance and banking issues as it was put in charge of the ASEAN Committee on Finance and Banking (COFAB) in the course of the assignment of responsibility for the five ASEAN Economic Committees. Thai representatives had previously spoken of the importance of a payments union which would further encourage mutual trade by enabling payments in local instead of hard currencies. Such matters were discussed within the Permanent Committee on Commerce and Industry in 1971-1973, and then within the ASEAN Bankers' Council after 1976, although concrete results were not obtained during this period.¹³⁹ Thai participation within COFAB was led by the Ministry of Finance, together with the Bank of Thailand. Dr. Puey Ungphakorn, Thailand's dynamic Central Bank Governor, had already been responsible for fostering cooperation among the Central Banks in Southeast Asia. Under his leadership, Thailand together with Malaysia had played a central role in the founding of the Southeast Asian Central Bank Group (SEACEN) in 1966. At the same time, Thailand also promoted a Southeast Asia voting group within the World Bank and the IMF so as to improve its bargaining power in matters of international finance.¹⁴⁰ Within

the ASEAN context, various initiatives in finance and banking were undertaken during this period. Within the scope of the Committee of ASEAN Central Banks and Monetary Authorities, the agreement on ASEAN Swap Arrangements of \$100 million to provide liquidity support for ASEAN members in balance of payments difficulties was signed at the Kuala Lumpur Summit in 1977. Groundwork was also laid for an ASEAN Finance Corporation (AFC) which was eventually set up by the private sector in 1981 with an initial capital of US \$10 million to finance joint-venture projects. Nevertheless, Thailand's chairmanship of COFAB had its critics, and the Thai economist Dr. Narongchai Akrasanee noted that COFAB failed notably to distinguish itself with innovative plans to further ASEAN cooperation. This was despite the strong enthusiasm of the private sector, particularly in the banking sector, such that cooperation in this field also failed to fulfil its promises.¹⁴¹

As previously mentioned, industrial cooperation had long been envisaged as an aim of regional economic cooperation, having in mind the limited financial resources of Southeast Asian countries to make the necessary investments in this sector. Joint venture industries had been discussed within ASA, although discussions had not culminated in concrete projects.¹⁴² As has also been noted, industrial complementation, as well as 'package deal' allocation of industrial projects, were proposed by the UN Study Group on ASEAN Economic Cooperation so as to help ASEAN build up an industrial base. Industrial cooperation was an option that was particularly favoured by Indonesia against a trade-based approach, and discussions began in earnest in 1973. As already shown, the issue of ASEAN industrial projects was

intrinsically linked to the work of the UN Study Group, which considered ways and means to reduce ASEAN's dependence on manufactured imports. Joint projects organized in 'package deals' assigned to particular countries would overcome the confines of small national markets to provide a regional market for manufactures, thereby reducing import requirements. Such basic industries could also form the basis for future industrial growth of each of the member countries. Yet despite recognition of the importance of the proposals of the UN Study Group, there were hesitations and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that a key role was played by the 1976-1977 Summit process in actively stimulating ASEAN cooperation in industrial matters. Thailand, for its part, accepted Indonesia's view that an ASEAN resilience should be fostered, although it remained outward-looking in its perspective. However, as will be seen its involvement in the ASEAN Industrial Projects (AIP) as from 1976 was a relatively unhappy one.

Due to the abundance of rock salt supplies in Thailand, a project involving the production of rock salt/soda ash had already been tentatively identified as worthy of inclusion in the scope of regional industrial cooperation by the ASEAN Working Group on Industrial Complementation in its first meeting in August 1974.¹⁴³ Such interest also took place against the background of high world fertilizer prices. From 1971 to 1974, the world price of urea rose from \$46.00 per tonne to \$315.80 per tonne as costlier oil prices following the Oil Shock fed through to derivatives such as fertilizers, and large producers such as Japan cut down their exports.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, continued growth in agricultural production, including the 'Green

Revolution' and rice production, was increasingly dependent on assuring steady supplies of cheap fertilizer. After the events of 1973, there were fears of a fresh food crisis arising from the lack of fertilizer.¹⁴⁵ When industrial projects were assigned to individual countries, it was therefore decided that Thailand should undertake the Rock Salt-Soda Ash Project, for the production of raw materials for the glass, paper, fertilizer and textile industry. In fact, Thailand's interest in the Rock Salt-Soda Ash Project had been stimulated by the existence of a venture already launched by the Srifuengfung family envisaging cooperation between Thailand's Asia Trust and the US company Diamond Shamrock. This venture had been suspended since 1974 due to the necessity for costly investment in infrastructure linking the upcountry rock salt mining facilities with the soda ash production plant on the coast.¹⁴⁶ It was felt that adoption of the stillborn venture as an AIP would solve such funding problems, as ASEAN could undertake part of the funding for the necessary infrastructural development which had impeded the original project. Thailand's policy was thus motivated by clear expectations of economic benefits. The Rock Salt-Soda Ash Project was expected to become the core around which further industrial expansion could be centred, launching Thailand as a heavy industrial producer. It was also hoped that turning the project into an AIP would also eliminate budgetary constraints faced by the Thai Government for what was originally a 'national' project, emphasizing the national origins behind the AIPs. However, the initially optimistic expectations were not to be fulfilled. An initial site was identified at Laem Chabang on Thailand's Eastern Seaboard development zone for the

production of soda ash, but was rejected by environmentalists and local groups, and the distances between the rock salt mining site in Chaiyaphum province and the proposed soda ash production facility on the coast proved prohibitive, given that ASEAN funding for infrastructural development was eventually excluded. Thai problems were compounded by delays within the ASEAN Committee on Industry, Minerals and Energy (COIME), which was responsible for the technical aspects of ASEAN industrial cooperation, as well as within the ASEAN Committee on Finance and Banking (COFAB), which was responsible for the financing aspects and which Thailand itself chaired.¹⁴⁷ After numerous delays, there was a gradual loss of interest in the Rock Salt-Soda Ash Project among its Thai supporters and private sector investors.

On the whole, the main problems behind the AIPs were that they ended up as competing with national projects launched by the partners involved. The Thai case demonstrated this dilemma, for it was eventually felt that the output of the Rock Salt-Soda Ash Project could compete with Thailand's plans for a national fertilizer plant. With the emerging situation of low world soda ash prices, it was further argued by potential Thai investors that it was cheaper to import soda ash from overseas and that Thailand could not absorb the excess production over and above ASEAN requirements, particularly of rock salt, within its own domestic requirements.¹⁴⁸ Within the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, tariff preferences given to the products of ASEAN AIPs were also designed to encourage production, as well as to further ASEAN trade, but the attractions of the scheme have proved insufficient. Even as Thailand lobbied for Japanese

funding for Thailand's AIP project during Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien's visit to Japan in September 1977, Minister of Commerce Suthee Natvaratat also requested financial assistance for national projects for the production of steel, natural gas and fertilizer.¹⁴⁹ When combined with the lack of government funds to undertake the necessary infrastructural improvements, given the high defence spending instituted as from the time of the Tanin Government, which had helped to build up a substantial national debt, the Rock Salt-Soda Ash Project was eventually withdrawn as an AIP on Thai request.¹⁵⁰

In fact, only Indonesia's Urea Fertilizer Project in Aceh, North Sumatra, and Malaysia's own Urea Project may be regarded as successes, and all other AIP projects were eventually abandoned. Singapore was particular disheartened that its proposal to produce diesel engines within the scope of the AIP was rejected by other countries which wanted to establish their own national diesel engine ventures. In the end, Singapore refused to participate fully in the AIP programme.¹⁵¹ Under the AIP scheme, the host country was supposed to contribute up to 60% of the funding, with the other four ASEAN countries providing 10% each in contribution to the project to make up the remaining 40%. Singapore, however, in its disappointment declared unilaterally that given it had no industrial project of its own, it would limit its participation in AIP projects to only 1%, and went ahead with its own diesel engine project in cooperation with Cummins, a US company.¹⁵² Other industrial cooperation schemes also ran against Singapore's expressed reluctance to support the emergence of protected national monopolies in the guise of ASEAN projects. Indonesia's role in

this regard has been particularly criticized, although it was only symptomatic of the priority given to national concerns by the ASEAN countries. The Indonesian position on economic cooperation was explained forcefully by President Suharto in his Keynote Statement at the 4th AEM in 1978:

We are promoting our economic and social cooperation primarily with the purpose of consolidating our respective national resilience. (It is) For this reason, therefore, that we are constantly seeking economic cooperation that will not undermine our respective economic resilience, it must, on the contrary, strengthen it. This is how it should be, because the weakness incurred by one of us will weaken us as a whole, which in due course will certainly undermine our regional resilience.¹⁵³

Thai critics have highlighted the lack of market orientation characterizing the AIP projects, pointing to the failure of project-oriented approaches to industrial cooperation.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, from the start alternative proposals were sought to provide possible smaller-scale options for ASEAN cooperation in this field. With this in mind, pre-feasibility studies were considered for fisheries and potash production in respect of Thailand for the planned second phase of the AIP programme, although this second phase was not implemented. At the same time, despite the problems encountered with ASEAN industrial cooperation, on a political level Thailand's commitment to this aspect of ASEAN cooperation was shown by inclusion of ASEAN economic cooperation in the Policy Statement of the 1st Kriangsak Government (November 1977-December 1978). This public

commitment was also seen in the inclusion of ASEAN cooperation in the 4th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981). However, such pious intentions were not translated into an adequately firm implementation in practice, and commitment to participation faltered.

It has been pointed out that in Thailand, the allocation of resources laid largely in private hands, and a dominant role has been played by banks and other financial institutions in propelling domestic investments. It was thus expected by government leaders that private sector initiatives would also drive ASEAN economic cooperation, in line with the government's general *laissez-faire* economic policy. In his message to the 9th Meeting of the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASEAN-CCI) in Bangkok in November 1978, Foreign Minister Upadit Pachariyangkun thus mentioned that: "although the ASEAN Governments can provide a framework for, and conditions conducive to, regional economic cooperation, it is the private sector which has to give this cooperation added meaning and more substance."¹⁵⁵ Private sector initiatives had indeed developed within ASEAN by the late 1970s through the efforts of the ASEAN-CCI, which had established its own organs in parallel to the regular ASEAN structure. Thai private sector representatives were active in the ASEAN-CCI Working Group on Trade, as well as in the various Commodity Clubs, such as for sugar, livestock and food, fruit and vegetables, and coffee and pepper. By the end of 1978, some 12 Industry Clubs had also been formed.¹⁵⁶ In addition, Joint Business Councils were formed with the private sector representatives of ASEAN's dialogue partners, such as with the US and Japan in 1979, meaning that

the private sector was involved with most aspects of ASEAN's economic cooperation by the end of the period under study. Nevertheless, the private sector as a whole played an ambiguous position in this period. Indeed, it appeared that on one of the only occasions when ASEAN economic cooperation touched Thai domestic life, which was on the siting of the Soda Ash Project in 1980, the service sector in the resort of Pattaya and various other business interests led a campaign against industrial interests as well as the personification of ASEAN as represented in the project in a bid to have the plant located well away from tourist areas.¹⁵⁷

Moreover, the decision-making structure continued to be dominated by officials with only consultative functions by the private sector in the regular ASEAN structure. Such a parallel structure did not make for particularly good coordination, and the necessary synergy failed to develop between government officials and the private sector in furthering cooperation in ASEAN. By the early 1980s, the work of the ASEAN-CCI working groups was to lead to concrete proposals for ASEAN industrial complementation, beginning in the automobile sector, although in the period under study, most of these proposals were still under consideration.¹⁵⁸ A report had nevertheless emerged in 1980 that proposed free trade and a framework of economic cooperation not dissimilar to provide by the Treaty of Rome.¹⁵⁹ Such proposals were not acted on by the ASEAN Ministers, leading to such a situation that by the mid 1980s, there was already strong disappointment within the Thai private sector at the lack of progress and non-inclusion in decision-making on ASEAN economic cooperation. This fostered a certain scepticism

within such circles with regards to the prospects for ASEAN as a whole.

It is not improbable that in national terms, Thailand's efforts were also hampered by the apparent lack of continuity in political leadership given the political instability of the mid 1970s. Permanent officials did make up for some of the lack of continuity, but it is the contention here that the necessary political inspiration and direction vital for longer term planning was missing at crucial stages in the ASEAN negotiations. At the 2nd AEM Dr. Amnuay Virawan as the Permanent Secretary for Finance was the most junior of the national representatives present, as Thailand had no delegates at Ministerial level. As a further demonstration of this lack of continuity, the fact that different sets of economic representatives were present at the Bali and Kuala Lumpur Summits probably did not help Thailand's bargaining power, and this factor will be further investigated. In this regard, Thanat Khoman's comments on the origins of economic cooperation are instructive of the ready acceptance of a slow pace of economic cooperation by political leaders:

it started more like a neighbourhood association, a gentleman's club of well-bred and well-off people, who got together to discuss their problems in an easy-going manner without the stiffness and the hardnosed predatory method of the western businessmen as our respective countries were not economically hard pressed. If we could reach agreement, so much the better, if not, we put it off until the next time.¹⁶⁰

Such attitudes preserved the overall unity of the Organization and thereby maximized the informal and bilateral benefits for the member countries, particularly in terms of consultations. With this in mind, the first Director of ASEAN's Bureau of Economic Cooperation, Dr. Amado Castro, observed that during the first eight years of the Organization's existence, the Economic Ministers "knew little about, or had little interest in, the efforts to promote economic cooperation, the impetus for which was coming from the Foreign Ministers. Economic cooperation was treated as foreign relations and not as a question of internal affairs within an economic framework."⁶¹ This ensured that decision-making on economic issues was slow. However, while the foreign policy emphasis has retarded decision-making on economic cooperation, it also ensured that progress on contentious issues of formal economic cooperation were made while arousing as little controversy as possible. This was a trade-off which suited most ASEAN decision-makers during the period, but which frustrated observers and the private sectors in the respective countries, as well as outside commentators.

ASEAN'S EXTERNAL DIALOGUES

It is clear that Thanat Khoman and the initial Thai planners did not mean ASEAN to be entirely self-sufficient, and envisaged external economic cooperation with third countries early on. This readiness to forge external links was seen in Thanat's UNGA speech in 1969 which proclaimed that ASPAC and ASEAN were not inward-looking and that:

They also envisage cooperation with nations outside the area provided that the latter agree to work with them on the basis of equality and partnership, sharing equitably advantages and obligations.¹⁶²

In the Thai view, external cooperation did not detract from ASEAN's origins as an indigenous association of Southeast Asian countries. Indeed, one reason for the formation of ASEAN had been to compensate for the member countries' lack of financial resources for development, as previously discussed. As has been posited, another important element driving the formation of the Association was to enhance the voice of Southeast Asian countries in the international arena so as to achieve greater bargaining power on international economic issues as well as political questions. However, the external dialogues with third countries that began in the early 1970s were initially non-political, at least partly for the reason that a publicly political content threatened to expose the ASEAN countries to the charge that they were inspired by external powers and were not truly independent, which was a primary cause for concern in the formative period. At the same time, other multilateral channels were already open to many of the ASEAN states, such as to Australia, New Zealand, and Japan through ASPAC until 1973, and to the former two and the US, Britain and France through SEATO until 1975. Thus multilateral cooperation and consultations between ASEAN and external powers did not become a priority until the early 1970s, when motivated primarily by external developments.

Considering that Thailand's largest trading partners were to be found among the developed countries, and not among its ASEAN colleagues, an emphasis by Thailand on fostering relations with developed countries was also likely. Similar concerns were strongly voiced by other ASEAN members, particularly those with a strong trade orientation or overwhelming development needs. The importance of trade to Singapore meant that the city state was active in this field from the time of the 2nd and 3rd AMMs in 1968 and 1969, respectively. As its Foreign Minister S. Rajaratnam. declared at the 3rd AMM, ASEAN's activities had specific requirements:

Regional cooperation between poor and underdeveloped countries requires different approaches and solutions from those adopted by regional groupings of rich countries...ASEAN must, therefore, seek the assistance and participation of countries from outside the region and outside countries will not do this unless they are first convinced of the internal stability, both political and economic, of the countries constituting ASEAN.¹⁶³

For Singapore then, an outward orientation to regional cooperation was required in Southeast Asia which distinguished ASEAN cooperation from that of groupings of developed countries, which could largely depend on their own resources. At the same time, Indonesia also saw the importance of external linkages, though primarily for developmental purposes given its relative economic weakness after the Sukarno years, and fully supported such overtures.

It is worthwhile, however, to ask the question whether Thailand's motivation for ASEAN economic cooperation was driven by primarily external concerns, as Anwar has suggested for Indonesia, or by an interest in promoting indigenous ASEAN ventures.¹⁶⁴ Certainly, speeches by Thai leaders gave the impression that Thailand saw the value of developing both elements of cooperation. This was seen, for example, in the speech of Deputy Prime Minister Boonchai Bamrungpong at the 5th AEM in 1977, in which after advocating the establishment of large-scale industries and increasing intra-ASEAN trade, he also called for the development of:

closer economic relations with other countries and groups of countries. ASEAN as a member of the international community of nations cannot develop in isolation. In this respect my Government notes with gratification, ASEAN's continuing common dialogue with others to promote more fruitful relations with them.¹⁶⁵

There is no evidence, however, which suggested that Thailand saw ASEAN economic and functional cooperation as areas in which primary stimulus and funding would come from abroad. Rather, Thai policy-makers saw the need for ASEAN cooperation more to strengthen solidarity and ties between the members, including through mutual trade and joint projects, although vital funding for such activities could indeed come from the developed countries for most ASEAN countries, including Thailand, were short of funds for development. Moreover, although aid was multilateralized, there was

understanding from the start that this should not prejudice existing bilateral programmes with the developed countries. Certainly, there was little multilateralization of investment promotion activities, for the ASEAN countries were actively competing for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in a bid to develop their industries, making cooperation in this field difficult to achieve, even though there was agreement on joint trade promotion activities.

Thailand's policies towards the institutionalization of ASEAN's external dialogues reflected both its domestic constraints that the brief of its economic ministers was not all-encompassing, as well as a concern to obtain maximum advantage from such meetings, both in economic and political terms. Hence, as on many economic matters, it tended to side with the Singapore-Philippines line on the representation of both Foreign and Economic Ministers at meetings with third countries, such as for the first dialogue meeting with the US in 1978, instead of leaving such discussions to the Economic Ministers which was an Indonesian preference.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, the MFA maintained its insistence that ASEAN economic cooperation constituted a tool of foreign policy and that accordingly the Foreign Ministers should maintain an overall coordinating role. Nevertheless, ASEAN's external dialogues were dominated in their first years by issues of market access, trade and development cooperation instead of political questions. Certainly, Thailand continued to receive substantial bilateral development aid, particularly from the US, throughout the period concerned. Although this had fallen off by 1975, there was no overriding demand for additional aid as in the case of Indonesia. With this in mind, Thai policy-

makers saw ASEAN as a means obtaining supplementary support from external powers, as seen in comments on the role of ASEAN and ASPAC by the Ambassador to Washington and then Minister of Economic Affairs, Bunchana Atthakor:

The aim is to form a 'power base' in such a way that support in the form of economic, technical, political cooperation could be invited from outside friendly powers like the United States to help strengthen our cause of freedom and progress.¹⁶⁷

The evidence suggests that the economic dimension was indeed a strong motivator for ASEAN's external cooperation, with the importance of trade for each of the member countries being an important driving factor behind such moves. At the same time, ASEAN's attempt to deal with external powers as a group may be regarded as a fairly innovative approach to inter-organizational relations as despite their rhetoric of wanting greater unity within Asia, the major economic powers preferred to negotiate bilateral deals with the countries of Southeast Asia. Even the European Community which normally negotiated as a group through the European Commission normally favoured bilateral agreements with developing countries, such as with India.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, as from the period 1972-1975, the EC and ASEAN through the Joint Study Group were conducting extended studies on the ways and means to chart the future evolution of their relationship, which led to the eventual signing of the first ASEAN-EC Cooperation Agreement at a joint Ministerial Meeting in March 1980. That trade issues as well as

development cooperation were included in the dialogues showed the triumph of the joint stand advocated by ASEAN versus the preference of the countries of the West for 'aid and not trade' in terms of their relations with the developing world. Despite this substantial achievement, ASEAN nevertheless encountered limited success in its demands during the initial negotiations due to the developed countries' lingering preference for bilateralism.

It is suggested that the very drawbacks which retarded ASEAN's internal economic cooperation contributed to the effectiveness of its external ventures. As a Thai advocate of ASEAN economic cooperation has commented:

The similarity of economic structure among the ASEAN countries, or the lack of complementarity, has had positive effects on the extra-ASEAN relations. Thus, ASEAN has found enough common interest to enter into joint approaches on international economic problems.¹⁶⁹

The first formal dialogue meeting between ASEAN and a third country took place between ASEAN and Australia in 1974, leading to the launching of the ASEAN-Australia Economic Cooperation Programme (AAECP), although discussions had previously been held with the EC and Japan on an informal basis.¹⁷⁰ The dialogues with the EC had represented the culmination of attempts by the countries of Southeast Asia to confront the threats and opportunities offered by the political and economic consolidation of their traditional partners in Europe. However, the actual timing of the dialogue was strongly motivated by

Britain's entry into EC in 1973. This was more a cause of special concern for Singapore and Malaysia than for Thailand and the other ASEAN members, for the loss of Commonwealth preference that such a move would imply, although Indonesian Minister of Trade Radius Prawiro played a major role in developing the dialogue. Thailand did not seem to have played a particularly active role in the initiation of the dialogue, despite hosting certain of the discussions in Bangkok. However, the trend of increasing protectionism within the EC by the end of the period threatened Thailand's growing tapioca exports, forcing it to become more active in the negotiations.

Meanwhile, the dialogue with Japan had been initially driven by concerns over the need to control synthetic rubber production by Japanese producers in 1973, and thus of special interest to Thailand as well as Malaysia and Indonesia. It is also often pointed out that Tokyo received about 90% of its oil requirements from the Straits of Malacca, and hence its special concern for the stability of the ASEAN countries.¹⁷¹ The First Oil Shock brought home to Japan its reliance on supplies of raw materials from overseas, including from Southeast Asia, and hence induced an element of vulnerability.¹⁷² To compound such worries, Japan had been concerned at the extent of anti-Japanese feeling aroused as a result of Japanese economic activities in Southeast Asia, including in Thailand as seen during Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's visit to the region. During the course of 1969, at a time when Thailand faced a huge trade deficit, Economic Affairs Minister Bunchana Atthakor put the finger on Japan as being the country most responsible for the deficit.¹⁷³ Increasingly, the US also attempted to persuade Japan to play a

more active role within Southeast Asia in the post-Vietnam period, not least because Japanese economic aid would be regarded as 'neutral' as opposed to direct aid from the US. Since the announcement of the Fukuda Doctrine in August 1977, Japan has therefore tried to promote a 'heart to heart' relationship with the ASEAN countries, particularly in efforts to strengthen ASEAN solidarity and resilience, as well as in the development of ASEAN's relations with the states of Indochina to stabilize the whole of Southeast Asia.¹⁷⁴ Within this framework, Thailand has obtained technical assistance from Japan on rubber production through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

It may be noted that ASEAN dialogues with the US began relatively late on. It was only in December 1977 that the first formal meeting took place between the two sides. Perhaps the argument of the 'kiss of death' still applied and served to dampen demands for official ties with Washington, but perhaps an important factor was once again the existence of bilateral channels of dialogue and support, which was certainly true for Thailand up to the middle of the 1970s. It has also been noted that the US was initially too occupied in Vietnam, and then too uninterested in Southeast Asia as a whole as a result of that experience, to take an active interest in ASEAN. However, this attitude changed as US policy-makers sought to re-engage in Southeast Asia under the Carter Administration and looked for a suitable mechanism that would prevent the appearance of a bilateral commitment.¹⁷⁵ As shown above, increased concern for the development and stability of Southeast Asia was also initially carried out through the encouragement of Japanese activities

within the region. Direct American interest in ASEAN was further magnified by the onset of the Kampuchean problem in late 1978, and by the resultant need to provide political support for the countries of Southeast Asia, and particularly Thailand which as will be shown actively lobbied for increased US commitments. Indeed, owing to the impact of such stimuli it is suggested that the US-ASEAN relationship was “determined as much or more by external circumstances as by the attractiveness of ASEAN itself.”¹⁷⁶

ASEAN economic cooperation was thus substantially motivated by external concerns, particularly with the increasing protectionism in, and difficulty of market access to, the developed economies. This led to an important external dimension being enshrined in formal ASEAN cooperation by the mid 1970s. The increasing participation of the ASEAN Economic Ministers in the ASEAN process after 1975 further boosted such developments, driven by the AEM’s interest in fostering its own discussions with the developed countries.¹⁷⁷ Meanwhile, the holding of UNCTAD in 1964 and the subsequent granting of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) by developed countries paved the way for greater international trade bargaining. This was a factor in boosting the importance of external dialogues with the US, Australia or Japan within the overall ASEAN process. As Thailand concentrated more on production for export and moved away from ISI as from the late 1970s, the dialogues were to prove invaluable in securing market access and increased quotas for Thai products in developed countries, particular in the EC and the US. However, ASEAN has been relatively unsuccessful in getting its developed partners

to participate in the stabilization of ASEAN countries' export earnings through a STABEX scheme, or a Lomé—type agreement such that bound the EC to developing countries which were former colonies of the European countries. Moreover, as has been noted, ASEAN cooperation did not extend to such matters as a common foreign investment code which was a preoccupation of other regional groupings, as seen in the Andean Pact in 1971. A major factor in this regard was the outward-looking nature of the ASEAN economies, as opposed to those of the South American countries which were obsessed with the idea of dependency, but which also encouraged greater competition for foreign investment among the former.

Upon the institutionalization of ASEAN's dialogue relationships with external partners, Thailand was entrusted with dialogue relations with the United Nations and its organs, largely for the reason that Bangkok was the seat of ESCAP. This dialogue, focusing on development cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the organs of ESCAP, was substantially less political than other dialogues, such as with the US or Japan. Perhaps due to the low intensity or the lack of political content of the dialogue, Thailand was not seen to push any issue in particular during its coordinatorship. The low intensity of the dialogue probably further meant that in overall terms the external dimension of ASEAN cooperation was not as important for Thailand as for certain countries, namely Indonesia.¹⁷⁸

It is interesting to point out that despite the fact that the external dialogues commenced due to economic concerns, many such issues including securing the stabilization of rubber exports

and market access were also of major interest to Thailand, revealing the existence of common interests within ASEAN. Only later on did these external dialogues become more overtly political in terms of content. This development was largely the result of ASEAN efforts to combat the massive flows of Indochinese refugees into ASEAN countries and the outbreak Kampuchean Crisis in the late 1970s, necessitating international cooperation. An internal dynamic within the dialogue process may also have been involved, for once the institutional mechanisms were in place, there was a tendency to discuss issues of concern to at least one of the two parties involved. As will be seen, Thailand played a major role in the politicization of ASEAN's external dialogues by pressing for the resolution of refugee and Indochina issues through such fora. The institution of formal Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMC) following the AMMs as from the 12th AMM in Bali in 1979 enabled regular discussion of issues of mutual concern to the two sides, and in the process, it is suggested that: "the primary beneficiary is Thailand, but all states in the process gain because this relationship with the great powers enhances the process and makes it more valuable."¹⁷⁹

THAILAND AND FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

Technical and cultural cooperation among member countries, as well as initiatives to complement efforts in economic cooperation through scientific and social development, have been collectively termed by the Organization as 'functional cooperation.' This aspect of cooperation has been central to

ASEAN's activities since its founding, for as an ASEAN publication suggests:

ASEAN has always recognized the important role that social and cultural development plays in helping the Association achieve its goals of political stability and economic resilience. Raising living standards and improving the working conditions of the peoples of the region are the cardinal principles of ASEAN cooperation.¹⁸⁰

It seemed that Thailand's main motivation in playing a role in ASEAN functional cooperation was to help justify the formal basis of the Organization as promoting social and cultural, as well as economic, development. Such common activities were regarded as vital elements in the process of promoting the habit of cooperation. As ASEAN Secretary-General Dato' Ajit Singh has noted, "it has provided a firm foundation and a rallying point for common action towards strengthening ASEAN solidarity and cooperation."¹⁸¹ The words 'rallying point' are crucial in this regard, for while political activities were initially supposed to be outside the formal framework of ASEAN, the slow and deliberate pace of economic cooperation frequently meant that functional cooperation had to be held up as one concrete area in which practical projects could be undertaken. Thus, it was within the scope of so-called functional cooperation that the work of community-building within Southeast Asia would take place.

In implementing functional cooperation as in economic cooperation, ASEAN initially resolved to concentrate on short-

term and practical projects. Large scale or long-term projects were felt to be more suited for regional programmes run by the ADB or ESCAP which were better endowed in terms of financial and technical resources. The decision to opt for quick-yielding projects was decided early on, as seen in comments by Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik at the Second Session of the First ASC: "We are of the opinion that the implementation of ASEAN projects should as far as possible further our national projects in the sense of contributing towards the speedier implementation of these national projects. We are at this stage, in favour of quick-yielding projects which require modest expenditures."¹⁸² At the 3rd AMM in December 1969, an Agreement for the Promotion of Cooperation in Mass Media and Cultural Activities was concluded, with such activities being largely small-scale in nature. Subsequently, various projects were run by the Permanent Committees, involving activities such as the exchange of cultural programmes and ASEAN package tours, etc. Even after 1976, small projects were maintained as they were regarded as more valuable in the creation of a cultural community and greater social exchange than large scale ones. Henceforth, however, cooperation was carried out through the four functional committees founded after Bali: The Committee on Science and Technology (COST), the Committee on Culture and Information (COCI), the Committee on Social Development (COSD), and the Senior Officials on Drugs (ASOD) as well as various expert committees.¹⁸³ An important initiative, and which went one step further from ASA, was the creation of the ASEAN Fund of \$5 million in 1969 to help support joint cooperation projects. Under the scheme, each member state appropriated from its annual

budget \$1 million to the ASEAN Fund to finance ASEAN projects, with the disbursements being controlled by the ASEAN Standing Committee. However, while the ASEAN Fund was made up from contributions by the member countries, member states were reluctant to draw on the Fund. Instead, important aspects of ASEAN cooperation were funded by ASEAN's dialogue partners, which helped to solve ASEAN's own budgetary constraints. For example, the ASEAN Cultural Fund was constituted from substantial lump-sum contributions by Japan, with the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Cultural Fund being concluded in December 1978. Meanwhile, the focus of development cooperation centred on the transfer of technology or expertise to ASEAN countries, as deemed relevant for most developing countries.

Nevertheless, functional cooperation often appeared to be the poor sister to other areas of cooperation which were closer to the national interests and priorities of member countries. Rhetoric aside, this aspect of ASEAN cooperation was given low priority by the member states, including by Thailand. Thanat Khoman expressed a commonly-felt view among policy-makers that: "The importance in ASEAN lies in the economic field... functional cooperation is insufficient."⁸⁴ This impression may have arisen perhaps because technical matters were less prestigious and less newsworthy than grand schemes for economic cooperation, although part of the answer may also have laid in the traditional bottom-up approach to formulating ASEAN projects. In terms of procedure, projects were typically proposed by individual national agencies according to their own requirements, and only at the final stage couched in ASEAN

terms, which meant that full regional impact was often limited. Moreover, the agencies involved were only engaged for the specified period of the projects, without necessarily obtaining a wider view of ASEAN cooperation.¹⁸⁵ The short-term nature of the projects meant that their general profile was kept low and their impact often ephemeral. Some momentum was provided by the Summit decisions, with the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord being a key document in broadening the scope and intensifying the pace of functional cooperation activities, but this meant that for the greater part of the time cooperation in such fields was at best patchy. Functional cooperation was also one aspect where much of the initiative had to come from the various individual national agencies and not from the MFA due to the latter's limited competence in technical matters, contributing to a problem of encapsulation. Moreover, in terms of implementation, such agencies became the national 'focal point,' being responsible for technical aspects while the task of diplomatic coordination was carried out by the MFA. As has been shown, ASEAN's structure, both at the national and regional level, was not conducive to the fostering of large-scale initiatives. It was thus that community-building constituted a low priority among ASEAN states, in a departure from the public aims of the Organization.

In bilateral terms, cooperation in technical fields between the ASEAN countries did increase considerably during the period under study, although there was remaining uncertainty as to the extent of ASEAN's contribution to this process. In the field of law, differences in legal systems have limited cooperation between member countries. Despite the constraints, the

Declaration of ASEAN Concord envisaged a study of ASEAN judicial cooperation and the possibility of concluding an ASEAN extradition treaty. In this regard, it has been pointed out that extradition treaties were concluded between Thailand and Indonesia in 1976 and with the Philippines in 1981, but that: "It is unclear whether these were prompted by the existence of ASEAN itself or whether they would have taken place irrespective of ASEAN."⁸⁶ Since its membership of ASEAN, Thailand has also concluded double-taxation treaties with all its other partners in the Association, which has helped to facilitate investment in the area, although again the role played by common membership is disputable. Nevertheless, it may be said that membership of ASEAN at the very least has facilitated bilateral deals.

Within the various areas of ASEAN functional cooperation, certain fields of specific interest to Thailand may be identified. For example, Thailand placed an importance on technology transfer through the Committee on Science and Technology (COST). It also chaired the Committee on Social Development (COSD) for the initial period, and at the same time placed special emphasis on population issues and on education, echoing the national priorities of this period. In this regard, interaction with the UN agencies on such issues was facilitated by Thailand's coordinator ship of ASEAN's dialogue relations with ESCAP, and more particularly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Thailand also played an active part in developing ASEAN cooperation on drugs, as Northern Thailand then constituted a major route for the trafficking of drugs and narcotics, so ASEAN cooperation was regarded as a valuable

supplement to existing national and multilateral initiatives. Following the Bali Summit's identification of cooperation in the prevention and eradication of drug abuse and trafficking as a priority, annual meetings of ASEAN Drug Experts were held as from 1976, and from 1979 to 1983, and as part of the activities there was a cross-posting programme for drug officials between the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand.¹⁸⁷ The Tanin Government, in particular, made the issue of eliminating drug trafficking one of its policy priorities. Accordingly, through its Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) as from 1977, Thailand played an important role in ASEAN's drug control programmes, particularly in the provision of drug enforcement training.¹⁸⁸ A further boost for functional cooperation was given by the establishment of the external dialogues with third countries, with the additional funding being of primary value in financing regional projects and remedying the drawbacks in the ASEAN Fund. Thus, for instance, the EC became a major supporter of ASEAN's anti-drug activities on an ongoing basis. Subsequently, dialogue partners were to be crucial in stimulating activities in food and agriculture, forestry, human resource development and science and technology.¹⁸⁹ However, as at the end of 1979 most of the projects to be funded by ASEAN's dialogue partners were still in the planning stage.

At this stage, few ASEAN states stressed the importance of widening popular support for ASEAN cooperation. The general lack of interest on this matter tends to reinforce the impression that priority remained very much in the policy arena in this period, and that a general distrust of popular participation was perpetuated by the domination of political and bureaucratic

elites in the ASEAN process. This was certainly one aspect that set ASEAN apart from the European example, which earnestly sought to foster greater public participation and general awareness. ASEAN cultural programmes did contribute to a greater awareness of cultural affinities within Southeast Asia, and of the common problems facing regional states. Indeed, a specific provision of the 1967 Bangkok Declaration had been “to promote Southeast Asian studies,” a priority which was reaffirmed in the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord. However, an examination of Thai academic research on Southeast Asia reveals that much of this knowledge was superficial, and that research interest was directed elsewhere away from ASEAN partners. Even after the founding of ASEAN, the state of knowledge within Thailand of its neighbours remained poor, and it has been pointed out that there has been a general dearth of Southeast Asian studies in the Kingdom. Prior to modern times, Thai rulers had good knowledge of neighbouring territories including through the employment of ethnic minorities such as Mons and Karens as intelligence-gatherers, but since the colonial era, even this avenue of information had declined.¹⁹⁰ Into the 1980s, Thai scholarship tended to focus on the countries of Indochina, Cambodia, followed by Laos and Vietnam, and then Burma, accompanied by a security perspective as if the authors were decision-makers.¹⁹¹ Works on the other Southeast Asian countries, including on Thailand’s partners in ASEAN, were relatively few.¹⁹² Indeed, of the ASEAN members only Malaysia was considered an immediate neighbour of Thailand. It was particularly striking that Indonesia as the largest country of Southeast Asia has received little attention from Thai

scholarship.¹⁹³ So-called 'Southeast Asian studies' tended to concentrate on Thailand itself or on the role of great powers such as the US and Japan within the region. Such trends seemed to confirm the impression of Huxley that there is a dominance of extra-regional scholarship in the literature on Southeast Asia, and that there is an overwhelming policy perspective, particularly on regional security.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, as scholarship on Thai policy concentrated on what was regarded as the policy theme, this almost inevitably drew attention to Thailand's relationship with great powers to the detriment of studies on the relations with its neighbours.

INFORMAL TIES BETWEEN THAILAND, SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE WIDER EAST ASIAN REGION

A conclusion may already be drawn that even with its membership in ASEAN and in other regional economic organizations, Thailand's economic and social/cultural integration with its ASEAN partners remained relatively poor, at least when compared to other regional states such as Singapore and Malaysia. As has been shown, Thailand's trade linkages with ASEAN were strongly based on exchanges with Singapore, and to a lesser extent Malaysia, with the most important trade being in rice and petroleum. Moreover, it was a very one-sided relationship, with Thailand's food exports to its ASEAN partners dominating the exchanges.¹⁹⁵

In informal terms, however, the degree of integration may be seen to be significantly higher. This applied in particular to flows of investment capital, rather than trade. Externally, already

by the late 1970s Thailand had become a regional centre for Japanese trans-national corporation (TNC) activity. The role of TNCs has meant that action by individual governments and their investment promotion activities have had at best a supportive impact on actual investment flows. Joint ventures between Thai and Japanese business interests, initially in industries such as textiles, had become very active and formed the basis for further economic expansion. In particular, Japanese activities in the car industry sector expanded rapidly during the 1980s throughout the ASEAN countries. A regional distribution of vehicle manufacture among the ASEAN countries was aided to a certain extent by the ASEAN Brand-to-Brand Complementation Scheme (BBC) as from 1988, although the impact of the scheme has remained limited.¹⁹⁶

The study of the activities of Thai financial institutions has also revealed a strong network of contacts within the region, including with Hong Kong and Japan.¹⁹⁷ As has been shown, Thai banks had emerged out of the agricultural sector during, and in the aftermath of, the Second World War and the relative weakness of Western interests which had until then been dominant. Usually connected with ethnic Chinese business communities, the commercial banks grew into conglomerates around which industrial activity was organized. These business groupings with extensive regional contacts promoted Thailand's exchanges within Southeast Asia as well as with the wider East Asian region, albeit maintaining their feet in finance.¹⁹⁸ Thailand's Bangkok Bank was directly present in more ASEAN countries than any other ASEAN bank, as well as within Asia.¹⁹⁹ This informal integration may be differentiated from formal ASEAN

economic exchanges, including the programmes of ASEAN economic cooperation with which the private sector had become associated. In 1981, the *Bangkok Bank Monthly Review* had observed that since 1976 “several ASEAN businessmen have since come to the conclusion that government-inspired industrial projects have very little chance of getting off the ground.”²⁰⁰ This reflected not only the relative disillusionment at efforts to forge formal cooperation within ASEAN, but also attempts by the private sector to come up with its own initiatives within the ASEAN framework, as well as to collaborate in more informal terms.

When informal contacts are placed against the formal relationships between the ASEAN members, as seen in institutional and bilateral terms, therefore, the situation emerges as being substantially different. However, this also reflected part of a general trend, of Southeast Asia’s increasing interdependence with the wider framework of East Asia.²⁰¹ As the share of manufactures increased in exports, so the linkage was enhanced. Such trends were to increase markedly with the relocation of Japanese industries to the ASEAN countries following the appreciation of the Japanese yen against the US dollar after the Plaza Accord in 1985. From an original base in the production and assembly of motor vehicles, textiles and synthetic fibres, the activities of Japanese companies expanded into the household electronic and electrical products sector and made a major contribution towards the industrialization of Thailand, as of its ASEAN partners such as Malaysia and Indonesia.²⁰² Export-oriented production thus grew largely as a result of this external impulse of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), much more than as the result of government incentives for export, and certainly

above the impulse provided by the existence of the ASEAN market. Thailand's economic exchanges took place increasingly within the scope of the Asia-Pacific region, although its trade with the ASEAN countries remained relatively constant. The dynamics of *de facto* economic integration has thus surpassed the formal structures of cooperation.

CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that the study encompasses a mere 3 years of ASEAN's enhanced economic cooperation, the main trends with regards to its activities in this field may already be distinguished. Most importantly, the mechanisms for economic cooperation launched during this period, including trade liberalization, industrial complementation and 'package deal' arrangements, served the Organization until 1992. Those who argue that the substance of ASEAN laid in concrete economic and functional cooperation nevertheless suggest that it barely existed before 1976.²⁰³ This ignores the network of contacts that had been built up since the ASA period and which was sustained throughout the early years of ASEAN, as well as the smaller scale bilateral or trilateral projects undertaken prior to the completion of the UN Study on ASEAN Economic Cooperation, a document which admittedly laid the basis for much of ASEAN's subsequent thinking on economic issues.

Despite its ambitious aims, however, a measure of the importance of ASEAN economic cooperation for Thailand may be shown in that while by 1979-1980 Thailand's foreign political relations could not be made without some reference to ASEAN,

its economic and technical policies had very little to do with the Organization. An exception may perhaps already be found in the field of multilateral trade negotiations, which itself had strong linkages with foreign political policy. It may be asserted that there was in fact an inherent contradiction between an activist ASEAN economic cooperation and the general *laissez-faire* mode of economic development pursued by Thailand within a climate of macroeconomic conservatism. This may also be attributed to the fact that despite the rhetoric of Collective Political Defence in guiding general policy towards ASEAN, there were problems in implementing such an approach in the economic field, including that in terms of the implementation of economic decisions, the crucial decisions were removed from the MFA. On concrete issues of economic cooperation, it was easier to see national advantage through relative gains, and what Thanat Khoman called the “spirit of give and take” was not present, even among Thai officials. The reality was that Thailand’s economic achievements remained essentially on a national level, and if ASEAN cooperation was indeed intended by Thai policy-makers to promote substantive economic development, then the efforts involved were decidedly half-hearted. Thai policy-makers did favour a substantive economic cooperation. At the same time, it could not be argued that they attempted to play a determining role in driving ASEAN economic cooperation during the period under study. Even within the MFA, trade and economic cooperation were not perceived to advance the main priorities of political stability and security, except in the longer term, and were thus given lower priority. Despite these reservations, however, Thailand did exert efforts to make a

positive and active contribution in the economic field.

The conclusion may be drawn that Thailand's policy on ASEAN economic cooperation in this period was premised on 3 basic requirements: firstly, to increase Thailand's voice and bargaining power in international arena; secondly, to promote economic linkages within ASEAN; and thirdly, to promote national development. As may be seen, these were overwhelmingly general aims and had wider political objectives, which could be attributed largely to the ideology of Collective Political Defence. For much of the period overall decision-making laid within bureaucratic and foreign policy structures. Even within this bureaucratic framework, the economic agencies did not play a determining role until after 1976 with the institution of meetings of the ASEAN Economic Ministers and subordinate organs, and thus much of economic cooperation was initially decided political objectives in mind. However, even though the MFA insisted on being involved in decision-making on ASEAN economic cooperation, it did not have the resources to conduct in-depth study, which limited its contribution. In due course, economic and foreign policy decision-making became increasingly autonomous from each other and badly-coordinated. The period under study thus represented a transition stage between the complete dominance of politics over economics of the 1960s and the assertion of economic factors in government policy which was accomplished in the 1980s. The study has attempted to touch on areas where foreign political policy interfaced with foreign economic policy, although a greater knowledge of the background behind the determination of Thailand's foreign economic policy is still required.

Thailand's policy included the promotion of greater economic linkages within ASEAN. It was not entirely clear, however, whether it favoured a trade-led or an industry-led approach. Generally benefiting from favourable terms of trade with the other ASEAN countries, it showed strong interest in further promoting exports to ASEAN. As such its policy was outwardly to support the idea of trade liberalization within ASEAN, as seen through public pronouncements made by its political leaders, although it appeared to be more equivocal in the implementation of decisions. It failed to press actively with conviction so that the idea of free trade would be accepted within the Organization. In its advocacy of greater economic cooperation, it may be seen that it was less vocal than either Singapore or the Philippines, when placed against the firm opposition of Indonesia and the relative reticence of Malaysia. Nevertheless, in holding that a consensus on free trade was necessary, its policy was fully consistent with its overall emphasis on maintaining unity within ASEAN above other policy concerns, and of its self-designated role as conciliator. In time, it came to see the greater importance of regional stability and prosperity from ASEAN unity instead of through formal intra-ASEAN economic cooperation *per se*. It also saw as greater necessity to take account of domestic concerns when implementing agreements, particularly as the benefits from increased intra-ASEAN trade were slow to materialize. The example of Thailand showed how the force of consensus played upon initial national preferences to produce a common ASEAN policy. In addition, in overall terms, Thailand's attempted role as a unifying element within ASEAN again seemed to have come

through on discussions regarding regional trade liberalization. However, in the implementation of tariff preferences the example of Thailand revealed, probably more than any other country, that political commitments at the ministerial level were often not translated into action at the working level. Given the unattractiveness of Thailand's tariff offers and the large size of its exclusion list on across-the-board tariff cuts, the episode also showed how at the working level officials bargained for full national advantage in the absence of firm political direction or overall policy coordination in favour of trade liberalization.

Thailand's policy did place an importance on ASEAN industrial cooperation, for the development of basic industries was indeed a national priority which was driven by the concern to widen the Kingdom's economic base away from agriculture. Yet Thailand's policies on industrial cooperation were aimed more at increasing its own industrial potential, rather than revealing any concern with maximizing ASEAN complementarity. Moreover, the success of Thai initiatives in ASEAN industrial cooperation seemed to have been mixed, which lessened its interest in this field as time went by. Despite outward enthusiasm, poor coordination and planning appeared to have characterized participation in joint industrial activities such as in the AIPs. In this regard, a major factor appeared to have been that as from the early 1960s Thailand had already embarked upon a process of planned industrialization and attracting substantial FDI. Thus, national projects were well advanced and it did not need to attract additional investments on a level that was required by certain other ASEAN partners, such as Indonesia. Nevertheless, despite setbacks, it continued to place an importance on ASEAN

industrial cooperation. In contrast with its active role in political cooperation, participation in this aspect of cooperation appeared to have been low-key. This may have reflected national priorities as set by the National Economic and Social Development Plans, which generally worked against efforts to produce common economic planning within ASEAN. Despite the rhetoric, there was in practical terms a primarily national emphasis to industrial production, and hence the priority was given to national projects, some of which ran against ASEAN concerns. As has been suggested, this cooperation required not only political will, but also in-depth study and overall leadership. The general lack of interest shown by Thailand towards joint regional planning pointed again to problems in the implementation of political decisions. On the other hand, ASEAN cooperation in resource-sharing has proved more fruitful for Thailand, especially on those commodities in which Thailand has the greatest exchanges with ASEAN members, namely oil and rice. This ensured greater stability in rice exports, although its success in obtaining crucial oil supplies has been mixed.

Certainly, it may be said that Thailand lacked the comprehensive ministerial structure on economic affairs of many of its ASEAN partners, which may have hindered progress on its initiatives for economic cooperation within ASEAN. After Thanat Khoman no firm advocates for regional economic cooperation emerged until much later, either within public or private sector circles, who could sustain Thailand's participation at a high level on a continuous basis. Moreover, during 1973-1980, crucial years in the development of ASEAN economic cooperation, the Thai government was beset by numerous

troubles, of domestic as well as external nature. Thus, within ASEAN, Thailand may have preferred to focus on political actions, as well as on those economic issues closest to its interests, such as cooperation on commodities production and later on market access for its products, rather than on those requiring sustained action, given domestic uncertainties.

The external dimension of economic cooperation also proved more important for a country which has traditionally placed an emphasis on economic openness. Thanat Khoman's general aim of obtaining a greater voice in international arena as stated in the 1967 Bangkok talks was reflected in Thai policy on economic matters. Given that this objective was attained, it could be said that to a large extent, its aims in the economic field were satisfied even if progress on long-term projects was slow. Thailand contributed to, and benefitted from, the joint ASEAN stand with regards to major developed countries on issues of trade and development. It may even be said that by the mid 1970s this had emerged as one of the most valuable aspects of ASEAN cooperation for the Kingdom. It found a joint ASEAN stand on commodity issues particularly valuable, for primary products and particularly agricultural commodities continued to form a substantial part of Thai exports throughout this period. Nevertheless, Thailand was rather a follower than a leader of initiatives in this field, due largely to the perception of its policy-makers that it was not the most important producer within ASEAN, as well as its general non-confrontational style. Moreover, as with political cooperation, external links with the US, Japan and the EC became regarded as more important than formal cooperation within ASEAN *per se*. ASEAN cooperation

thus again played a supplementary role so as to provide greater bargaining power vis-à-vis existing trading partners, rather than opening up new avenues. Within these parameters, Thailand gave importance to the development of the Organization's external dialogues. Indeed, given Thailand's long interaction as a sovereign state with the great powers, it had come to realize the value of cooperation with such powers in supporting national development. However, whilst it realized the value of external cooperation for the economic development of ASEAN, it did not seem to place a primary focus on it above ASEAN's own internal cooperation on economic and functional issues. Nevertheless, as Thailand was to focus more and more on production for export, ASEAN's external cooperation became increasingly valuable so that market access would be obtained for Thai manufactured as well as commodity products, a trend that would be made clear in the 1980s.

Although Thailand gave particular importance to certain aspects of ASEAN functional cooperation, such as technology transfer within the scope of COST, it is difficult to identify any clear policies towards functional cooperation that may be distinguished from those of other ASEAN members. Certainly, there was a consensus among the member countries of the importance of functional cooperation for national development and as a 'rallying point' for the Organization as a whole, although this recognition remained on a largely rhetorical level. In this manner, functional cooperation's overall symbolism was perhaps prized more by policy-makers, and again this symbolic aspect of cooperation may be seen to have marked Thai priorities within ASEAN. It may also be said from the Thai example that although

much practical benefit was derived from technical cooperation in the various fields, including in establishing valuable networks of contacts between ASEAN members, this such activities remained peripheral to the work of the national bureaucracies, which continued to concentrate on formulating national programmes rather than regional ones.

Finally, it may be said that Thailand's policy towards ASEAN economic and social cooperation reflected the limitations regarding policy prescriptions offered by the vague conceptual framework of Collective Political Defence, and the lack of a more formal plan on its part to guide activities in such fields. Just as Collective Political Defence became recognized within Thailand largely for its political functions by the end of the period, rather than economic and social ones, so the lack of economic planning for ASEAN was even more highlighted. Such problems were compounded by the fact that the implementation of ASEAN economic cooperation was often taken with an eye for national advantage as a zero-sum game. Nevertheless, where public goods were distinctly at issue, such as on economic consultations, joint positions on international trade negotiations and the conduct of external dialogues, the effectiveness of Collective Political Defence could be highlighted. A final conclusion may therefore be made that while the concept may be applied to include economic and social cooperation as a whole, it is more suited in terms of *external interaction* and not for intra-ASEAN cooperation. This reflected the limitations of the concept of security, which is largely used to coordinate actions against external factors, and only derivatively for internal cooperation.

CHAPTER

7

DECISION-MAKING
WITHIN ASEAN
FROM THE THAI PERSPECTIVE

This Chapter aims to provide a more detailed analysis of Thailand's decision-making within the ASEAN framework. This is done primarily through the study of its position at the crucial 1976 Bali Summit in comparison with other key ASEAN meetings taking place before or after. Such an analysis demonstrates the manner in which general Thai policies on ASEAN issues were translated into concrete positions taken at actual meetings and how they were transformed within the ASEAN context. For this purpose, Thailand's objectives are judged, to the extent that it is possible, against the results obtained at the meetings concerned. Meanwhile, the 1976 Bali Summit's special importance laid in that it constituted the first gathering of ASEAN at the level of Heads of Government. It led to the launching of an expanded economic cooperation as well as the intensification of cooperation in other fields, including in the vital political field. Indeed, perhaps more important than the Meeting itself is the Summit process, for ASEAN has to be seen at various levels of activity. Finally, the perception of Thailand by other ASEAN members is discussed so that the evolution of Thailand's role within the Organization could be better assessed.

CONSENSUS AND THE QUESTION OF ASEAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Consensus has been recognized as the traditional ASEAN mode of action, involving extensive consultations and avoiding the possible divisive impact of coming to a vote. An important consideration in the enshrining of such a practice has been an appreciation of the strains that voting would place on the formal adherence to equality regardless of size or level of economic

development within the Organization. Accordingly, thus far there has been a marked reluctance within ASEAN to move to majority voting. Yet it has also been realized that consensus is neither specifically Southeast Asian, nor indeed an exclusivity of Asia as a whole. The initial decision-making structures in European institutions were also based on the principle of consensus. As one noted analyst of Europe-ASEAN transactions has observed:

The issue is not one of consensus...versus majority vote in decision-making. For consensus is required in all important decisions in the formation of the European Community too. The difference is more subtle and refers to the style of negotiation; whereas in the European context there is a tendency to thrash matters out until a consensus has been reached, in some cases even stopping the clock to meet self-imposed deadlines, the corresponding style in ASEAN countries appears to be the removal of contentious issues from the agenda until such time as a change of views permits consensus.¹

Indeed, more conventional discussions of consensus have ignored the element of 'power' as a contributory factor in arriving at decisions.² Nevertheless, a more gradual approach to decision-making is indicative of ASEAN political culture, one that accorded well with Thai preferences. National policies became ASEAN policies through a constant bargaining process at various levels, with the necessity for consensus at each level.

Beyond formal acceptance, how far did Thailand subscribe to the ASEAN mode of consensus? It is the contention that

traditional Thai working styles also favoured an extensive process of consultations before arriving at decisions. Certainly, 'saving face' and a non-confrontational approach to decision-making with no strict time constraints is as important within Thailand as in the other ASEAN countries. In this process, personal relations are regarded as important assets in obtaining recognition and acceptance. However, in the Thai context form appeared to be more important than substance. In other words, whilst consultations were accepted as the norm; consensus was not necessarily an ultimate aim. Within the scope of national decision-making, delaying tactics were often used to minimize controversy, such as by permitting frequent reassessments of the issues concerned and setting up various study groups before coming to a final decision. Extended to the ASEAN sphere, the use of deferrals or the setting up of committees and working groups was seen as typical.³ Accordingly, consultations often became an end in themselves and not goal-oriented. Moreover, while the parties involved stressed the importance of providing an input, compromise could often be found regarding a commitment to objectives. As a result, Thailand could often be found to advocate compromise within ASEAN negotiations. As a medium-sized power within ASEAN, it may be said that its interests also laid in forging a consensus. Certainly, it did not regard itself as possessing sufficient leverage on its own to impose its views on its ASEAN partners, particularly as it viewed the appearance of ASEAN solidarity as being of primary importance in the period studied, possibly above all other concerns. Nevertheless, on security issues, the other countries were more inclined to defer to Thailand for it was the most exposed partner within ASEAN as the only country directly bordering on Indochina.

On other issues, there was a need for coalition-building according to individual issue areas. It is the contention of this study that ASEAN contained a potential balance of power that enabled informal and temporary coalitions to be formed within the Organization to press for various initiatives, such as on the issue of trade liberalization. Smaller powers within ASEAN, such as Singapore and even Malaysia, found it useful to employ another power such as Thailand which was sufficiently removed from intra-ASEAN disputes to act as a broker so that projects could be adopted by the Organization. This highlighted the importance of informal and behind-the-scene ‘lobbying,’ and one corollary was that private diplomacy as opposed to public exchanges became more utilized as a mode of action. As it will be shown, Thailand had an interesting and influential contribution to play within this power structure and the prevailing situation of ‘creative tension’ among the participants.

THE CASE STUDY OF THE 1976 BALI SUMMIT IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Thai policies towards cooperation with ASEAN can be further investigated by an analysis of the positions taken by Thai representatives at various meetings. It is noted, for example, that: “there is no single ASEAN policy that emerges from any particular ASEAN meeting...What we perceive as an ASEAN policy is actually some form of a synthesis or an amalgam of the policies of the different members so that a common stand is projected.”⁴ Thus it is important to see how individual national positions are transformed in concrete terms within ASEAN fora. However, it is also noted that the consensus model militates

somewhat against the identification of discordances, with a multitude of meetings at various levels, each trying to forge an ASEAN consensus. This is such that “by the time of the final meeting on an issue occurs, basic differences would have been ironed out and the public would only hear of the common areas of cooperation agreed upon or the policy statements on a particular issue.”⁵ Nevertheless, efforts will be made to identify specific Thai policy aims and national positions adopted at various meetings, and to judge them against the outcomes of the meetings concerned. Prior to the 1976 Summit, ASEAN’s two previous key meetings had been the Bangsaen-Bangkok Meetings in August 1967 and the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in November 1971. What may be seen as from these years was the gradual move within ASEAN away from informality, making them worthy of closer analysis.

At the Bangsaen-Bangkok Meetings of 1967 there was an agenda mutually agreed upon by the participants, with the focus to be on the proposed joint Declaration by the five Foreign Ministers. Thai policy aims were also clear: to ensure that the Organization was established, but that its basis should remain as informal and flexible as possible to maximize Thailand’s policy options in a period of relative uncertainty in regional terms. Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman has suggested that much of the proposed Bangkok Declaration had already previously been drafted prior to the Meeting, and indeed circulated among the participating delegations, and what remained to be done was merely to see whether it was acceptable, and what amendments had to be made.⁶ In fact, however, many details deemed important to individual states remained to be resolved at the

Meetings in Thailand. As has already been mentioned, the issue of foreign bases led to extensive discussions between Indonesia and the Philippines, which was supported by Singapore. Malaysia and Thailand were described as taking a position “somewhere in between.”⁷ On the other hand, the Thai moderation regarding this issue of distinct national interest may also be attributed to a concern to accommodate Indonesia, which it viewed as the most important player in regional terms. Particular issues were also introduced at relatively late stages, such as Singapore’s free trade proposal. It will be seen that such initiatives introduced at the last moment, without any prior warning to ASEAN partners, were invariably rejected for the necessary consensus-building activities or consultations had not taken place.⁸ Accordingly, the Singaporean proposals were rejected as premature. Even then, there was a compromise when Singapore’s concrete proposals for cooperation in specific areas, and the reference to various “means of expanding intraregional trade,” were included in the Joint Press Release.

At the Bangsaen talks in particular, the Foreign Ministers themselves decided on much of the substance, and undertook many of the consultations between themselves, so that the officials played a distinctly supporting role.⁹ On the other hand, Thai officials had an important role to play by discussing matters with individual delegations and then conveying their respective views to Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul, who was in overall charge of the documentation as Thanat’s right-hand man.¹⁰ Moreover, although a representative from the Prime Minister’s Office, Maj.-Gen Phaitoon Inkhatanuvatra, attended the Meetings, most of the other Thai delegates came from the MFA, which facilitated

the decision-making and enabled Thanat Khoman to dominate the proceedings on the Thai side. Thus, it is clear that the Meetings were dominated by a series of relatively informal discussions within a highly restricted circle, with the only public event being the delivery of the Closing Statements and signing of the Bangkok Declaration on 8 August 1967. Within this largely informal format, with the successful founding of ASEAN in Bangkok through the signing of a broad declaration of intent and the inclusion of Indonesia in a regional framework, Bangkok's immediate objectives were achieved.

At the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November 1971, the discussions centred on the Malaysian proposal of neutralization, although other political issues were also raised. As previously discussed, the Meeting was a follow-up of the New York Foreign Ministers' Meeting in October 1971 at which it was agreed that a general declaration of intention by ASEAN should be produced regarding China's role in Southeast Asia, given its impending UN membership. This initiative was to incorporate Malaysia's proposal of neutralization, and it was resolved that Thailand should produce a draft declaration to that purpose. The Ministerial Meeting on 26-27 November 1971 was preceded by a meeting at the officials level on 25-26 November, but a major role was still reserved for the Foreign Ministers. Moreover, the Meeting was formally described as a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN countries, not of ASEAN itself, for political cooperation still had not been institutionalized within the Organization. To all sense and purposes, however, it was an ASEAN meeting and followed a similar format. Above all, it is crucial to stress that the Meeting was originally organized

as part of the informal consultations on political issues, and not solely to discuss the Malaysian neutralization idea. It was thus that the Philippines wanted to rally support for an Asian Summit while both the Philippines and Singapore wanted discussions on current political developments, including on relations with the PRC, both of which Thailand was agreeable to as the enhancement of ASEAN's political activities was a general Thai objective.¹¹

For the first time, the question of an adequate Thai mandate at an ASEAN meeting arose, for the Meeting took place barely 2 weeks after Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn launched a coup d'état against his own government, during which Thanat lost his post as Foreign Minister. Nevertheless, Thanat was assigned to attend the Meeting as Special Envoy of the newly-founded National Executive Council (NEC), and apparently had full authority to sign the documents in question. His authority was also fully accepted by his ASEAN colleagues, with whom he shared close personal relationships, particularly with the Meeting's Chairman, Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Razak. Moreover, according to a senior MFA official, ZOPFAN was almost entirely an issue for the MFA at this early stage.¹² Thus Thanat possessed a substantial leeway which was nevertheless based on his *personal understanding* with the Prime Minister, as he was no longer officially Foreign Minister. This was in contrast to Indonesia, whose delegation included, as a commentator put it, "a regiment of generals," which rather restricted the room for manoeuvre for Adam Malik, the Indonesian Foreign Minister.¹³ On the other hand, Thanat gave a hint of the differences in position between his own (MFA) line and that of certain members of the military leadership regarding

the signing of the Declaration on ZOPFAN. Thanat explained that he went before Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn insisting that if he was to be sent to Kuala Lumpur, he should be allowed to sign the document on Thailand's behalf, and that if that action did not accord with policy, someone else should be sent instead.¹⁴ From these indications, it may be concluded that Thanat had a fairly large room for manoeuvre within the scope of his understanding with Thanom, during which he would have explained the aims of the draft Declaration which had been prepared under his direction. With that in mind, Thailand's policy aims consisted in getting the Conference to concentrate on the Thai proposal and not in the details of neutralization, a concept with which Thai leaders had difficulties.¹⁵ As for the details of the proposal itself, Thailand's main objectives consisted in paving the way towards a possible reconciliation with China and Indochina by the formal declaration of an independence of policy, whilst also stressing a rejection of external interference in all forms. At the same time, there would be provisions to increase all aspects of ASEAN cooperation, particularly in the political and diplomatic field which Thailand had desired for some time, in order to realize this declared independence through greater solidarity and enhanced bargaining power. While Thailand preferred not to regard itself as a seconder of the Malaysian proposal, in its efforts at trying to broker a consensus between ASEAN members on the subject it did play a proactive role as it saw certain benefits in terms of general policy that would be obtained from acceptance of its draft.

It was thus that Thailand was able to play somewhat of a mediating role with its proposal of a joint declaration on

ZOPFAN, thereby avoiding direct commitment to neutralization and taking a position in between the scepticism of the Philippines and Singapore and the strong advocacy of Malaysia, which Indonesia was prepared to support to a certain extent.¹⁶ The respective positions were further complicated by residual bilateral tensions between certain of the members, such between Malaysia and the Philippines and between Indonesia and Singapore. According to the agenda, the Meeting discussed in turn the draft Declaration, the Summit proposal, the question of neutrality in Southeast Asia, the role of China, other matters, and the Joint Communiqué. As at Bangkok, the proceedings were kept secret and relatively informal, apart from the final session in the morning of 27 November when the Closing Statements were delivered and the Declaration signed. Various working papers were also introduced by individual countries at the Meeting as mandated by the New York Meeting, although they were merely taken note of, for what was to become the usual excuse that there was no time to study them.

Accordingly, discussions at the Officials' Meeting centred on the draft Declaration produced by Thailand, with the relative importance of each agenda item being first discussed. The Philippines took a very legalistic position, wanting to define 'neutrality,' while Singapore was also inclined to that position before proceeding further. As host of the Meeting, Malaysia and in particular Tun Razak took the key role in guiding the discussions.¹⁷ Between the relative polarization of positions, Thailand as the drafter of the Declaration played a conciliating role by proposing that instead of discussing the details of neutralization, the Declaration should be discussed clause by

clause as it represented merely a general declaration of intention. In this regard, any controversial questions which could not be resolved would be left to the Foreign Ministers.¹⁸ In particular, the Thai delegation pointed out that the intention in New York was that the Declaration would only be a first step, and that “neutrality” would mean “freedom from interference.” The preamble of the original draft Declaration made it clear that Thailand’s preoccupations were with external interference and insurgency:

Every nation, large or small, is entitled to the right to lead its national existence free from outside interference and that any support for movements which resort to the use of force to undermine or overthrow the legitimate authorities in another country unmistakably constitutes such an interference, despite whatever euphemistic name may be given to it by its advocates, and likewise represents a grave threat to international peace and security.¹⁹

In its formulation, Thailand also proposed that the Declaration would be authored by the members of ASEAN, given its enthusiasm that ASEAN should cover political activities, although the scope of ZOPFAN would cover the whole of Southeast Asia. Other countries, however, appeared not only reluctant to admit publicly to ASEAN’s political cooperation, but also thought that any such agreement should be outside the scope of ASEAN, and that the Association should only be referred to indirectly

As it emerged, it was to be the operative paragraphs of the Declaration which caused the greatest problems for the delegations. The initial draft which was presented to the Meeting had proposed:

1) Southeast Asia shall be respected as a Zone of peace, freedom and neutrality by all powers.

2) Southeast Asia shall be neutralized from all forms and manners of interference in internal affairs of the States of this region by outside powers.

To this end, all peace-loving states, particularly the major powers, are invited to ensure their observance of, and extend their support for the strict application of the principles of self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of the sovereign and independent countries of Southeast Asia.²⁰

Within this formulation, the essential elements may be seen in the inclusion of the word “neutralized,” but only in respect to excluding the influence of external powers; and the absence of reference to great power guarantees, only that the great powers were invited to observe and extend their support for the principles behind ZOPFAN, as described in terms of the Bandung principles of peaceful coexistence. However, the deliberate reference to neutralization, while the concept was still not fully thought out, led to certain reservations among the participants. The differences at the officials’ level necessitated an amount of private diplomacy by Thanat, who prepared a new

formulation which he presented to the Foreign Ministers at the Formal Dinner on 25 November hosted by the Malaysians. On that basis of Ministerial understanding, the Officials' Meeting was able to continue its deliberations.²¹ Subsequently, the Ministerial Meeting was able to discuss the Declaration in the afternoon of 26 November, leading to final acceptance.²² The original formula, which had provided that Southeast Asia shall be neutralized from all forms and manners of interference in internal affairs of the states of the region by outside powers, may be distinguished from the vaguer reference to neutralization and insurgency in the final Declaration. The final formula spoke instead that the five countries were "determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of, and respect for, Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality."²³

As Thailand also had specific aims at the Meeting in playing a constructive role to stress the continuing importance that it placed on ASEAN after recent speculation regarding its domestic and external policies, Thanat also tried to alleviate these fears in public. In his Closing Statement on 27 November, Thanat took the opportunity to reiterate Thailand's commitment to ASEAN in the aftermath of the coup, as well as his own attachment to the Organization:

Field Marshal Thanom...insisted that I should come as the Special Envoy of the Council to attend this crucial meeting. This is a measure of the importance my country attaches to the present meeting and to the policy of regional cooperation in general which Thailand continues to support and to uphold.²⁴

In this fashion, Thailand's positive commitment to ASEAN cooperation was reiterated in a timely manner. While many elements in the original Thai draft had been altered, in terms of achieving the objectives set by Bangkok, it may be seen that most of the objectives were met. Most importantly, the Declaration was adopted without detrimental effects on the relationship with the US. Final agreement was possible precisely because the details of ZOPFAN remained vague, and no specific commitments had been entered into for the neutralization of Southeast Asia, particularly regarding foreign military bases, two of the objectives set by Thailand. An additional agreement was that the five countries also agreed to coordinate their approaches to the PRC, regarded more as a concession to Indonesia which was suspicious of Beijing's intentions but which also suited Thai sensibilities.²⁵ The Declaration remained a general declaration of intention, as Thailand had intended, and more specific commitments such as the setting up of a committee of senior officials to study the proposals, were referred to in the separate Joint Communiqué. Moreover, as it turned out, the fact that the project did not quite emerge as originally planned by Malaysia was largely due to the response of external powers after the Kuala Lumpur Meeting, rather than the outcome of the Meeting itself.

Thailand's participation in the first two important ASEAN meetings, other than the regular ones, has therefore been characterized by substantial private diplomacy before and at the Meetings concerned, with the personality of Thanat Khoman symbolizing the Thai position.²⁶ The importance of the personal approach was underlined at the Kuala Lumpur Meeting by Thanat's presence in the extraordinary capacity of Special Envoy. Although some preparatory work was ready being done at the

officials' level during the two Meetings, the key negotiations took place between the Foreign Ministers, and policy questions could be tackled with some flexibility owing to this close involvement of top policy-makers. Nevertheless, Thanat's diplomacy was also dependent on his own domestic relationship with Thailand's military leaders, and this dimension constituted a vital element linking domestic and external politics in the early years of ASEAN. With his removal from office as well as the increasing complexity and formality of the ASEAN structure, such trends were to change, as will be seen in the Summit meetings. At the same time, wider policy concerns were reflected not only in the positions adopted on issues in the agenda, but also on other issues which Thai representatives saw fit to announce in the ASEAN forum. Thai participation was also dominated by the MFA, with only token participation by other agencies, for the nature of the discussions was largely political. At both Meetings, the Thai aims were centred on getting the relevant declarations adopted by the ASEAN countries, incorporating as many of the Thai concerns as was possible in accordance with the drafts presented by the Thai side. However, it was also prepared to accommodate certain members to a large extent; Indonesia in Bangkok, and Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur. A well-defined brokering role was therefore already apparent in the early years.

The 1976 Bali Summit has rightly been regarded as a turning point in ASEAN development, raising cooperation in all fields to a new plane. As an ASEAN publication suggests:

The First ASEAN Summit heralded a new era in ASEAN's development, one marked by a deeper sense of

regionalism. The stress placed on harmonizing views, coordinating positions and taking common action, signalled a new awareness of the importance of concerted action, both intra-regionally and extra-regionally.²⁷

By the time of Bali much of the agenda was now handled by extensive preparatory meetings, both at the national as well as at the ASEAN level. At the national level coordinating meetings chaired by the MFA prepared positions on concrete issues of cooperation, marking a departure from the preparations for the two previous meetings which only involved the MFA and various government leaders.²⁸ Meanwhile, at the policy level, the National Security Council (NSC) also discussed the upcoming summit, including how ASEAN could help promote Thailand's security.²⁹ The amount of activity reflected both the breadth of the subjects to be tackled as well as their complexity. As has been suggested, Thailand itself played an active role in pressing for the Summit to take place in the aftermath of the decision of the 8th AMM in May 1975 to strengthen the Organization, such as during Prime Minister MR Kukrit's ASEAN visit between June-July 1975. In interviews given in Singapore, MR Kukrit disclosed that at the Summit he wanted to discuss the activation of ASEAN cooperation, closer cultural ties and the prospect of new membership, but not any differences between member countries.³⁰ The general impression from MR Kukrit's ASEAN visits in June-July 1975 was that ASEAN should show substantial results and have a more substantive cooperation so as to be worthy of the increased political investment that Thailand was to make in the Organization. It was not well defined, however,

as to how much cooperation was desirable, and a stage by stage approach appeared to have been acceptable.³¹ In another interview on 20 February 1976 prior to his departure for Bali, MR Kukrit also mentioned bilateral objectives, that of obtaining petrol supplies from Indonesia, an initiative which had been unsuccessful in 1973.³² Initially, sections of the Thai press seemed to have regarded the prospect of a Summit in positive terms, likening the Meeting to “an Asian Helsinki,” in reference to the recent success of the CSCE process in concretizing *détente* in Europe.³³ The quest for substantial results also accorded with the desire of some to hold the meeting in Thailand, again as a matter of symbolism. The urgency of strengthening ASEAN was made more urgent by the effective demise of both ASPAC and SEATO by this time, reducing Thailand’s wider policy options. It was eventually decided that adequate preparations were required and that the Summit should take place subsequent to the Autumn 1975 session of the UNGA. Further bilateral discussions between ASEAN leaders also took place at Tun Razak’s funeral in January 1976, which was attended by all the ASEAN Heads of Government except President Suharto. Many bilateral meetings thus took place in Kuala Lumpur, such as between MR Kukrit and Lee Kuan Yew and with the new Malaysian Prime Minister, Datuk Hussein Onn. During the course of these discussions, a date was definitively fixed for the forthcoming Bali Summit.³⁴

At the officials’ level various preparatory meetings were held, including Senior Officials’ Meetings (SOM), Meetings of the ASEAN Secretaries-General, and Senior Economic Officials’ Meetings (SEOM) prior to the AMM and AEM. As part of the final preparations for the Summit, Thailand also hosted a 4th

Pre-Summit SOM in Bangkok on 4-6 February which considered, among other issues, proposals by Indonesia for greater security cooperation.³⁵ Another important subject was the Malaysian demand for an endorsement of ZOPFAN by the Summit. The SOM was followed by a preparatory Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 9-10 February 1976 in the Thai resort of Pattaya, chaired by the Thai Foreign Minister, Maj-Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan. At this Meeting, there was an attempt to clear up most of the outstanding issues still at dispute regarding the Summit. An uncontroversial matter was the nomination of the Indonesian candidate for the post of Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat, which was formally accepted by the ASEAN members. The issue of foreign leaders attending the meeting was also resolved, and although Thailand appeared to support the idea of holding talks with Japan, Australia and New Zealand at the conclusion of ASEAN's activities, it was decided that this Summit should remain a purely internal function. Apparently, Singapore and Malaysia were opposed to external powers attending the Summit as they did not want the Meeting to lose its specific ASEAN identity, while they also felt that as a *quid pro quo* for their attendance such third countries had to make specific commitments to aid ASEAN, a view that was supported by Indonesia.³⁶ In the face of this opposition, the Philippines and Thailand, which welcomed external interest, remained relatively silent.³⁷ It was felt that such talks could give the impression that the Organization was being deliberately strengthened by allies of the US in the aftermath of the events in Indochina, and Chatichai as the Chairman of the Meeting was mandated to inform the Japanese and Australian Heads of Government, who

had indicated their interest in attending the Meeting, of that decision. As the *Far Eastern Economic Review* opined, Jakarta “sees the summit as underlining its regional leadership role and will therefore not want to share the spotlight.”³⁸ On the issue of free trade, Singapore and Thailand were seen to be backing Philippine efforts to obtain a formal agreement on free trade within ASEAN.³⁹ However, no final agreement was reached on the issue, although it was also decided that the proposed Declaration of ASEAN Concord which would contain the common position on the subject should be further discussed and strengthened. The Meeting was therefore not the conclusive gathering that some of the members had hoped. The Conference Spokesman, Thai Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs Anand Panyarachun, spoke of “a fair consensus of views” on the goals of economic cooperation, but that it was “a slightly different matter.” regarding the means.⁴⁰ In the case of Thailand, it may already be seen that for the sake of consensus, part of the original objectives had to be abandoned, such as greater international exposure to optimize ASEAN’s potential in terms of Thai policy.

The remaining sensitive issues, as well as further work on the documents, were thus further considered at a subsequent SOM in Bali on 18-19 February in Jakarta. In view of such information, on a national level Thai press speculation centred on the possibility of ASEAN enhancing its security cooperation as a result of the Summit. By this stage, much of the initial optimism about the possibilities for cooperation with the countries of Indochina had died down, and there were suspicions that ASEAN constituted an important contributory element in this development, considering the conservatism of the political

regimes, among which Thailand seemed to stand out as a rare haven of democracy. From the time of the Pattaya Foreign Ministers' Meeting onwards, elements of the Thai media spoke against attempts to foster military activities within ASEAN, in view of Indonesia's 12 point proposal for security cooperation. In an editorial by Suthichai Yoon, *Prachachart* warned against the creation of an ASEAN bloc versus Indochina in Southeast Asia, and that the Summit appeared to have the purpose of consolidating the power of the ASEAN leaders, instead of promoting prospects for peace and stability in Southeast Asia.⁴¹ Subsequently, the Organization was accused of acting as an intelligence-gathering body for the US, considering the exchange of intelligence between the ASEAN military circles.⁴² In particular, there was considerable antipathy towards the regional role of Indonesia, which was accused of being imperialist in its occupation of East Timor, and in proposing military cooperation which would make Thailand a buffer state for the other ASEAN countries.⁴³

At the Bali Summit itself, therefore, despite the intensive preparations the remaining subjects for debate were substantial. These included debate over the implications of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) and the details of the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, the latter of which would be the document enshrining the various decisions taken at the Summit.⁴⁴ To some, it might appear that there was substantial overlap between the ASEAN Concord and the TAC. However, it should be noted that while the ASEAN Concord was seen very much as the Summit document, the TAC reflected concerns with the wider scheme of Southeast Asia and accordingly was not

strictly an ASEAN document. Rather, the ASEAN Heads of Government took the opportunity to launch the document in Bali to maximize its political impact, after it had already been initialled by the Foreign Ministers. Within a general aim of further promoting ASEAN cooperation in all fields, it appeared that Thai delegates concentrated on two objectives. Firstly, to enhance economic linkages, such as through the promotion of a degree of trade liberalization within ASEAN, although how much liberalization was aimed at was not clear. Secondly, to improve the regional security situation through a symbolic contribution towards regional order and reconciliation, such as in the shape of the TAC. The Thai delegation was led by Prime Minister MR Kukrit Pramoj, Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan and Minister of Commerce Vicharn Nivatvongs, accompanied by a large group of officials from the major political and economic agencies. Crucially, owing to domestic difficulties MR Kukrit had already dissolved Parliament on 12 January 1976 and declared that fresh elections would be scheduled for April, and thus again the question of a lack of strong mandate was posed for the Thai delegation as his Administration became in essentials a caretaker government. As a commentator had suggested a few months earlier, "the somewhat frenetic workings of Thai democracy scarcely leave Kukrit or any other Thai leader much time for espousing regional ideals."⁴⁵ Now, on the eve of the Summit, it appeared that the Thai leadership had tied its hands needlessly to accommodate the domestic political situation.

Key questions, including that of a dispute settlement mechanism and free trade, were thus not resolved at the officials'

level and only agreed upon on the eve of the Summit itself. Upon their arrival in Bali the ASEAN Foreign Ministers held a one day meeting on 21 February to try to iron out the differences between them. Important differences remained between the Philippines and Malaysia on the establishment of a dispute settlement mechanism within the scope of the TAC, which was advocated by the former and aroused suspicions in the latter that it could be employed to enforce Manila's claims on the Sabah issue. Accordingly, the element of voluntarism was upheld by Malaysia while the Philippines insisted on the importance of such a mechanism as an integral element of ZOPFAN. There were extensive discussions over the question of free trade also, on which the Philippines continued to press for specifics in the proposed Declaration of ASEAN Concord, as well as raising again the question of a commitment to a free trade area as a long term goal, as recommended by the UN Study Group.⁴⁶ In the face of such difficulties, consultations were held on the Thai side between the MFA representatives and other agencies present in Bali as to what contribution could be made by Thailand. The position of the MFA appeared to be to uphold what it saw as the Prime Minister's commitment to the Philippines made in Manila, although already in late January it was noted that Thailand and Malaysia were reluctant to press for free trade if there was no consensus.⁴⁷ Again Thailand seemed have played a conciliating role at all levels, which might nevertheless have reflected its relative lack of leverage. Over the Sabah issue and the question of a dispute settlement mechanism, it was apparently joined by Indonesia and Singapore in attempts to smooth differences between Malaysia and the Philippines.⁴⁸ At

the same time, the Economic Ministers also met to continue work on their recommendations to the Heads of Government, including on the nature of the proposed preferential tariff arrangements and food & energy cooperation, although the scope of their work remained strictly limited.⁴⁹ However, despite the remaining differences, President Suharto as the host of the Summit had an extensive opportunity to guide the agenda according to Indonesia's requirements. Following the Foreign and Economic Ministers' Meetings, bilateral meetings were held on 22 February between Suharto and Lee and between Suharto and Marcos, presumably to come to a compromise on the issue of regional trade liberalization. Such meetings also indicated that the crucial negotiations which took place in Bali were between Indonesia and the two main advocates of free trade, Singapore and the Philippines, as well as between the two participants in the Sabah dispute, Malaysia and the Philippines. *Thailand's role was rather peripheral to these consultations*, albeit useful as a relatively 'neutral' party for purposes of mediation and in the formation of consensus. An observer therefore suggests that there was a "search for consensus before the Summit rather than at the Summit," and in this process bilateral diplomacy continued to remain important.⁵⁰

The formal Meetings of the Heads of Government took place on 23-24 February 1976. MR Kukrit's rhetoric appeared to have given some importance to the Thai presence at Bali, over and above its actual impact. However, given that much of the substance had been prepared by the officials and the Foreign and Economics Ministers as shown above, the real impact of the Thai Prime Minister was perhaps not very clear. Certainly, much

of the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government was taken up with ceremonies, with a formal Opening Ceremony on 23 February at which prepared statements were read out, as well as a formal Signing Ceremony on 24 February at which the TAC and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord were signed by the Heads of Government, and the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Secretariat by the Foreign Ministers.⁵¹ The Report of the Foreign Ministers constituted a framework for formal discussions, including on how ASEAN could respond to regional developments.⁵² Of note among the political issues appeared to be the apparent anomaly of Kampuchea which broke the impression of a monolithic communist bloc in Indochina.⁵³ In view of the actual transactions taken by the Heads of Government at their Meeting, Antolik thus suggests that the value of the Summits thus lay rather in their symbolism and not really in the substance which was external to Summit concerns, with the primary beneficiary of the process being Thailand:

A review of the occasions when ASEAN leaders gathered indicates that summits serve as instruments of public diplomacy. They are not forums for a diplomatic process-these exist at several functional levels-but are instruments which permit members to signal a collective political stand...When there is no grave danger, there will be no gathering.⁵⁴

However, at this stage it is useful to separate the Meeting of Heads of Government, which was above all symbolic, from the overall Summit process, which did involve a great deal of substance.

Nevertheless, as the elected representative of one of Thailand's first fully democratic governments, MR Kukrit was eager to show to his ASEAN partners that democratic Thailand could play an active and positive role in ASEAN cooperation. Accordingly, he tried to ensure that the results of the Summit, and Thailand's contribution to such results, were as positive as possible as perhaps seen in its conciliating role. Despite his own domestic preoccupations, he therefore brought personal touches to Thai policy, as seen in the floating of an idea for a regional arms reduction agreement for discussion at the Bali Meeting, and in trying to foster a general rapport between the leaders.⁵⁵ Moreover, although trade liberalization was a general aim of the Thai delegation, there are indications that MR Kukrit was personally interested in the idea. This was shown, for example, in his advocacy of free trade within ASEAN in later years, as in a 1985 interview in which he spoke of a treaty for economic integration.⁵⁶ Some personal conviction therefore lay in his Opening Statement in which he declared that:

Thailand has always held the opinion that, for ASEAN to continue to be a viable and meaningful vehicle for regional cooperation, strong and close economic ties among the member countries are a necessity...The Thai Delegation is of the opinion that ASEAN requires and is capable of achieving much more in economic cooperation.⁵⁷

Remarkably, MR Kukrit was apparently the only Head of Government not to give a formal press conference during the Bali Meeting, although he was normally known for the frequency

with which he granted interviews given his previous background as a prominent political commentator and journalist. At the same time, the fact that the Thai media itself took relatively little interest in the Summit may be explained by the considerable internal unrest within Thailand during early 1976. The atmosphere in Bangkok at the time was rife with rumours of a coup d'état, with the army being placed on a state of enhanced readiness. There were also considerable concerns with the spate of political killings in the run-up to parliamentary elections, with the most publicized one being the assassination of a leading left-wing politician, Dr. Boonsanong Punyodyana, Secretary-General of the Socialist Party of Thailand. ASEAN matters thus appeared to have little priority when placed against domestic political concerns. Although Thai television accompanied MR Kukrit to Bali, it was alleged that only one journalist was included in the delegation, as opposed to 182 for the Philippines.⁵⁸ However, the Thai press seemed to act positively towards the progress of the Summit, in contrast against the general scepticism expressed throughout January and early February. Certain commentaries even praised the achievement of the Meeting in the light of the history of the region.⁵⁹

Despite the difficulties faced by the Thai delegation, it appeared that to a large extent, the objectives set by Thailand were met. In the economic field, a commitment was made towards regional trade liberalization, even if agreement did not go as far as Thai statements prior to the Meeting implied. The argument for free trade had not been accepted by all the members, although some concession had been made towards increasing ASEAN trade through preferential tariff arrangements,

food and energy cooperation and joint industrial projects. Thailand, which from the start did not show a strong position on obtaining general commitment to a free trade area, and seeing the strong opposition of Indonesia towards such a commitment, quickly moved to a compromise within the framework of ASEAN consensus. Nevertheless, as the Thai position itself did not appear to be fully concretized as to the extent of trade liberalization desirable, within limits the aims in this field were met. What was important was that a rough consensus was maintained on the issue. As MR Kukrit had mentioned prior to the Meeting, he wanted to minimize the appearance of ASEAN discordance, and with this in mind the political necessity of an outwardly strong ASEAN overrode the economic commitment to trade liberalization from the Thai perspective. This compromise was also possible because additional work had been mandated to the Economic Ministers to implement the economic decisions of the Summit. Accordingly, an Economic and Planning Ministers' Meeting took place in Kuala Lumpur barely one month after the Summit to work out the details behind the broad agreement laid down by the Heads of Government. In the various specific fields, the Joint Press Communiqué also mentioned food and energy cooperation, large-scale industrial projects as well as the fostering of joint approaches to international questions.⁶⁰ On the political side, a framework for regional relations had been laid down in the TAC, which was open for accession by other countries in the region and supported the wider political objectives of Thailand in offering a hand of reconciliation to the countries of Indochina. Thus, within an overall framework, a general agreement to enhance cooperation in all fields, a Thai

aim within the Organization since 1971, was achieved. In reflection of this, the Joint Press Communiqué of the Summit announced that the Heads of Government believed: "it was essential for the member states to move to higher levels of cooperation, especially in the political, economic, social, culture, scientific and technological fields."⁶¹ At the same time, the ASEAN Secretariat was also formally established, although in bilateral terms there was no commitment on petroleum supplies from Indonesia even if ASEAN cooperation linking food and energy was envisaged. Given the increasing dependence placed by Thailand on ASEAN as a source of support during the mid 1970s, such achievements provided some cause for comfort. In personal terms, MR Kukrit also found it useful to discuss regional issues with his ASEAN colleagues and felt reassured by the response given by the regional leaders to his actions. Certainly, the Thai Prime Minister showed enthusiasm in his Closing Statement in which he declared: "We must have more meetings such as this, without the formalities, and to make them another permanent fixture of ASEAN."⁶²

In contrast with Bali, the aims of the Second ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur were somewhat more modest. Officially held to celebrate the progress of ASEAN over the previous ten years on the occasion of ASEAN's tenth anniversary, as well as to review implementation of the programme of action set at Bali, the Second Summit was not envisaged to be groundbreaking. However, substantial transformations had already taken place within Thailand during the interval between the two Meetings. By the time of the Second Summit, the composition of the Thai delegation was already significantly different at the

highest levels. The Thai case constituted the only major change of administration within ASEAN during this time, and cannot have failed to undermine Thai credibility, particularly if it is considered that in the interval not only MR Kukrit's but MR Seni's administrations had already passed. This time around, the Thai delegation was led by Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien, Foreign Minister Upadit Pachariyangkun and Minister of Commerce Suthee Natvaratat. It was also notable that Tanin was accompanied by Air Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, Secretary-General of the NSC Secretariat, helping to highlight Thailand's security emphasis. The general objective at the Kuala Lumpur Summit appeared less clear than at the landmark Bali Summit, but seemed to be more limited given the preoccupations of the Thai government with domestic stability. However, some of the concerns of policy-makers may be gauged from their statements around this time. The then Supreme Commander, General Kriangsak Chomanan, responding to international concerns regarding human rights situation in Thailand after the events of October 1976 and the subsequent crackdown on left-wing and student movements, commented that instead of criticizing Thailand, the appropriate international response should be: diplomatic backing for the Tanin Government which had restored stability on the frontiers of communist expansionism; greater recognition and support for Thailand's role both in absorbing Indochinese refugees and fighting the drugs menace; and more economic aid and investment to help Thailand's social development.⁶³ This neatly summarized Thailand's international priorities and, it may be argued, much of its position in Kuala Lumpur. A general political objective was thus to obtain support

for Thailand's position as a frontline state. On the economic side, a definite objective was reaffirmation of a commitment to the implementation of the Bali agreements which had seemed to flag following differences over priorities.⁶⁴ However, Thai delegates also sought to influence the discussion regarding the restructuring of the ASEAN institutional mechanisms, itself a direct result of the commitments made at Bali, in such a way as to ensure maximum effectiveness while remaining consistent with the structure laid down at Bangkok. The impression obtained was that in the rush for economic planning for the 1st Summit the ASEAN Foreign Ministers had lost control of the priorities, and as a result the Report of the Foreign and Economic Ministers to the ASEAN Heads of Government at Bali had enshrined a new policy giving the Economic Ministers a new and enhanced status which called into question the coordinating role of the Foreign Ministers. The realization of such implications dawned during the course of 1976 and early 1977, making the question of their early resolution a subject of crucial importance.

The Meeting of Heads of Government was held on 4-5 August 1977, preceded by substantial bilateral summitry and preparatory meetings, in which process Thailand again played an active part. Tanin's ASEAN visits in November-December 1976 may have again reinforced the moves to call a Second Summit, a decision which was confirmed by the time of the Foreign Ministers' Meeting to commemorate the Bali Summit in February 1977. The 4th AEM and 10th AMM were held in Singapore on 27-29 June and 6-8 July 1977, respectively, to finalize the Reports of the Foreign and Economic Ministers to the Heads of Government. It may be seen that at Kuala Lumpur, the Report

of the Economic Ministers had become more important in relative terms, due to the functions that had been mandated to them at Bali. As part of Thailand's preparations, a meeting of the National ASEAN Committee chaired by the Foreign Minister also took place in June to coordinate positions between the various agencies.⁶⁵ The main issue concerned the substance of economic cooperation and the structure of that cooperation, including follow-up to the 1976 commitments. With this in mind, observers spoke of "discussing Bali rather than improving on it," implying that little innovation was expected.⁶⁶ A final meeting of SOM took place on 29-30 July to finalize the topics to be discussed at the Summit and at the Meeting between the ASEAN leaders and the dialogue partners, which was to follow the ASEAN Meeting. The Ministers arrived in Kuala Lumpur with Philippine and Singaporean representatives commenting on the necessity for political will to implement ASEAN decisions.⁶⁷ Following their arrival, respective preparatory Meetings of the Foreign and Economic Ministers were also held on 1-2 August. Thus, in comparison to the Bali Meeting, where the immediate meetings of officials and ministers at Bali prior to the Summit were organized in an *ad hoc* manner to resolve outstanding issues, the Kuala Lumpur Meeting showed that the preparatory meetings were incremental and pre-planned as integral parts of the process.

As we have seen, considerable speculation was also placed at the Meeting over the Thai role in fostering ASEAN military cooperation, given the strongly anti-communist political orientation of Tanin's Government. As Tanin declared in his Opening Statement, which was preoccupied with political questions:

The aims and attitudes of the other side are indicated by its attempt to cause divisiveness in the ranks of ASEAN members by advocating and practising a policy of selective preferences in its relations with ASEAN countries...Such a policy calls into question its sincerity of intentions, not only towards those who are discriminated against but also for other ASEAN members as well.⁶⁸

The Thai position from the start was therefore for a strong line to be taken with regards to the Indochinese countries. Particular concern was directed toward the Vietnamese policy of fostering bilateral relations with individual ASEAN countries, but singling out Thailand as being a reactionary tool of the US in the region.⁶⁹ This Thai preoccupation was reflected in discussions over the Joint Communiqué which was the main public document issued by the Summit.

In terms of procedure, the Heads of Government made their Opening Statements in an initial Open Session and then retired to a closed-door meeting to discuss the (political) Report of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the Report of the ASEAN Economic Ministers in turn, followed by discussion of the improvement of the ASEAN machinery. Such subjects were also discussed informally between the Heads of Government during recesses. The status of the AIPs was discussed, and Singapore again introduced the question of across-the-board tariff reductions.⁷⁰ As part of the formalities, the Reports of the Sectoral Ministers were then approved as well as the Final Communiqué, followed by delivery of the Closing Statements in a final Open Session. Important elements of the Reports of

the Foreign and Economic Ministers were to be found in the Final Communiqué, which contained the decisions of the Summit. At the end of the Meeting, the Memorandum of Understanding on the ASEAN Swap Arrangement was also signed by the ASEAN Central Bank Governors.

It may be seen that to a large extent, Thai leaders were again satisfied with the results obtained from the Kuala Lumpur Summit. Indeed, the paucity of specific aims set for the Summit which could be identified seemed to support the argument that the overriding priority for the Thai delegation was to obtain public assurances of political support for Thailand. In this regard, it did appear that vital political support was accorded to Tanin's Government, at a time of domestic political difficulties, which took place at the same time as border clashes with Cambodia near Aranyaprathet.⁷¹ That this support was considered as important may be seen in comments made by Thai leaders in the aftermath of the Summit:

Thailand in particular was satisfied by the unity displayed by the ASEAN members. At the start of the Meeting there were doubts raised in some quarters as to whether the ASEAN members would stand by Thailand in a period of difficulty caused by armed conflict and incursions along our eastern borders.⁷²

A comprehensive discussion of political issues was also considered to be useful for purposes of policy coordination and a confidential internal document, the Report of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers to the ASEAN Heads of Government, helped to provide a common framework around which relations with

the countries of Indochina could be conducted in a continuation of the discussions at Bali. In the assessment of the attitudes of the Indochinese countries towards ASEAN, the Report may be seen to have incorporated certain concerns expressed by Thailand as seen in the Prime Minister's Opening Statement, as well as by Singapore, which were not publicly reflected in the Joint Communiqué, such as in Section 10 of the said document: "While the countries of Indochina have indicated their readiness to improve bilateral relations with ASEAN countries, it should not be ruled out that this could be used as a means for undermining ASEAN solidarity." Nevertheless, the Report went on to advocate "further efforts to enlarge areas of understanding and cooperation" with the countries of Indochina and generally to maintain the policy of reconciliation.⁷³ A definitive stance was therefore taken in Kuala Lumpur as to the form of relations with Indochina, as opposed to the generally conciliatory but wait-and-see position previously adopted at Bali. Multilateral security cooperation was nowhere mentioned in the Joint Communiqué, which emerged as the main document of the Meeting, nor in the confidential Report of the Foreign Ministers which only mentioned that existing bilateral cooperation on a non-ASEAN basis should be continued on such matters. However, the Heads of Government once again reaffirmed their commitment to the objectives of ZOPFAN and agreed that: "further initiatives which would create conditions conducive for the establishment of the zone" would be considered. In this connection, it was considered that "resilience...would create conditions conducive for the establishment of ZOPFAN," marking a further evolution in the concept to incorporate Indonesian concerns with domestic

adjustments and building an indigenous regional order through National and Regional Resilience.⁷⁴

Indeed, certain scholars have proposed that a primary function of the Summit was to serve as political support for Thailand. Antolik is a prominent proponent of such a thesis and suggests, for example, that:

Political support for Thailand was never articulated; it was instead suggested by summit ceremonies and announcements about economic and administrative matters designed to bolster the regional organization ...support in a shadow-play style. The announcement, however, that the organization would issue a separate political communiqué after meetings was an important first step out of the shadows to admitting publicly (and realizing Thai expectations of) a collective political function for ASEAN.⁷⁵

Such a stand may go a little too far by implying that much of what the Organization did was actually for Thailand's sole benefit, whereas it has been shown that ASEAN Summits meant a great deal for certain of Bangkok's partners. Nevertheless, apart from the wider political objectives, various other concrete goals set by Thailand were also achieved. Thailand's concerns on the issue of refugees from Indochina were aired.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, to further enhance ASEAN cooperation, concrete measures were agreed upon as contained in the Joint Press Communiqué which made reference to specific agreements on regional developments, ZOPFAN, economic cooperation, external relations, cooperation in social, cultural and other fields, and improvement of the

ASEAN machinery. On the economic side, political support was obtained for the Preferential Tariff Arrangements (PTA) as a multilateral mechanism, as opposed to Singapore's bilateral drive. The reaffirmation of the Agreement, which had been signed by the Foreign Ministers earlier on in the year, ensured that the economic dimension and regional trade liberalization, progress on which had been slow since Bali, were given further impetus. Following extended discussions leading up to the Summit and at the Summit itself, a compromise was reached on the institutional structure. The importance of the Bangkok framework was preserved, as indicated in the Joint Communiqué, in which the Heads of Government "agreed that changes in the organizational structure of ASEAN should be effected without altering the status of the ASEAN Declaration as the basic document which embodies the principles and objectives of ASEAN."⁷⁷ Thus, Thailand's basic interests were preserved in the various decisions of the Meeting, despite ambiguity over its interest in security cooperation.

It may be seen that contemporary foreign observers regarded the external dimension of the 1977 Summit as almost as important as the internal dimension. This view was stimulated by the presence of the Heads of State of three regional powers, namely Australia, New Zealand and Japan, who met with the five ASEAN leaders in a 'Five plus Three' session which immediately followed the ASEAN Summit on 6-8 August 1977. The appearance of ASEAN solidarity was shown for international consumption, and Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat Hartono Rekso Dharsono was allowed to make a presentation to the gathering between the ASEAN Heads of Government and

those of the dialogue partners. In the run-up to the Meeting, there was much talk of a new Japanese policy towards Southeast Asia, which eventually evolved into the well-known Fukuda Doctrine enunciated in Kuala Lumpur. By contrast, such observers tended to ignore the impact of ASEAN's own deliberations. This was taken in view of the limitations that had been involved to the scope of the Summit, namely that no fresh studies were commissioned, and thus no mandate for change.⁷⁸ In this regard, a scholar of ASEAN economic cooperation has suggested: "The priority given to reorganization weakened the intent of a renewed commitment to focus on the package deal. In this atmosphere, it was necessary for an outsider, Japan, to re-establish the pace and intent of cooperation on the package deal of the five AIPs."⁷⁹ At the same time, Thai policy-makers did also regard external support for economic cooperation as vital, and had already favoured the attendance of external powers at Bali. As a Thai diplomat is reported to have observed, "Thailand is...realistic enough to detect the inherent problem within ASEAN. It is seeking outside support for ASEAN, particularly from the neighbouring countries of Japan, Australia and New Zealand."⁸⁰

During 1976-1977, the role of Heads of Government in the ASEAN process was thus concretized. Yet Bali may be regarded as representing a one-off event, which may be taken apart from the very different circumstances surrounding the Kuala Lumpur Meeting. As a prominent scholar of Southeast Asian affairs suggests: "The Bali Conference must be seen as the product of sheer necessity and institutional evolution. Consequently, the accomplishments were specific and spectacular...such a success

was difficult to duplicate, and any attempt to recreate 'the spirit of Bali' was doomed to fail.⁸¹ Bali contrasted with Kuala Lumpur in being more spontaneous, despite the prior preparations, whereas all aspects of the latter Meeting were carefully prepared. Bali may therefore be regarded as an intermediate stage between formality and spontaneity in negotiations.⁸² Moreover, it has to be stressed that the wider Summit process has to be separated from the actual Meeting of the Heads of Government, which was more limited in nature and remained largely informal.

From the analysis of these four Meetings, it may be concluded that Thailand's overall policy concerns were indeed translated into concrete policy positions at ASEAN meetings as part of a deliberate policy. Speeches made by Thai representatives at key ASEAN meetings not only touched on issues of ASEAN cooperation as contained in the official agenda, but also matters of general concern to Thailand which Bangkok wanted to place in an ASEAN context. This tends to support the impression of Thailand's deliberate employment of ASEAN as a supplementary mechanism to support the general trend of its foreign policy and that ASEAN policy was not generated in an environment separate from Thailand's other policy concerns. The initial move towards regionalism, the exploratory approach of outward neutrality, and the eventual commitment to greater self-reliance, including through the enhancement of ASEAN cooperation, were general policy initiatives reflected in positions taken by Thai delegates at respective ASEAN meetings. The negotiations around Bali also suggest that from around this time, such high-level Meetings should also be regarded as part of a process, a series of consultations and negotiations leading up to a final

meeting at which the agreements concerned are sealed, rather than as a single decisive conference. In this manner, national positions were adapted and reformulated in the course of an ongoing negotiation process, during which there was a constant attempt to forge consensus. This was seen, for example, in the Thai stance on regional trade liberalization as well as on security cooperation. The analysis also reveals the increasing complexity of ASEAN as the years progressed, with extended deliberations at various levels. Decision-making evolved from a situation where the decisions were made by the Ministers and concretized by officials to one where much of the ground was already covered and agreed upon by officials and then endorsed and concretized by the Ministers. Moreover, decision-making became more diffuse, with a wider participation of other agencies in addition to the Foreign Ministries, as shown in the Thai example.

One constant remained, that of informal diplomacy and the importance of bilateral contacts between ASEAN partners in reaching agreements. This had enhanced the status of Thanat Khoman in the early days of ASEAN, and there are grounds to suggest that this eventually led to the preponderance of the influence of long-established leaders such as President Suharto of Indonesia within ASEAN as a whole, which may in turn have reduced the influence of Thai leaders who were relative novices in the process. Due to the institutionalization of preparatory meetings at the officials level, matters of detail and not of policy were tackled by the officials, making the potential role played by leaders possibly even more important. Thus, in time, not only the Foreign Ministers but the Heads of Government became an integral part of the ASEAN process.

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THAILAND'S PLACE WITHIN ASEAN

Thailand's own perception of its role within ASEAN has already been discussed, as has the nature of its relations with prospective partners at the time of the creation of ASEAN. After 1967, having no major bilateral difficulties with any one of its four ASEAN partners, Thailand felt it useful to play a constructive role as a mediator within the Organization. At the same time, it wanted to see an organization in which no single group of countries should be able to dominate the rest. As a former senior MFA official associated with ASEAN pointed out, Thailand's role reflected its perception of a trend in the history of regional cooperation: that Muslim countries tended to stick together even if they did publicly fall out at times. This privileged relationship was sensed between Malaysia, Indonesia, and to a certain extent the Philippines. It was therefore important from the Thai view to have an organization in which interests are more balanced, with Singapore and Thailand playing an active part in the process.⁸³ Another senior diplomat observed that Thailand preferred the role of mediator and therefore generally remained in the background while, for example, Singapore and the Philippines appeared to have played a much more active role on economic issues, and Indonesia and Malaysia on political issues. His view was that Thailand was "quiet by nature rather than by intention," and that it was active behind the scenes on many issues. Such a subdued stance proved an asset to the Association as Thailand could be found to go along with any country, having a relatively free hand on most issues.⁸⁴

In this light, the perception of Thailand by the other countries sheds additional clarification on its activities within ASEAN. Such views also provide a useful indicator of perceived changes in its role during the period under study from 1967 to 1979, when taken with the study of internal developments within Thailand itself. Such analysis would also clarify the impression that some regional commentators seemed to have that the Kingdom's attitude towards the Association has been rather non-committal, suggesting for example that it has been "the least assertive in the respect of the concept of ASEAN in general."⁸⁵ In this perspective, it is important to stress that ASEAN operated on a formal basis of equality regardless of the size of the country or level of economic development. ASEAN has been a success as an organization because Indonesia, its largest member, has exercised a policy of restraint, even though it has acted decisively to block developments it deemed detrimental to its interests. This did not always go its own way, and it was forced to acquiesce to others regarding such issues as ASEAN structure, and to Thailand regarding the situation in Kampuchea.

Within the ASEAN circle, Thailand's participation was generally regarded as a valuable asset for the Organization as a whole, providing a useful mediating role. Its mediating position enabled it to play a role in brokering various projects and to bring them to fruition. Thailand's middle stance on various issues also seems to be noted by its partners. However, many scholars of ASEAN relations seem to stress the importance of the relationship between Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, with the Philippines and Thailand on the periphery.⁸⁶ A Malaysian official is recorded as saying: "you can imagine ASEAN without

the Philippines, and even without Thailand—though of course the region would be different. But you cannot imagine ASEAN without Malaysia and Indonesia, and you cannot have peace in non-Indochinese Southeast Asia without peace between Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.”⁸⁷ An impression therefore seems to exist in certain quarters that Thailand is in fact not essential to the ASEAN framework. In this view, Thailand’s major importance to the Organization lies in the strategic position of securing ASEAN’s ‘western flank,’ with Indonesia and Malaysia forming the ‘core.’ Thus, according to Antolik:

The western flank of ASEAN is built on the asymmetrical exchange between the lower peninsula and Thailand. Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia join in a strategic concession—diplomatic support—to Thailand’s national security in turn for Thai cooperation in tactical control of Malaysia’s insurgency problem.⁸⁸

Accordingly, this ‘core’ concept is at once geographical and normative. Indirectly, the image also coincides with Indonesia’s preponderant size within ASEAN to accrue to Indonesia’s importance within the Organization, with the relationship between Jakarta and two other capitals, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, being seen as crucial to the ASEAN process.⁸⁹ Within this framework, Bangkok and Manila appear as mere complements.

For its ASEAN neighbours, Thailand’s most important contribution was to act as a buffer between them and the instability in Indochina. Thailand’s distinctly continental position set it apart from its ASEAN partners, and even Malaysia may be regarded as being only vicariously affected by continental

affairs. For the Thais, this must have been a particularly difficult role to play, since Thailand itself had traditionally relied on buffer territories to protect itself from its enemies, as revealed in its traditional interaction with neighbouring Laos and Cambodia. Nevertheless, this buffer role appeared to have been the view of Singapore and Malaysia, and to some extent Indonesia.⁹⁰ The Philippines was less preoccupied with such considerations as with its geographical position and its treaty provisions with the US, it was some way removed from strategic considerations on the continent. By contrast, Singapore had been dubbed 'the impregnable fortress' of the British Empire in the East in the years prior to the Second World War, until it was outflanked by the Japanese advance down the Malayan peninsula through Thailand in late 1941. This left a powerful impact on later Malaysian and Singaporean leaders of the need of securing the integrity of Thailand for their common benefit.⁹¹ As the British Ambassador to Thailand had observed in 1948: "the frontiers of Malaya are on the Mekong and...if we desire to establish a bastion against communism in this area, we must be ready to give very substantial help to Siam."⁹² Nevertheless, this relationship was by no means merely filled with strategic concerns, and as has been shown there was close cooperation on insurgency between Thailand and Malaysia, and also extensive trade with Malaysia and Singapore.

Yet one is led to ask whether this situation could be regarded as representing two sides of the same coin? It is the contention of this study that while the buffer role was indeed important, Thailand's position within the ASEAN cooperative structure cannot merely be seen in strategic terms of acting as

the 'flank.' ASEAN on the whole acted within the general scope of Thailand's foreign policy as a complement to its bilateral linkages. In this same vein Thailand may itself be regarded as an important complement to the overall political structure of ASEAN. Intriguing questions are posed. In one sense it is true that Indonesia's foreign policy subsequent to 1966 was largely premised on restraint, with development, regionalism and non-alignment being the main themes. Such policy objectives were all accomplished through membership of ASEAN, while the Association could also not be established without Indo-Malay reconciliation, in the face of which Singapore could not afford to remain neglected. Only Thailand and the Philippines remained somewhat peripheral from this interlocking framework. Yet it remains persuasive that Singapore would have been reluctant to participate in the reconciliation process without the presence of Thailand, and certainly Malaysia would value the initial balancing influence of Thailand vis-à-vis the Philippines and Indonesia in view of its past differences with these two powers. Indeed, it is often suggested that Indonesia's objections to initiatives put forward by smaller neighbours spring less from the substance of the proposals concerned than from the fact that they detracted from Indonesia's *de facto* leadership of the region.⁹³ It would not be stretching the point too far to posit that if Thailand could be persuaded to broker various arrangements, then Indonesia's opposition to such measures could be lessened. Internally therefore, Thailand also acted as an important buffer within ASEAN, which enabled it to perform mediating and brokering functions. Hidden within so-called 'intractable' bilateral problems, less recognized synergies were possible among

the member states. It seems almost a truism to state that Indonesia has led ASEAN from behind, and yet countries in the middle such as Thailand did not appear to be content merely to follow, as is the common impression, the pace of the slowest member. ASEAN cooperation was conducted in fits and starts in accordance with the priorities of various members and the extent of concordance of interests. A tentative conclusion may already be made that in general terms, Thailand was of intrinsic value to its partners in the period under study both in terms of internal ASEAN dynamics, as well as in the more recognized external postures. Such a description also better describes Thailand's contribution to ASEAN cooperation than the relatively restricted image of 'flank,' though Thailand's removal from bilateral disputes did accrue to its influence. This influence, nevertheless, was heavily dependent on an active role being played by its leaders, and some of the reduced leverage of the mid 1970s may have resulted from a certain degree of restraint, even over-cautiousness, by its representatives given domestic difficulties within Thailand.

After 1975 Thailand's internal stability became even more crucial to its ASEAN neighbours as ASEAN's 'frontline' state vis-à-vis Indochina. Given the overall ASEAN strategy of National and Regional Resilience as actively promoted by Indonesia, which was endorsed by the Bali Summit, there were justified concerns with recent political developments within Thailand. Already in 1973, the riots in Indonesia may be seen to have found some inspiration in the October 1973 overthrow of the military regime of Field Marshals Thanom and Prapat, revealing the interconnections in regional stability.⁹⁴ The

difficulties of the Government of MR Seni Pramroj in maintaining civil order amidst rising communist insurgency and political polarization in 1976 became a particular cause of concern. With this in mind, there were indications that there was substantial relief within much of the ASEAN leadership at the takeover of power by the military-dominated National Administrative Reform Council (NARC) in October 1976, leading to the appointment of Tanin Kraivixien as Prime Minister, with the promise of bringing stability to the Kingdom. Tanin himself also appeared to allude to this ASEAN feeling in his Address to the Nation given soon after coming to office on 13 October 1976:

From the past events, it is clear to all of us that there is a strong desire of the Thai people to safeguard our nation, our religion, our monarchy and our national identity. Such ardent desire of the Thai people is noted not only among us all but recognized by various countries in the world particularly neighbouring countries under free democratic system which are pleased and feel more secure to witness greater security in a country with similar system of government in the same region.⁹⁵

This episode therefore seemed to be an illustration of the way in which ASEAN sometimes impinged on the national political scene of Thailand: how the need for domestic political stability and measures to achieve that aim were justified in terms of upholding the dictates of ASEAN resilience.

Certain aspects of Thailand's political adjustment process during the mid 1970s were indeed witnessed with some apprehension by its ASEAN partners. This may be seen, for

example, in the analysis of bilateral relations with Malaysia in late 1976. As part of a Thai campaign to remove foreign military bases inside Thai territory and assert Thailand's 'independent' course, a policy which was demanded by the then influential student and intellectual body, Malaysian forces were requested to withdraw from forward positions inside the Thai border, and there was substantial tension between the two sides. Tension had already been raised between the two countries after various border incidents in the vicinity of the town of Betong, as well as the episode where Malaysian Cabinet Minister Datuk Asri told a gathering that: "the request for autonomy with specific conditions in the administration of the four southern provinces of Thailand seems credible and could be a wise move towards reconciliation and peace."⁹⁶ While this incident raised Thai suspicions of Malaysian support for southern separatism in Thailand, Malaysia in turn was led to question the Thai commitment to elimination of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) as opposed to the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in the light of the new Thai policy on military cooperation, and to ask whether the Thais thought of maintaining them as a buffer force on the border between the two countries.⁹⁷ In fact, the situation with the CPM and CPT was but a pale reflection of the difficulties prevailing on Thailand's borders with Burma, Laos and Cambodia. There were deep suspicions by each of Thailand's continental neighbours of a policy pursued by Bangkok to foster or at least tolerate the existence of groups of rebels in border areas, which could act as useful buffers for Thailand or which could be employed as leverage for Bangkok. Moreover, even though the Tanin Government restored full

military cooperation with Malaysia and a new bilateral security agreement was concluded in 1977, this did not mean an end to Thailand's part in creating controversy with ASEAN partners. Although the ASEAN governments largely approved of the Tanin Administration's policies to maintain political stability in Thailand, that Government's confrontational attitude towards Vietnam was seen as counter-productive. Subsequently, as the situation in Indochina deteriorated, it will be shown that Thailand's policy towards Vietnam, as supported by Singapore, was to prove particularly problematic within ASEAN from 1979 onwards. Thus, as relationships between ASEAN states improved and as Thailand's involvement in Indochina became more controversial, its value to the ASEAN core lessened.

In overall terms, however, Thailand's bilateral relations with Malaysia were close. It has already been shown that in 1967, Thailand had entertained a privileged position with Malaysian leaders, and the Malaysian Prime Minister as a rule visited Thailand as the first foreign country upon coming to office, an action which was largely reciprocated by Thailand in the mid 1970s, although this tradition was broken under Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. In addition, family links were also present, as seen in the person of Tunku Abdul Rahman who was a prince of the Kedah royal line which was for a long time associated with Thailand, and who was partly educated in Thailand. Extensive cooperation with Malaysia within other regional organizations such as ASA and ASPAC up to the mid 1970s meant that cooperation between the two countries within ASEAN was particularly close. It was thus that Datuk Hussein Onn was able to give Tanin Kraivixien an unprecedented assurance in 1977 that:

“if there should be a time—which I pray to God will not happen—when Thailand requires assistance from Malaysia, Malaysia will do her best to cooperate and be of assistance to Thailand.”⁸

The question arises as to whether there was also a policy convergence between Thailand and Singapore. The role of Singapore on influencing Thai policy has often not been recognized despite the political affinities and frequency of bilateral policy consultations between the two countries. This was perhaps due to the fact that many Thai leaders also continued to harbour some suspicions of Singapore’s own regional role, in common with other ASEAN members. For example, there was some recognition of Singapore’s maverick reputation in regional terms, while the relationship between Thanat Khoman and Lee Kuan Yew during the 1960s had not always been totally smooth. In the aftermath of the Communist takeover of Indochina, Thanat, showing the secret Thai resentment of the benefits received by Singapore behind the security buffer provided by Thailand, as well as a certain jealousy of the island state’s economic achievement, commented: “Of course, Lee Kuan Yew is asking Thailand to keep troops while he takes all the good industrial projects.”⁹ In such an interpretation, Singapore with its keenness on maintaining a US security presence in the region, and yet aware of the negative side-effects of such a presence on its territory, was content to let US troops remain stationed in Thailand which incurred the full wrath of Vietnam for providing such facilities. Thailand’s attractiveness as an investment location would be damaged by the resultant increase in insurgency activities and other hostile actions adopted in retaliation by communist states, while the island state was rendered much more

attractive in relative terms with its secure environment far removed from conflict. That same suspicion of Singapore's overwhelmingly economic motives also appeared in another of Thanat's comments that: "a certain member on several occasions, had displayed bazaar rather than cooperative spirit insisting on taking more than giving, as evidenced in the case of industrial joint ventures and others."¹⁰⁰ The general feeling was therefore that Thailand should be afforded greater recognition for its frontline status, or in a wider scheme, that Singapore should be able to make a greater sacrifice for the sake of its ASEAN partners.

Yet there were close consultations between the two countries, especially on political matters, from around 1971 onwards. Prior to 1972 and Singapore's policy shift towards a greater investment in regionalism, Lee Kuan Yew's only visit to another ASEAN country apart from Malaysia as Prime Minister of an independent Singapore had been a stopover in Bangkok in 1966.¹⁰¹ Within Thailand's conception of a balance of power within ASEAN, it was important that both Thailand and Singapore were essentially non-Malay and non-Islamic countries. The two countries therefore had an interest in working together, often in company with the Philippines. Singapore's conception of Thailand as a buffer has already been noted, and doubtless played an important part in motivating Singapore to mobilize political support for Thailand at key instances. Through other means, Singapore also sought to bind Thailand closer to the Organization, fearing 'defection' or the possibility of Bangkok moving towards some form of accommodation with the communist regimes, particularly in the 1975-76 period. Singapore,

however, was often careful not to appear politically exposed in regional terms, bearing in mind the position of its Indonesian neighbour, and thus Thailand was often nominally promoted as sponsor of various initiatives by Singapore, particularly those in the ultra-sensitive military and economic fields.¹⁰² At the same time, it was perhaps possible that Thailand let Singapore through the personality of its Foreign Minister S. Rajaratnam take a hardline position on political issues because while the Kingdom was a frontline state, it neither wanted to be seen to rupture an ASEAN consensus by taking an overly tough line, nor did it want to invite retaliation on its borders by adopting tough positions. Singapore, on the other hand, with its maverick reputation could play the devil's advocate and act more forcefully and controversially.¹⁰³ Meanwhile, apart from the close cooperation with Singapore and Malaysia, Thailand may also be seen to have had some identity of interest with the Philippines on general questions of regional security, and particularly on the regional role of the US. On certain crucial questions, including on the Kampuchean issue, however, the Philippines tended to take a conciliatory line to Vietnam, being geographically far removed from the events. At the same time, a difference in strategic perception often separated Thailand and Indonesia, even though prior to 1973 there was a significant convergence in political regimes. On the other hand, in general terms Thailand was often willing to defer to Indonesia in recognition of its wider diplomatic importance and in the absence of issues of bilateral contention between Bangkok and Jakarta.

It may thus be concluded that on many matters and above all on the crucial Kampuchean issue, Thailand did approach

Singapore in position more than any other ASEAN partner, though it could be observed that this was frequently more an alliance of convenience than of choice. It is even possible to see the strong ASEAN response to the Kampuchean issue in 1979-80 as another instance where the Thai government acted as lead broker for a course of action that was actively pressed for by another nation, in this case Singapore, which for its own bilateral difficulties could not take a prominent role in promoting such a line. At the same time, it has to be pointed out that pursuing such an active policy was also largely perceived to be securing Thailand's essential interests. The Singapore-Thai relationship may be regarded as representing a distinct trade-off in bilateral terms, and it is observed that: "There is no specific indication that there is a permanent or quasi-permanent coalition formation among the five during regional negotiations. Support or disagreements within the group vary according to the issues and the interests at stake."¹⁰⁴ It may therefore be said, using the old adage originally introduced by British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston in the 19th Century but which seems perfectly suited to the pragmatic Thais, that within ASEAN Thailand had no permanent allies and that only its interests were permanent.

Beyond ASEAN, the image of Thailand within Southeast Asia was often less positive, particularly among the countries of Indochina. This may be seen to have been a function of its extensive involvement with the US during this period. For a long time, Thailand had been considered as a tool of the Western powers by its virulent anti-communism and its support for US policies in Southeast Asia. This negative view of Thailand, and of its role in ASEAN, was strongest in Vietnam. Thus, according

to Gareth Porter, “The dominant Vietnamese image of Thailand, which has remained relatively stable despite changes in Vietnamese views on internal Thai politics and foreign policy, is that of a weak, unstable state which has a habit of relying on external powers.”¹⁰⁵ In accordance with this view, the Kingdom was accused on numerous occasions of attempting to turn ASEAN into a military bloc. To some extent, this negative view was reciprocated by Thailand, and not only by leaders at the highest level: a survey of 360 community leaders conducted in 1984 revealed that 79.9% of respondents regarded the Vietnamese as completely untrustworthy. However, the results of the same survey were hardly more positive for Thailand’s partners in ASEAN: only 29.9% believed that Malaysians were particularly worthy of confidence, with a majority of respondents either not choosing to answer or remaining unsure. Meanwhile, many thought that the Chinese, and to a lesser extent Westerners and Japanese, were preferable as close friends for the Kingdom.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, particularly after 1979, Laos was seen to follow the Vietnamese position, as did the Vietnamese-backed Cambodian government of Heng Samrin in Phnom Penh, which made cooperation between Thailand and such countries problematic. Thus, according to prominent Thai scholar, Thailand’s policies are rather a reaction to its environment: “Thailand has been caught in three situations: First, domestic; second, we are caught among the superpowers; third, the minor powers in the north, and in the south, Indonesia.”¹⁰⁷ Such a statement revealed the Thai impression that its regional role is determined by various constraints, some domestic and some external in nature. Such constraints have prevented it from fully exerting its influence

within the region and of forging an identity as an independently-minded Southeast Asian entity.

Personality was important in the maintenance of good bilateral relations between the ASEAN partners. This was also seen in the case of Thailand, as in the phenomenon of ‘Tun Thanat.’¹⁰⁸ As has been shown throughout the course of this study, the personality of Thanat Khoman and his relationship with Southeast Asian leaders was a determining factor in propelling Thailand to the forefront of regional cooperation during ASEAN’s first years. This factor, and Thanat’s long tenure at the helm of the MFA, gave him a regional stature unmatched by other Thai personalities for many years. Not only was he Foreign Minister between 1959-1971, but after leaving office, he acted as Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Thanom Government, particularly on issues of regional cooperation, and attended various meetings as Special Envoy up to 1973. Thanat also acted as Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Sanya Government in 1973-1974, and to the Tanin Government in 1976-1977. Subsequently, as leader of the Democrat Party, he also served as Deputy Prime Minister in the first Prem Government as from 1980 to 1982. This long and almost uninterrupted exposure to foreign affairs enabled him to build valuable relationships within the region. As one of his long-time Assistants revealed, this was illustrated in various incidents, such as one where a group of ASEAN diplomats stopped a plane, he was travelling in on a visit to Washington on the runway merely so that they could have the opportunity to greet him and send him off.¹⁰⁹ When interviewed by the author, Thanat lamented that following his departure Thailand became, according to the Thai expression, *Chang Tow Lung Tan Chang Tow Nah* (the

elephant's back feet instead of its leading feet).¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the appointment of career diplomats as to the post of Foreign Minister subsequent to Thanat's removal helped to contribute to the maintenance of the chain of continuity with regards to relations with ASEAN partners, despite the frequent changes in government. It must be concluded, however, that the degree of leverage previously exercised by Thanat over his ASEAN colleagues was perhaps lacked by his successors.

The question may also be posed whether specific cultural traits could be identified within the ASEAN members, which could provide an additional guide as to the respective national policies pursued within the Organization, particularly those of Thailand. It may be seen that while Thai foreign policy outputs have been discussed extensively in the academic scholarship, its policy style has been paid far less attention. The official position adopted by the ASEAN countries is not to ascribe roles to any particular member country, and that all five members are equally necessary to the collective ASEAN community, although certain members may have particular interests at various stages. It is suggested that personal traits rather than ethnic characteristics appear more noticeable.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, it is suggested that Singaporeans typically pride themselves to be "tough, direct, didactic, explicit, somewhat abrupt and even arrogant."¹¹² By contrast, the Thais appeared to have preferred a more softly-softly approach, with actual policy positions being hidden by a cloud of active diplomacy instead of necessarily being explicit. With regards to negotiations, a basic understanding in principle was usually taken to be desirable by the Thai side, while details could be worked out at a later stage instead of being specified

from the beginning. Indeed, as seen in the general nature of government policy statements, the lack of clarity was often taken to be a virtue, allowing greater flexibility to be given to policy. In this manner, despite the strong element of pragmatism, policy shifts do not take place suddenly, but usually as an evolutionary process. This has sometimes led to the impression of an overly cautious diplomacy, with the pragmatism often verging towards opportunism.¹¹³

Meanwhile, national positions may also have reflected the organizational style of the national agencies concerned, ranging from the visionary and spontaneous to the pragmatic and meticulous.¹¹⁴ Within this formulation, *Saranrom*, the Thai bureaucracy of the MFA at Saranrom Palace, could be regarded as fairly well prepared and pragmatic at the negotiating table, given its long tradition of professionalism, but perhaps not as detailed or meticulous as Singapore or Malaysia's *Wisma Putra*, steeped in the traditions of the British Civil Service. The Philippines' *Padre Faura*, on the other hand, was often more visionary, but at the same time it could also be found to be formalistic and legalistic with respect to certain fundamental questions, such as seen on its perception of the need for an ASEAN Charter to place ASEAN on a formal footing, and the need to have agreed definitions before embarking upon ZOPFAN. Moreover, while it is difficult to see distinguishing stances as arising from these different bureaucratic traditions, different negotiating styles may be discerned. Thailand could be seen to be less 'intense' than certain other ASEAN members, such as Indonesia. One can even use the rather hackneyed term *sabai-sabai* expressed for the easygoing attitudes adopted by Thai

representatives in ASEAN fora, which may nevertheless partly help to explain a conciliating role. When interviewed about national styles, Singaporean Premier Lee Kuan Yew once referred to the intensity of various cultures such as Northeast Asians including the Koreans, attributes which enabled them to undertake rapid development as opposed to Southeast Asians who were less intense, but when asked whether the Thais according to that definition were intense enough to provide an effective buffer for Singapore, he replied:

I don't think (the Thais) have any intention of being an intense buffer state, and they are not that kind of people, I don't believe that an indigenous Thai insurgency movement can overthrow the established government.¹¹⁵

In this Singaporean view, Thailand's 'bending with the wind' attitude was thus highlighted, as well as the perceived lack of fanaticism or fortitude on the part of Thais in general. With such doubts cast upon the Thais' ability to stand up under pressure, it was often felt to be judicious to lend political support to the regimes in Bangkok. However, while the pragmatic attitudes of Thai delegates within the ASEAN negotiations seemed to have been dominant, this did not mean that Thai diplomacy was always flexible. As will be seen, given the necessary impulses and confluence of domestic and external factors, a strong and resolute attitude was adopted over the events that unfolded in Kampuchea at the end of the period under question.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of decision-making at ASEAN meetings between 1967-1977 shows that in general, concrete policy positions adopted by Thailand at ASEAN meetings tend to match Thailand's overall policy concerns to a significant degree. Such actions supported the wider objectives of the MFA of employing regional cooperation and ASEAN as a tool of foreign policy and the general conclusion that ASEAN served to complement Thailand's overall foreign policy concerns.

Nevertheless, the institutionalization and increasing complexity of the ASEAN process meant that much of the informality of the formative period had been lost by ASEAN's second decade, in a move away from the personalized approach centred on the personality of the Foreign Minister. This meant that issues were more likely to be discussed at the officials level before being presented to the Ministers and Heads of Government, and accordingly ASEAN meetings tended to represent the culmination of a long process of negotiations and consultations, during the course of which Thailand's position may have been somewhat modified to accommodate a consensus and thus appeared less obvious. The differences between the Bali and Kuala Lumpur Summits largely reflected this evolution, with the more comprehensive programme of the latter having been extensively prepared, although the Meeting itself was somewhat overshadowed by the subsequent dialogues with ASEAN's external partners, the multilateral aspects of which were launched on that occasion. To look at the issue another way in terms of policy output, where general declarations of intention were required, as in the early stages of ASEAN, it was possible

to have a large role for Ministers. By the time of Bali and Kuala Lumpur, however, agreements were more detailed and needed prior preparation on the documents by officials. Kuala Lumpur again went one step further from Bali by containing precise details of implementation. This magnified the importance of Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman at the beginning, whereas his successors were perhaps less significant within the complexity of the larger structure. Such developments, as well as the evolution of bureaucratic rivalry at the ASEAN level, further necessitated action by the Heads of Government which were one stage removed from the normal business of the Organization.

There are some grounds for believing that Thailand was somewhat handicapped by the lack of coherence in its ASEAN representation during the period under study, as shown at the two Summits. The role of personality has been shown to have played a significant part in the success of Thai initiatives in 1967 and 1971, with the role of Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman being an important contributory factor. Following the departure of Thanat Khoman, the lack of personal leverage may have contributed to Thailand's conciliatory position towards many issues of cooperation in subsequent years. Another explanation may lie in a certain lack of interest by politicians and sundry officials who preferred to concentrate their attention on national programmes and domestic priorities. Such concerns reduced Thailand's bargaining power within the group, especially during the mid 1970s. This was partly rectified by the continual role of permanent officials in ASEAN negotiations, although the lack of political direction necessary for a long-term vision was apparently not compensated for.

Nevertheless, this did not seemingly prevent Thailand from obtaining its major objectives within the Organization, as seen by the goals set at ASEAN meetings.

At a micro level, the Thai tendency to adopt the middle ground within ASEAN also seemed to be apparent. This partly reflected the general desire to foster an ASEAN consensus on issues of cooperation, a priority to which Thailand also subscribed. Such concerns were evident in the role played by Thanat Khoman in Bangkok in 1967 and in Kuala Lumpur in 1971. It may, nevertheless, in later years have also reflected a lack of leverage on the part Thai policy-makers. At the key stages of ASEAN cooperation, such as at the Bali and Kuala Lumpur Summits, and one could even say the 1971 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Thailand suffered from substantial internal disruption, which may have distracted the attention of policy-makers away from ASEAN affairs. In any case, the incumbent governments which took part in the two Summits left office within 2 months of the respective meetings, lending support to the implication that Thai positions were weakened by a lack of continuity, and particularly that implementation processes suffered as a result of changes in leadership. At the same time, the comparative study does not reveal a specific Thai negotiating style, although the preference appears to be for forming a consensus and not excluding possible options. This may also account somewhat for the external perception of Thailand as being little interested in ASEAN cooperation. It may be concluded that Thailand's perceived silence was not necessarily due to any lack of initiative, it was partly due to a preference to work behind the scenes and to act as conciliator, and also partly to counter the lack of

political direction or domestic limitations on policy. Thus, activity at lower levels belied the relative self-effacement at higher levels.

Despite the domestic and security problems cited above, the ASEAN perception of Thailand's role within the Organization appears to be a generally positive one. Despite the reluctance of ASEAN bureaucrats to ascribe specific roles to the individual member countries, the dominant image of Thailand in the early period was that of a conciliator. However, this positive perception of Thailand was later obscured by Thailand's internal and external security problems by the late 1970s. Member countries' support for Thailand was regarded as being particularly necessary once it became a frontline state vis-à-vis the instability in Indochina. In terms of the perception of other countries, from being a net contributor to ASEAN cooperation, it became a net recipient of the benefits therefrom. At the end of the period under study, Thailand's aggressive stance regarding the Vietnamese role in Indochina became the predominant and lasting image, rather than the previously conciliating role within ASEAN.

CHAPTER

8

THE INDOCHINA ISSUE
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR
SUBSEQUENT POLICIES

This Chapter discusses the ramifications on Thailand of Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea in late 1978 and its effects on subsequent Thai policy towards ASEAN and Southeast Asia as a whole as a case study of Thai policy within the Organization. The episode illustrated the importance of external factors, and particularly the role of Indochina, in motivating developments within ASEAN as well as Thai policy towards the Association itself. It also provided an important example of the manner in which Thailand was able to influence ASEAN political cooperation on an issue that was to occupy the energies of the Organization as a whole for over a decade. Thailand as ASEAN's frontline state became the focal point of ASEAN's reaction to such external stimuli, and played an important role in mobilizing international opinion on the Indochina issue. Thailand's reinvigorated partnership with ASEAN, as well as with certain great powers, may be said to have set the tone for much of its regional policy until the conclusion of the Indochina conflict, and even beyond.

THE ROLE OF INDOCHINA IN MOTIVATING ASEAN COOPERATION

Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea in December 1978 leading to the Third Indochina War was the result of a steady deterioration of bilateral relations between the two countries, which was linked to the wider Sino-Vietnamese split subsequent to 1975.¹ In turn, the Sino-Vietnamese discord echoed the wider rivalry between China and the USSR, thereby making the incident an illustration of the manner in which the revival of

great power rivalry impinged upon the regional politics of Southeast Asia. The Thai policy towards Indochina was to set the scene for a subsequent internal debate within Thailand on foreign policy that lasted through much of the 1980s. This concerned the question of conciliation or opposition towards Vietnam, and whether Thailand's declared neutrality towards events in Indochina was real or not. This was a debate which was not to reach its *dénouement* until the advent of the Government of Chatichai Choonhavan in 1988.

As has been shown throughout the course of this study, events in Indochina have played a powerful influence on motivating developments within ASEAN. This may also be seen to have applied to Thai involvement in the Organization from the beginning. As the country closest to Indochina, events in that area have affected Thailand more than any other country, and Thai actions within ASEAN were frequently undertaken with Vietnam in mind.² Similar concerns with events in Indochina may be seen to have motivated other ASEAN leaders throughout the period. The 1976 Bali Summit may be seen as a case in point, with the Communist takeover in Indochina contributing to a political decision to upgrade ASEAN cooperation on a comprehensive basis, plans for which had in fact been pending for quite some time. Thailand's increased political investment in the Organization may partly be seen as a function of this threat perception. MR Kukrit Pramoj, interviewed in late 1976 when already out of office, declared: "I am all for ASEAN. I think ASEAN could put a great deal of pressure on Vietnam to stop making troubles... And if the worst comes to the worst, I think ASEAN could put economic pressure on Japan to stop helping the Vietnamese."³ In addition, Thailand

concentrated on fostering an accommodation with Beijing as a counterbalance to the overwhelming influence exerted by Hanoi within Indochina. In this manner, Thai policy-makers described the year 1975 as the turn of the tide, when in the moment of darkness following the Communist victories the confirmation of the Sino-Soviet break opened opportunities for a more positive reshaping of regional relationships in Thailand's favour.⁴ With the resulting Sino-Vietnamese break, it was considered that Thailand was safe from external aggression for the time being, although in certain circles the old anti-communist perception remained.⁵ Indeed, Vietnam's initial interest in normalization of diplomatic relations with Thailand and its need for economic reconstruction and development in the aftermath of years of conflict may be taken together with the strong Vietnamese desire to establish relations with its old foe the US, as has been shown in recent studies.⁶ Considering regional developments which left Thailand relatively exposed on the continent, Thai interests after 1975 were essentially non-ideological and rested in the maintenance of peaceful coexistence with the Indochinese states. However, Vietnam was regarded as a potential threat considering the nature of historical relations between the two countries and in particular the large size of the Vietnamese army. Thus, special emphasis was placed in the maintenance of Laos and Kampuchea as independent and friendly states, even if communist, so as to act as buffers against possible hostile intentions from Vietnam. However, as Laos became drawn into the Vietnamese sphere, so Kampuchea was increasingly regarded as the area of greatest opportunity in checking Vietnamese influence in the region.

The resurgence of the Indochina problem in the late 1970s has to be taken against the background of the relative success of the Kriangsak Government in repairing Thailand's relations with its neighbours after the tensions of the Tanin period. The reforging of relationships had been facilitated by the relatively long tenure of Upadit Pachariyangkun as Foreign Minister through this transition from October 1976 to February 1980.⁷ As we have seen, Thailand's foreign policy during the Tanin Government had in fact been problematic, with reputed differences between the conscientious but dogmatic anti-communist Prime Minister and his more conciliatory Foreign Minister. Tanin had outwardly continued the policy of accommodation began by his predecessors, but his hardline domestic policy against left-wing radical groups and communism had lent a distinctly ideological touch to overall policy, even if the emphasis was placed on domestic affairs.⁸ Even after Tanin's removal in October 1977, Thailand remained concerned with the overwhelmingly negative Indochinese perception of ASEAN and of Thailand's role within the Organization, as indicated by Prime Minister Kriangsak's Keynote Address to the 11th AMM in June 1978:

The primary task of ASEAN at present is to strengthen the fabric of our cooperation. At the same time, we also have to generate a better understanding of our intentions and the nature of our various projects and activities.⁹

As 1978 drew to a close, therefore, Thailand had retained its previous suspicion of Vietnam's and Laos' refusal to deal with

ASEAN as a body and to insist on fostering bilateral relations with individual ASEAN member countries. There were also fears that the Vietnamese still entertained the idea of creating an Indochina Federation comprising Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, an idea which had its origins in the anti-colonial struggle of the Vietnam-based Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) during the interwar years. In turn, Vietnam had shown relative coolness towards Thai overtures throughout the 1970s to promote a degree of reconciliation in Southeast Asia. Thailand had in fact been singled out by Vietnam within ASEAN as a tool of the alleged continuing US ambitions in the region. However, this isolation of Thailand from the other ASEAN countries was seen by Thai policy-makers as part of a deliberate policy to weaken ASEAN as an organization, and conversely pulled Thailand closer to the ASEAN fold. Nevertheless, the last months of 1978 had been marked by renewed Vietnamese, Chinese and Kampuchean attempts to forge more friendly relations with the ASEAN countries as a whole as tensions between Hanoi and Beijing and Phnom Penh escalated.¹⁰ At the same time, ASEAN states were acutely aware of the role played by the escalating struggles between China and Vietnam in motivating efforts by both parties at trying to secure ASEAN's goodwill. The ASEAN response to Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong's ASEAN visits in September-October 1978, beginning with Thailand, has been described by commentators as "the most concrete example of ASEAN cooperation to date," with the various member countries avoiding the conclusion of a formal friendship and cooperation treaty with Vietnam during the visits which could have served to alienate China as constituting part

of a chain of containment inspired by the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, the ASEAN countries reciprocated the reconciliatory stance shown by Hanoi in accepting to sign far-reaching Joint Communiqués, stressing the existence of common interests.¹¹ Thus, Thailand also benefited from this new conciliatory position from Vietnam, although it continued to remain wary of Vietnamese intentions. Foreign Minister Upadit was to recall of the general optimism of this period at the 12th AMM in June 1979, stating that in the previous year: “we in Thailand as well as in other ASEAN member countries were not altogether dissatisfied with the turn of political events in the region.”¹² In this perspective, the events of the last week of December 1978 can only be described as a vital turning point in Thailand’s regional diplomacy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OVERALL THAI POLICY

In fact, upon the news of the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea on 25 December 1978, there appeared to have been little panic in Bangkok compared to the situation in the Spring of 1975, for the Vietnamese operation had been foreseen by intelligence analysts months in advance.¹³ According to Khien Theeravit, the National Security Council did not find it necessary to call a meeting right away, although Thai military leaders did convene a meeting to coordinate military responses on 5 January 1979.¹⁴ At that time, ironically, Prime Minister Kriangsak was on a long-scheduled visit to Laos, one of Vietnam’s closest allies. A cautious wait-and-see attitude was adopted at first, for although the attacks had long been predicted, there was uncertainty as to how the power structure in Kampuchea would evolve as the

result of such actions. There was certainly no love lost between Thailand and the Khmer Rouge, and the viciousness of certain of the border incidents over the previous two years, such as the massacre of 26 Thai villagers at 3 border villages in Prachin Buri Province in January 1977, impressed upon Thai policy-makers the need for caution.¹⁵ However, after it became clear in early January that the Vietnamese were fully determined to maintain their political dominance over the Kampuchean government and that the Khmer Rouge were no longer in a position to exert significant control over the country, Thailand supported by Singapore moved towards a vigorous political offensive against the Vietnamese action.¹⁶

The establishment of the Heng Samrin Government in Phnom Penh under Vietnamese backing on 7 January 1979 revealed in concrete terms Vietnam's intentions to maintain a long-term influence over Kampuchea. Thailand thus began actions to prevent the Vietnamese action in Kampuchea becoming a *fait accompli*, starting from support for the status of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) of the Khmer Rouge as a sovereign state with a seat at the UN, as seen in Foreign Minister Upadit's speech at the 34th UNGA in October 1979. Thai diplomats explained their actions in terms of traditional diplomacy: Thailand had to cooperate with other peace-loving states against the use of force to overthrow the government of a neighbouring country, especially as Thailand itself was also a small country. The right of self-determination of the Kampuchean peoples was also upheld. To have done nothing would not be constructive, and active diplomacy was required to provide the necessary guarantees for Thai security.¹⁷

In order to sustain this policy and to ensure its security against the massed forces of Vietnam along its exposed border with Kampuchea, in external terms Thailand was forced to rely on bilateral support from the PRC and the US. It may be seen that since the American withdrawal from Vietnam, US interest in Southeast Asia had declined substantially, and there was little public interest in the region. However, while the focus of the Carter Administration was on global issues and in particular relations with the Soviet Union, by late 1978 the US had already signaled a new readiness to remain engaged in Southeast Asia including to re-establish relations with Hanoi.¹⁸ This was seen in the visits to Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines made by Vice President Walter Mondale, and Thailand sought to encourage this renewed commitment. With the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, policy initiatives which might ultimately have led to the re-establishment of relations with Hanoi were put on hold, and support given to ASEAN, particularly Thailand. Thus, soon after the Vietnamese action, additional purchases of arms were made from the US, which also reaffirmed its Manila Pact commitments towards the security of the region. On the other hand, despite the reforging of ties with the US, it could be seen that the relationship between the two sides was not the same as during the previous Indochina conflicts. No US troops were despatched to Thailand, nor were there any requests to that purpose. Instead, support was requested in the shape of subsidized armed purchases to enable the Kingdom to better ensure its own security through self-help. That Thailand was worried by a massive conventional attack for the first time was shown in its purchase of M48 medium tanks and modern anti-

tank missile systems.¹⁹ Such conventional armaments would help reinforce the existing force of 150 outdated M41 light tanks, deemed to be no match for Vietnam's force of over 900 tanks of various models, including those abandoned by the US in 1975.²⁰ American commitments to Thailand's security were further affirmed within ASEAN fora, such as by US Secretary of State Muskie at the 13th AMM-PMC in June 1980:

We stand behind the independence, security, and territorial integrity of Thailand. That support is based on our historic friendship and our conviction that a secure Thailand is a force for regional peace and cohesion.²¹

Such comments were accompanied by the mention that the US would accelerate deliveries of equipment and grant additional credits and more generous terms for arms purchases. As a symbol of increased US concern in the region, an immediate airlift of military equipment purchased by Thailand under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) was also ordered by President Carter in July 1980. By 1980, therefore, there was a perceived commonality of interest between Thailand and the US as had not existed since 1975.

In contrast to the relative US reluctance at becoming closely involved in Southeast Asian affairs, China had expressed strong interest in the region since the middle of the 1970s. It has been pointed out that since November 1978, Beijing had provided assurances to Thai leaders that "appropriate measures" would be taken by China if Vietnam were to take control of the government

in Phnom Penh.²² In the aftermath of the fall of Phnom Penh, a high-level Chinese delegation led by Vice Foreign Minister Han Nianlong met with Prime Minister Kriangsak at the U-Tapao airbase to consider possibilities for Sino-Thai cooperation on the issue, at which it was said that “a foundation of *de facto* Sino-Thai alliance was laid.”²³ Following the initial discussions in January 1979, Bangkok maintained close consultations with Beijing over the events in Indochina in expectation of Chinese support against threats to Thailand’s sovereignty. Such consultations constituted a major factor in the continued maintenance of goodwill between China and Thailand during the course of the 1980s. Thailand was relatively at ease with its well-integrated Chinese population by this time, and could thus afford to give leeway to China. As Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng announced during Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila’s visit to Beijing in July 1980: “the Chinese Government and people will firmly stand by Thailand if Vietnam continues to create incidents along the Thai-Kampuchean border and make provocations against Thailand.”²⁴ However, at the same time this exposed Thailand to charges of collusion with Chinese interests in the region.

In order to understand Thailand’s attitude towards its allies on the Kampuchean issue, it may be seen that ASEAN could provide Bangkok with important political support and verbal assurances, but in view of the disparity of forces between Vietnam and the ASEAN countries, this could not completely reassure Thai policy-makers. As shown during the course of this study, Thailand’s position had always been, at least outwardly, to avoid multilateralization of ASEAN security cooperation.

In this perspective, to be advocating such a development at this stage would appear extremely negative vis-à-vis the Indochinese countries. Moreover, strict reliance on ASEAN with its limited means versus the world's third largest army at the time would have meant Thailand adopting a purely defensive posture, whereas enlisting the support of the US and China enabled it to be more pro-active and aggressive towards developments in diplomatic terms. As we have seen, fighting the enemy beyond Thailand's actual borders had always been a preference of Thai policy-makers throughout the ages. In this case, it was deemed that if Vietnam's advance could be halted in Kampuchea, then Thailand's security in the least could be assured without a costly defence of its borders. The potential provided by the assurances of the great powers was seen in the Chinese military action against Vietnam in February 1979. However, there is no evidence that China had coordinated its move with Thailand or ASEAN as a whole, as China had been looking for an excuse to 'teach Vietnam a lesson.'²⁵ Moreover, at that time Thailand appeared to have observed a strict equidistant policy towards the superpowers by ensuring that a balance was shown in foreign visits made by the Prime Minister in early 1979. Prime Minister Kriangsak visited all three superpowers involved in the region, namely the US, the Soviet Union and China, as well as Japan, to avoid any impression of partiality towards any one superpower in particular.²⁶ This judicious policy was also followed by his successor, General Prem Tinsulanonda, whose overall foreign policy was eventually termed as 'omni-directional' by the mid 1980s.

Moreover, in keeping with its declared neutrality on the Kampuchean issue, Thailand also continued to maintain relations

with Vietnam on a normal basis. Thai representatives even participated in a meeting of the Interim Mekong Committee in Hanoi in late January, only days after the invasion.²⁷ Even after the February 1979 Chinese military action against Vietnam, Thailand and ASEAN as a whole maintained the original official neutrality, but reserved the right to take such actions as they deemed appropriate for the sake of regional stability. As Foreign Minister Upadit declared at the 34th UNGA:

The fact that the ASEAN countries chose to deplore both the Chinese incursion into Vietnam and the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea demonstrated fully and clearly their earnest desire to remain neutral in the conflicts, from which position it hoped to be able to exert a stabilizing influence on the developments in the region.²⁸

In April 1979 Premier Kaysone Phomvihane of Laos made a return visit to Thailand, leading to the much-publicized proclamation of the Thai-Lao border as a 'zone of peace.'²⁹ Thai neutrality was further demonstrated in the limited permission given for overflights over Thai territory by Soviet aircraft en route for Kampuchea and Vietnam, although this privilege had been withdrawn by early 1980 amid suspicions of abuse.³⁰ Late 1979 was particularly notable for visits by both Vietnamese and Chinese leaders to Thailand. In October Nguyen Co Thach, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, on his visit to Bangkok was particularly conciliatory in proposing an end to propaganda attacks between the two sides.³¹ Nevertheless, despite various

flaws and occasional tensions, the policy of neutrality was maintained throughout the length of the conflict.

Yet again there was not a total consensus within Thailand of the Government's wisdom in adopting such an approach. Some felt that Thailand's announced policy of neutrality was merely a facade behind which a risky policy was being pursued. The group of so-called 'Democratic Soldiers' saw the Kampuchean issue as a struggle between two socialist nations and argued that Thailand should not become involved in the rivalry between the Soviet Union and China and thereby become a party to the conflict. To achieve this aim, they insisted on the implementation of a policy of strict neutrality and independence, even going as far as to advocate an international conference to guarantee Thai neutrality.³² This paralleled the approach taken by certain politicians, including by the Democrat leader and former Foreign Minister Pichai Rattakul who had pioneered the tentative move towards non-alignment in the mid 1970s. In an echo of the policies pursued during his term as Foreign Minister, Pichai wrote:

I submit that what Thailand should do is to declare a definite policy of non-alignment and to seek international status of neutrality, as a non-committed nation. This should be recognized and respected by all nations...Ideally speaking, the other ASEAN countries should also start by adopting the status of non-committed nations...I sincerely believe that such a policy would be more acceptable to the superpowers and other nations than just a vague Kuala Lumpur Declaration.³³

By the mid 1980s, within an influential section of the military leadership there was a growing advocacy of the need for coexistence, given Thailand's limited capabilities and fear of exploitation by external powers. Accordingly, the line taken by certain military officers and politicians thus differed in emphasis and degree from the official position espoused by the Government, particularly those of the MFA and the National Security Council.

This apparent difference was exploited by the Indochinese countries, as seen in the Vientiane Statement issued by the Foreign Ministers of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos following their meeting in the Laotian capital on 18 July 1980: "A number of people in the Thai ruling circles are making a further step along the dangerous path of following the United States and colluding with China in opposing the Indochinese peoples, at variance with the true interests of the Thai people and those of peace and stability in the region."³⁴ Internally, such themes were also employed by elements opposed to Kriangsak, who in adopting the policy of resistance may have felt the need to show a tough line on defence matters and demonstrate that he could firmly safeguard Thailand's security despite his previous conciliatory approach towards Indochina prior to 1979. Indeed, certain commentators had assumed that Thailand would eventually adopt an accommodating approach to Vietnam, given its notoriety in this field: "The Thais have been confronted with a *fait accompli* to which they are more likely to adjust than react... Thailand will allow a decent interval before diplomatically recognizing the new realities in Phnom Penh."³⁵ The tough stance shown by Thailand, as well as ASEAN as whole, thus tended to confound regional and international expectations. Such

expectations had not reckoned with a continuing Thai suspicion of Vietnam after the optimism of 1978, and the increased insecurity felt by leaders in Bangkok as to the integrity of the Kingdom's frontiers with large numbers of Vietnamese troops on its borders. Although Kriangsak was forced to resign as Prime Minister in February 1980, for largely domestic reasons, the policy of opposition to Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea, combined with an outward neutrality, was maintained by his successor. A subsequent study conducted by Chulalongkorn University of the Thai elite's perception of national security revealed that Vietnam and the Soviet Union were identified by those surveyed as the primary threats, well above that posed by China, and that more than 98% of respondents rejected acquiescence of the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea, although there was considerable variance on the appropriate solutions which should be adopted.³⁶ Indicators suggest that a substantial base of internal support therefore laid behind the Government's policy towards events in Indochina.

The new regional power relationships were marked by the weakening of communist insurgency within Southeast Asia, particularly in Thailand. It has been shown that since its origins, the Thai communist movement was largely motivated by China, and therefore shifts in the Chinese position had an important implication on the movement's overall political orientation. In particular, the views of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) on international affairs were dominated for a long time by the Beijing line. Moreover, it is suggested that while the ideology of revolution had an important bearing on Chinese attitudes towards Southeast Asia, China was in fact primarily motivated

by the strategic perceptions of threats emanating from the region, particular by external powers established there, as shown by the US presence as from the 1960s and more recently by the Soviet Union's presence in Vietnam.³⁷ To counter such threats, it was prepared to forego its revolutionary credentials and cooperate with regional states. Recent research has shown that the position of the CPT, which had after a period of relative weakness following the establishment of relations between Bangkok and Beijing been strengthened by new members in the previous two years subsequent to the crackdown on the left-wing and student movements from October 1976, was drastically undermined by the new power configuration. In the aftermath of the Vietnamese action, in an unprecedented move, the CPT's radio station, the Voice of the People of Thailand (VOPT), which was based in the Chinese province of Yunnan, offered the Thai government a united front against Vietnamese aggression.³⁸ In the resultant split between the Chinese and Vietnamese factions, pro-Chinese communists were driven from their sanctuaries in Laos and Kampuchea. At the same time, in domestic policy terms, Bangkok moved to a political offensive against communist insurgency, marked in 1980 by the accession of General Prem Tinsulanonda, a noted advocate of policies to combat insurgency by primarily political means, as Prime Minister. The issuing of Order of the Office of the Prime Minister No. 66/2523 (1980) on 23 April 1980 became a landmark in the fight against insurgency, and paved the way towards greater internal stability by the late 1980s.³⁹

IMPLICATIONS FOR THAI POLICY WITHIN ASEAN

It may be seen that while Thailand was keen not to over-react to the December invasion, it quickly moved for an ASEAN response. The Thai policy was to mobilize an ASEAN response to the Vietnamese occupation that would lend political support for Bangkok's exposed position. A first statement was made by the Indonesian Foreign Minister as Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC) on 9 January 1979, stating that: "ASEAN member countries deeply deplore the current escalation and enlargement of the conflict between the two states in Indochina," but refraining from naming an aggressor.⁴⁰ Upon Thailand's urging, a Special Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers was hastily organized in Bangkok between 12-13 January 1979, dealing with both the Vietnamese intervention as well as with the refugee situation. This constituted an unmistakable show of support for Thailand as Indonesia with its long-standing sympathy for Vietnam was still holding the chairmanship of the ASC at that time. In subsequent months, Thailand was 'allowed' to take the lead in formulating the ASEAN response to the Kampuchean situation. This revealed the measure of success in its attempt at obtaining recognition from its partners of 'frontline' state status and thus a special consideration on the current crisis. Nevertheless, it was suggested that Thai delegates at the Bangkok Meeting were initially hesitant in pushing for overt condemnation of Vietnam, which might incur reprisals from that country, but were strengthened by the strong position of Singapore, and the acquiescence of Indonesia, to emerge with a stronger line against Hanoi.⁴¹ Further consultations took place

in February, leading to a second statement by Indonesia as ASC Chairman, this time in Bangkok, on 21 February 1979. The study of the actions taken in January-February 1979 thus reveals a perceptible hardening of the Thai position within ASEAN. Particularly active Thai diplomacy was marked in the second week of January, with an ASEAN meeting in Bangkok, a meeting with the Chinese, and declarations at the UN.

As noted, Thailand had begun political moves through ASEAN to obtain international condemnation of Vietnam's action at the UN by the second week of January. Initiatives in the Security Council began with the debate on the Kampuchean issue on 11 January. Attempts were made to persuade all non-aligned members of the Security Council to sponsor a motion that corresponded as far as possible to ASEAN's resolution of 12 January as issued in Bangkok regarding the withdrawal of foreign troops and non-interference.⁴² On 15 January the Thai Permanent Representative in New York, Dr. Pracha Gunakasem, spoke of Thailand's special concern due to its proximity to the fighting, but at the same time stressed Thailand's neutrality vis-à-vis the conflict itself.⁴³ However, the non-aligned countries' motion failed due to the Soviet veto. Following the escalation of tensions with the Chinese military action against Vietnam in February, the ASEAN Ambassadors once again addressed the Security Council. In March, Pracha presented ASEAN's own draft UN resolution calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea, and compared the ASEAN countries to five adjacent houses which were worried by a fire engulfing two other neighbouring houses, and which threatened to spread to the other five.⁴⁴ However, once again the project of resolution in the

Security Council in the Spring of 1979 failed due to the Soviet veto, and thus the avenue for action shifted to the General Assembly. Pracha was tasked by Bangkok with coordinating with ASEAN Permanent Representatives regarding the inclusion of the situation in Kampuchea in the agenda of the UNGA.⁴⁵ This having been achieved on 17 August 1979; Thailand was assured that international attention could be focused on the problem. Nevertheless, a first struggle had to take place in the Credentials Committee as to the seating of the Khmer Rouge as the representatives of Kampuchea. Singaporean and Thai representatives worked hard at lobbying those members of the Committee believed to be uncommitted.⁴⁶ Once the credentials issue was resolved, the ASEAN New York Committee worked on maximizing its representation on the Steering Committee of the UNGA, which would better enable it to influence the organization of the sessions, with Singapore and Thailand achieving the necessary representation.⁴⁷ The UNGA debate on the agenda item 'The Situation in Kampuchea' took place on 12-13 November, and on 14 November a vote on the draft resolution proposed by ASEAN was adopted, defeating the draft resolution by Vietnam and sidelining another draft resolution by India. The effectiveness of ASEAN cooperation in the UN was demonstrated to Thailand by this episode, and helped to sustain its faith in the Organization. Dr. Pracha Gunakasem's successor, ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, proudly cites the voting record on ASEAN's motion on Kampuchea which increased each year.⁴⁸ ASEAN subsequently become a powerful tool in lobbying for votes on the issue in the UNGA, and thus a political instrument of primary importance for Thailand.

At the same time, the greater intensively of political consultations within ASEAN was sustained. Some have tended to suggest that Thai/ASEAN actions at the UN revealed the limitations of ASEAN as a regional organization. However, the author is more inclined to view that such actions were necessary to mobilize international opinion and were undertaken so as to reduce the perception of ASEAN as a protagonist in the dispute. Rather than revealing the actions as resulting from a failure to contain disputes within Southeast Asia, Thai strategic perceptions contributed to seeing the hand of superpowers in the dispute and with this in mind the UN was seen as the logical focus of action. In this perspective, ASEAN allowed Thailand to magnify its influence in international arena, including in NAM and the Commonwealth, and provided an important source of political support. At the 12th AMM in Bali on 28-30 June 1979, the Foreign Ministers of Malaysia and Indonesia made a point of making additional assurances to Thailand. Such sentiments were publicly revealed in the relevant Closing Statements, which seemed to satisfy Thailand with their manifestation of ASEAN solidarity. Singapore, however, whose Foreign Minister had made a long and vigorous Opening Statement condemnatory of Vietnam, was visibly disappointed by the Joint Communiqué issued which it did not regard as sufficiently strong, despite the specific mention of “interference by Vietnam and other foreign forces.” This disappointment was revealed in Rajaratnam’s terse Closing Statement, containing the words: “my expectations have not been fulfilled.”⁴⁹ Despite speculation in the months after the Kuala Lumpur Summit about the possibility of a Third ASEAN Summit, ASEAN relied on

informal consultations in dealing with the crisis, and no Summit was organized to deal specifically with the issue of Indochina. Instead, during the course of 1979, Kriangsak held bilateral meetings with various ASEAN leaders, including with Suharto, Lee Kuan Yew and Datuk Hussein Onn, which seemed to compensate for the lack of a formal Summit.

However, the threat to security posed by the Indochina question had both internal and external dimensions, as seen in the massive flight of armed and unarmed refugees into Thailand. As it will be seen, Indochinese refugees were to prove to be a major concern for Thailand and ASEAN as a whole throughout the 1980s, constituting a problem which affected all of the ASEAN countries in varying degrees. An ASEAN policy was thus adopted with regards to an appropriate response to the flow of Indochinese refugees. Already in September 1975 when the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) first became actively involved in Thailand, the Indochinese refugee population in the country amounted to 60,000 persons.⁵⁰ Thailand's approach to the refugee problem as approved by the Cabinet in June 1975 was to prevent those displaced taking refuge in Thai territory, but if they could not be persuaded to desist from such action or pushed back, then the policy was that they would be temporarily regrouped in refugee camps while awaiting return or resettlement.⁵¹ An additional response to the refugee flows was to convince the international community that the question of refugees was an international problem, and not merely a regional one. A first major statement in the ASEAN forum was made by Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien in his Opening Statement at the 2nd ASEAN Summit in 1977:

The large presence of Indochinese refugees in our region, with their increasing number and needs, has substantially created political, social, administrative and financial problems for the countries concerned. It is an international problem which calls for regional and international approaches to arrive at humane and durable solutions.⁵²

Following the initial influx of refugees in 1975-76, Vietnamese action against private entrepreneurs, and particularly those of ethnic Chinese origin in the Cholon area of Saigon, began to alarm ASEAN states as from mid 1978. The repressive activities of the Vietnamese state stimulated substantial flows of refugees among the affected populations from Vietnam into neighbouring states, leading to the phenomenon of the 'boat people.' Being countries of first asylum, ASEAN states became host to a significant number of such refugees. Due to its geographical position, Malaysia was the ASEAN country most highly affected by the flow of 'boat people', as it pointed out at the 11th AMM in June 1978. The ASEAN states had tried to internationalize the problem by appealing to the UNHCR and the international community for support in resettling the refugees, though initially with limited success. Thailand, in particular, had been dissatisfied with the outcome of the Consultative Meeting with Interested Governments on Refugees and Displaced Persons in Southeast Asia held in Geneva in December 1978, which dealt largely with the case of the 'boat people,' whereas Thailand felt that it should obtain consideration in respect of 'land cases' as well.⁵³ In particular, there was no commitment that the international community would engage

itself to take the burden of resettlement away from countries of first asylum. This was against the background of Thailand's position as a non-signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as the result of which Thailand saw itself as being under no legal obligations on the refugee issue.⁵⁴ It therefore saw the internationalization of the Indochina question as a new opportunity to present its case.

A common ASEAN policy became necessary, due to the unequal burden which was faced by the various member countries. As already noted, while Thailand was burdened with both land cases and boat people, Malaysia was the largest recipient of boat people, which by the first months of 1979 began to cause tensions within the recipient population. As Malaysia, and to a lesser extent Thailand, began pushing boats back out to sea on a wide scale, Indonesia in turn became affected as the nearest destination.⁵⁵ As a response, Indonesia and the Philippines offered islands as sites for regional refugee processing centres in an effort at burden-sharing. A common ASEAN policy was thus seen at the Meeting on the Establishment of a Processing Centre for Indochina Refugees in Jakarta on 15-16 May 1979 which was attended by the ASEAN countries, Vietnam, UNHCR and the receiving countries. A strong Thai position was shown from the time of the ASEAN preparatory meeting for the Conference, one which apparently surprised many of those present. Winyu Ankhanarak, Permanent Secretary for the Interior, made a forceful case for special consideration to be given to Thailand, in response to which Indonesia agreed that: "consideration would be given to the ASEAN countries of first refuge most severely

affected by the refugee problem in terms of the existing number of refugees in the countries concerned and the rate of new arrivals.⁵⁶

A strong ASEAN line also emerged in the aftermath of the Jakarta Conference. In June 1979, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia made simultaneous announcements that they would not receive any more refugees, and Prime Minister Kriangsak Chomanan officially declared that Thailand would only repair and resupply incoming craft before sending them out to sea. At the 12th AMM in Bali on 28-30 June, Thailand obtained special mention of illegal Kampuchean immigrants in Thailand as separate from the general flows of Indochinese refugees affecting ASEAN countries. With this in mind, a united ASEAN stance was able to be shown at the International Conference on Indochina Refugees and Displaced Persons held in Geneva in July, which represented the culmination of ASEAN efforts on the issue during 1979. Subsequently, an Informal Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers was held in Kuala Lumpur between 15-16 August 1979 to review progress achieved towards ASEAN's objectives on the various aspects of the Indochina question, in the light of the Geneva Conference. Thailand was satisfied with its obtention of an insertion in the Joint Statement released by the Meeting, mentioning the continuing lack of progress on land cases, but it appeared that the refugee influx had largely been halted due to previous joint efforts.⁵⁷ However, the end of the rainy season in October marked the beginning of a fresh Vietnamese offensive against resistance groups within Kampuchea, and the upsurge in fighting was accompanied by famine, causing massive refugee flows out of the country.⁵⁸

In response to such developments, on 22 October the Thai Government announced a major change in policy to that of an 'open door' policy. Under the new policy, the Thai government declared its readiness to provide temporary shelter for refugees, an initiative which marked a step towards acceptance of the principle of *non-refoulement* as contained in the 1951 Geneva Convention. Amidst the continuing atmosphere of crisis, another Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers took place in Kuala Lumpur in December to review the follow-up to the UN resolution and the response to the situation on the Kampuchean frontier. It could even be seen that Thailand's refugee situation became directly linked to the state of its relations with Vietnam, and following limited voluntary repatriation of refugees across the border into Kampuchea in June 1980, Vietnamese forces in retaliation launched an incursion into Thailand. Such strong responses to Thai actions concerning refugees ensured that the issue of refugees remained a policy priority for Thailand in subsequent years.

The firm ASEAN positions shown during the Summer of 1979 made a major contribution to galvanizing international concern on the refugee issue. In pursuing its concerns on the issue, Thailand also saw that the question of the boat people has helped to create a sense of ASEAN solidarity in providing a cause for common concern, which was of great value in bringing about common approaches. Thus, while there were differences in emphasis between the various ASEAN members, with Thailand giving more attention to land cases, it did not regard such differences as being a cause for serious concern at the time.⁵⁹ In more tangible terms, the common policy was also successful in

alleviating Thailand's refugee problem, with a positive response by third countries in receiving refugees for resettlement, particularly during the course of 1980-1981.⁶⁰ Accordingly, it could be seen that Thailand's policy concerns were well-served through ASEAN on this episode.

At the same time, an ASEAN approach to the external dialogue countries was also promoted by Thailand. The ASEAN countries individually and as a group appealed to the dialogue partners to engage in international burden-sharing on the refugee issue, and also to put pressure on Vietnam by refraining from providing aid to Vietnam until such a time that Hanoi reconsidered its presence in Kampuchea. Such demands were pressed by Prime Minister Kriangsak on his January 1979 visit to Japan, which was Vietnam's major aid donor, in the face of Japan's continuing desire to act as a bridge between ASEAN and Indochina.⁶¹ In the face of such *démarches*, Japan suspended its aid for Vietnam and has generally followed the ASEAN line on the Indochina issue. Further concerted efforts were made by ASEAN in successive meetings, such as at the 11th AMM-PMC in June 1979 and at the 12th AMM-PMC in June 1980, to rally support from the dialogue partners. Partly as a result of such joint approaches, the ASEAN external dialogue process itself became more political in a move away from purely economic and development concerns. For example, the Joint Communiqué of the ASEAN-EC dialogue meeting in March 1980 contained references to both the situation in Afghanistan and in Kampuchea as constituting a distinct linkage, as well as to regular issues of economic and development cooperation. At the same time, the Joint Communiqués issued by the AMM also became

more overtly political, and from this period onwards, a review of the situation in Indochina, refugee issues, as well as progress on ZOPFAN, became an integral part of ASEAN's public documents.

Thailand saw that ASEAN should have a mainly political role on the Indochina question as a fulfillment of Collective Political Defence. To have requested fellow ASEAN members to provide military support for Bangkok might have alienated China's support, while providing Vietnam with evidence of further alleged provocation. Military support in the shape of subsidized arms purchases were instead obtained from sympathetic great powers, namely the PRC and the US. Thailand's general security perspective was further reinforced by the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, Secretary-General of the NSC, as Foreign Minister in the new Cabinet of March 1980, replacing the conciliatory Upadit Pachariyangkun. This ensured that there was close coordination between the respective positions taken by security and MFA officials. At the same time, Thailand did keep its ASEAN partners constantly informed of its actions through a process of intensive bilateral and informal consultations, such as prior to Kriangsak's visit to Washington in February and Moscow in March 1979. In fact, it may be seen that the high level of ASEAN activity during the first months of 1979, a process in which Thailand was a major contributor, was without precedent in the Association's history save for the pre-Summit periods.

There did develop, however, perceptible policy differences within ASEAN. As previously noted, after a short wait-and-see period, Thailand and Singapore favoured a firm ASEAN response

to the Vietnamese invasion, seeing Vietnam as the principal threat to regional security.⁶² While the initial ASEAN response was indeed uncharacteristically firm, there emerged a gradual divergence between the Singapore-Thai line and that of Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia. In time, this developed into 'hawk' and 'dove' perceptions within the ASEAN group. Together with Singapore, Malaysia had initially seen the need to rally to Thailand's defence. However, while supporting the position of Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur also saw virtue in remaining at a distance from Beijing, particularly considering the latter's refusal to distance itself from insurgent movements despite the normalization of relations.⁶³ For its part, Indonesia persisted in its belief that the major driving force behind Vietnamese policies was nationalism and hence retained some of its traditional sympathies for Vietnam, regarding it as an important buffer against the southward expansion of Chinese influence which it continued to view with great suspicion.⁶⁴ A major difference of emphasis was shown when Indonesia and Malaysia launched the so-called 'Kuantan Doctrine' at a bilateral Summit in Kuantan in March 1980, thereby declaring their rejection of a role for superpowers within Southeast Asia. Such a declaration of position took place immediately following the change of Administration in Thailand, which lent to the distinct impression of an attempt to alter ASEAN's position.⁶⁵ However, as at 1979-1980 the major differences between member countries could still be papered over, and ASEAN could be found to rally to Thailand's side during the Vietnamese incursions into Thai territory at Non Mak Moon in June 1980. Following that incident, the ASEAN Ministers in a joint statement announced that they

“fully supported Thailand’s actions in the exercise of her legitimate right to self defence and the steps taken by Thailand at the United Nations...The Foreign Ministers agreed that any incursion of foreign forces into Thailand directly affects the security of the ASEAN member-states and endangers peace and security in the whole region.”⁶⁶

As the months wore on, Thailand lost more and more the perception of a mediating role within ASEAN which had been built up over the years. Such perceptions were magnified by its seemingly close association with the PRC, and thereby tacit support for the Khmer Rouge elements on the Thai border. In this regard, comments made by Malaysian Home Affairs Minister Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie against the dangers of inviting foreign intervention seemed to be aimed particularly at Thailand: “ASEAN must not succumb to external power persuasion to seek security through military alliance against Vietnam, whether or not Vietnam is backed by another external power.”⁶⁷ Even the ‘hardline’ Singapore may be seen to have played a part in persuading Thailand to move towards the formation of a Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), which was finally achieved in 1982, uniting the various factions opposed to Vietnam under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk, and then to play a part in convincing China of the need for such a coalition. It was deemed that a policy based primarily on supporting the DK was unwise in international terms despite the residual Thai antipathy towards Prince Sihanouk, as well as hesitations about the military effectiveness of the other resistance groups.⁶⁸ Thailand’s own priorities on the Kampuchean issue were to become a source of constant worry to its ASEAN

partners. In particular, the decision of the Chatichai Government to open talks with Hun Sen in 1988 without prior consultation with its ASEAN partners were seen as having “seriously undermined ASEAN credibility.”⁶⁹ For the time being, however, Thailand’s renewed commitment to ASEAN was exemplified in the presence within the government as from 1980 as Deputy Prime Minister of Thanat Khoman, who personified Thailand’s attachment to the Organization.

Increased ASEAN cooperation over the Indochina issue also filtered through into the economic sphere. There was a firm ASEAN response in solidarity to Singapore over Australia’s International Civil Aviation Policy (ICAP), whose review was first announced in November 1977 and which was being gradually implemented.⁷⁰ The unilateral announcement by Australia of the promotion of Qantas flights to Europe without a stopover in Singapore threatened prospects for tourism in the region, which had become vital in terms of foreign exchange, and led to a show of ASEAN solidarity. The demonstration of ASEAN support was a stance behind which Thailand fully participated reciprocity for Singapore’s political support given over the Indochina issue. A low fare scheme between Australia and Europe was implemented in February 1979 despite ASEAN’s protests, but even though some ASEAN airlines and tourism industries urged an early settlement with Australia, support was given to the Singaporean position until final conclusion of an agreement with the UK and Australia in 1981.⁷¹ Hereafter, it may be seen that common economic approaches were adopted with greater frequency by the ASEAN countries, particularly as the effects of the 2nd Oil Shock and world recession began to bite by the early 1980s.

Thus, in both the political and economic spheres, the period 1979-1980 may be said to have heralded a new phase of ASEAN cooperation. However, two priorities were to mark Thailand's ASEAN policies for much of the early 1980s: a comprehensive political solution in Kampuchea and the question of Indochinese refugees.

CONCLUSION

The Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea was to have a profound impact not only on Thailand, but also on ASEAN as a whole. The ASEAN and Thai stance on the Indochina issue were to characterize both for much of the 1980s despite differences in emphasis and the various shifts in position. In the case of Thailand, it signified a definite break from the previous Thai policy of conciliation of Vietnam and rebuilding of regional relationships towards an informal Cold War confrontation, and hence the disruption of linkages within Southeast Asia. ASEAN as a whole also became more political in emphasis, and its leaders have subsequently acknowledged that the episode has entrenched political cooperation into the agenda. That ASEAN became known as a 'one-issue' organization in the 1980s with its preoccupation over the Indochina issue was due substantially to the position pressed for by Thailand, together with Singapore, over the acquiescence of the other members in the crucial 1979-1980 period.

The case study examination of Thailand's ASEAN policy on the Kampuchean issue reveals that Thailand readily assumed a 'frontline' status for ASEAN upon the escalation of the conflict

in Kampuchea. On both the issue of security on the frontiers and on the question of accommodation of refugees, Thailand was seen to be bearing the heaviest burden within the Organization. In return it was granted special political support by its ASEAN partners as an implementation of Collective Political Defence, the usefulness of which may be said to have been fully demonstrated on the issue. Extraordinary licence was given to Thailand to take the lead on behalf of its partners in the Organization on issues concerning the situation in Kampuchea, often bypassing normal ASEAN channels, including well-established rotational procedures.

At the same time, in terms of its general policy, Thailand was forced to entertain various options simultaneously in order to guard against what it saw as distinct threats to its security. While political cooperation within ASEAN was deemed vital, other concurrent policy options included extra-ASEAN negotiations and bilateral deals with certain great powers. At a certain level, this may be said to have constituted a division of labour, and the perception of threat has had contradictory effects. On the one hand, greater reliance was placed on ASEAN as a political and diplomatic tool, especially at the UN. On the other, Thailand renewed ties with the US and forged closer links with China to obtain and upgrade its armaments against conventional attack. Yet Thailand's relationship with these two powers was a new form of relationship. It did not involve the despatch of troops American troops for Thailand's defence. Cooperation with China and the US merely provided sources of military hardware as well as less tangible political guarantees given to Thai leaders. Nevertheless, this dichotomy was to

characterize Thailand's status within ASEAN and helped to confirm the hypothesis that Thailand has sought to utilize both bilateral and multilateral tools throughout the period under study. Continuity was also shown in that once again Thai diplomacy has sought to defend national interests by a variety of means, without placing all eggs in the same basket.

The case study showed well how a joint diplomatic position, despite certain differences in emphasis, could be employed to persuade external powers of the virtue of an ASEAN viewpoint. This was particularly useful in the resolution of the refugee situation as well as the wider political question in Kampuchea, for it was shown that the humanitarian dimension could not be divorced from a broad political settlement. The link with external powers did not signal any lack of faith in ASEAN on Thailand's part, but instead a concern to maximize the chances for national survival and achieving policy objectives. The two options went hand in hand. Indeed, the response to the Kampuchean issue may be considered as a synthesis in the Thai policy towards ASEAN as a whole. A maturing attitude towards ASEAN cooperation led it to encourage a full-fledged political cooperation, and at the same time to employ other means to assure security in a realm where it was deemed that ASEAN should not have a formal role to play. Thai policy demonstrated how a multifaceted ASEAN response could be employed to serve common objectives in many different areas simultaneously. It thus marked a greater degree of confidence in regional cooperation than what observers may have initially thought, revealing a definite evolution in Thai attitudes.

The revival of tensions in Indochina nevertheless ensured that Thailand had further moved away from a self-defined role as conciliator and intermediary within ASEAN. Instead of helping to patch up relationships between its ASEAN partners, it became associated together with Singapore with a 'hard line' towards Indochina, especially towards relations with Vietnam. Indeed, it could be said that Thailand's own rhetoric of Collective Political Defence has led to a situation whereby the Organization's main policy preoccupation in the 1980s was perceived to be a comprehensive solution to the Indochina problem, accompanied by the collective political defence of Thailand. The other ASEAN members, namely Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, showed their solidarity with Thailand in its hour of difficulty, albeit with certain misgivings. Accordingly, although ASEAN members were prepared to provide political support to Thailand as a frontline state, there were increasing suspicions that Thailand was depending on the support of certain great powers to greater degree than was necessary and desirable. Indeed, Thailand's very commitment to ASEAN was questioned due to its apparent links with China. Subsequent Thai diplomacy during the 1980s thus concentrated on demonstrating Thailand's firm attachment to ASEAN on the one hand, and on the other the maintenance of its bilateral lines of communication to the great powers. Thailand's policy towards the Organization henceforth reflected the need to maintain a consensus behind its opposition to the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea. Under such pressures, the entire focus of ASEAN moved towards a political resolution of the Kampuchean dispute, such that the economic element was often eclipsed in what has been described as the 'lost

decade' in regional relations. Henceforth there were two distinct groupings with Southeast Asia: the ASEAN group and the Indochina group, the artificial and politically-based distinctions between which were only broken down in the late 1990s.

CHAPTER

9

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In examining Thailand's policy towards cooperation within ASEAN during 1967-1979, the study has helped to highlight the often-neglected linkage between policies towards ASEAN and traditional foreign policies. It is often assumed that ASEAN constituted a new form of cooperation somewhat removed from previous policy concerns. However, the study reveals that Thailand largely pursued traditional policies within the scope of ASEAN. Its participation in regional cooperation was part of a traditional search for security, albeit with new elements and using hitherto innovative mechanisms. At the same time, the mixture of old and new elements was often not easy to reconcile, and hence a seeming ambivalence has characterized Thai policy towards the Organization, an impression that was not always justified.

The study has demonstrated that Thailand's policies within ASEAN were not *sui generis* nor generated in a vacuum apart from other foreign policy concerns. The research has shown how additional light could be thrown on major aspects of Thai foreign policy in this period through the analysis of its regional diplomacy. Although Thai policies were often adapted within the course of ASEAN negotiations, the general trend of Thai foreign policy was largely reflected in its ASEAN policy. Indeed, it was not always a one-way relationship, and it may be concluded that Thailand's ASEAN policy became central to the evolution of Thai foreign policy by the latter half of the period. Meanwhile, throughout the period under study, Thailand's policy on cooperation within ASEAN should indeed be seen as an aspect of its overall policy within Southeast Asia, its traditional and main area of interest. In general terms, Thailand's policy was to

fully support ASEAN cooperation as an important tool of foreign policy. There was some initial ambiguity as to the extent of its faith in regional cooperation as a policy tool, but by the end of the period studied, it may be concluded that ASEAN was indeed one of the cornerstones of Thai policy, as asserted publicly by Thai leaders. Furthermore, it is more accurate to talk of 'policies,' reflecting political, economic and social & cultural dimensions, as well as differences in emphasis by the various agencies involved. Nevertheless, it is also shown that there is a need for a broad holistic approach to the subject, for ASEAN cooperation was both bilateral as well as multilateral, informal and formal, and behind-the-scenes as well as apparent.

A number of general conclusions may be drawn. ASEAN grew up amidst the widespread popularity of regional solutions during the 1960s and 1970s. As such the study has shown that the ideas which laid behind the creation of ASEAN shared similarities with the important European example and with functionalist themes. The importance of regional solidarity and the avoidance of conflict have been highlighted, as well as the key role of economic development in bringing about regional stability and fostering networks of cooperation. However, it has also been shown that there were distinct differences in terms of historical background and political culture between Europe and Southeast Asia, which fed through into ultimate objectives. In particular, the overall significance in the latter of the reinforcement of national sovereignty and independence has been highlighted, necessitating an intergovernmental approach to issues of cooperation, though largely shorn of their normative elements. Accordingly, the employment of classical approaches

does not fully explain the emergence of ASEAN from the viewpoint of Thailand and its partners. In particular, normative analyses at assessing the depth of integration usually come to the same disappointing conclusion about the prospects for regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, whereas the majority of policy-makers appeared to express general satisfaction with ASEAN. Moreover, Thailand certainly did not enter ASEAN in a fit of absence of mind, or in a missionary outburst of regionalist enthusiasm. It saw the Organization in more sober terms as a distinct organ of foreign policy, a diplomatic instrument for policy cooperation in international affairs. Seen from the point of view of foreign policy goals, the Organization's value laid in that it served multiple objectives. Above all, the primary importance of the enhancement of national bargaining power may be highlighted, for ASEAN was seen as serving strictly national concerns through regional solutions. Other important foreign policy objectives included economic and social development, and Thailand's policy towards the creation of ASEAN may be seen to have been motivated by a quest for security and development, which were perceived as interconnected. It further reflected an interest in international role-playing, with Thailand playing a constructive role in regional cooperation in order to alleviate the negative image of alignment and being a 'committed' state. Yet it has been demonstrated that for Thailand in 1967, the policy of regional cooperation was not new, but the relationships governing regional states as formalized through ASEAN was. It was a new form of regional relationship based on equality and partnership, and not on established notions of hierarchy. Thailand's

participation was not as a dominant regional power as in the pre-colonial days, but as one among equal partners. Some ideological and intellectual continuity may, nevertheless, be drawn from early efforts at regional consolidation, such as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as expounded at Bandung in 1955, or even the Southeast Asia League hosted by Thailand in 1947. Concretizing regional cooperation, however, was not without certain difficulties, for bilateral differences and conflicting loyalties served to distract the members of the Organization in the early years, while the notion of Southeast Asia itself remained fluid even after the creation of ASEAN, in the face of wider 'Asian' or 'Third World' perspectives through other organizations such as ASPAC and NAM. This fluidity regarding the perception of the most relevant region through which to channel policy initiatives enhanced the importance of the inspiration of certain individuals behind a policy of regional cooperation within Southeast Asia, and notably Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman in the case of Thailand. In general, ASEAN's founding fathers have been shown to be cosmopolitan in experience, and thus wider perspectives than purely regional ones exerted their influence. Most importantly, in their view ASEAN was at the same time emulative of the European and previous examples and original. However, considering the relative novelty of regional cooperation when placed alongside Thailand's long foreign policy tradition, it could be expected that its faith in the new framework would be gradual.

Meanwhile, the initial Thai participation was premised on the idea of Collective Political Defence, which encompassed a comprehensive range of cooperation to complement more

traditional military approaches to security. For all its vagueness, Collective Political Defence was a comprehensive policy designed to safeguard Thailand's security and prosperity through political, economic and other aspects of cooperation. From the point of view of Collective Political Defence, participation in ASEAN has been fruitful. However, despite the initial encompassing nature of the concept under Thanat Khoman it may be said that the cornerstone importance of Collective Political Defence for Thailand laid more in the political element, an aspect which was stressed by subsequent policy-makers. Moreover, despite the rhetoric, the implementation of major development objectives also remained largely independent of ASEAN, and was achieved through unilateral and bilateral means. This reflected the fact that despite the original aims, what was important for Thai policy-makers was the pragmatic implementation of both political as well as economic imperatives. It may be concluded that Collective Political Defence does provide a holistic conceptual tool with which to assess Thailand's policy towards cooperation within ASEAN in the years 1967-1979. However, in terms of the implementation of policy decisions the concept works better in the political sphere than in the more disputed economic and social spheres, and thus its contemporary usefulness remains limited.

Despite the apparent limitations, the employment of the ideology of Collective Political Defence and associated themes enables us to conclude from the study that among the Thai policy-makers, there was a definite conception of the aims of regional organization and that a long-term plan was envisaged for cooperation within ASEAN. What may be said, however, is

that it was not translated into a programmable policy on a continuous and comprehensive basis, and the fact that its vision remained on a largely rhetorical level was no more evident than in the late 1970s. There was no economic, strategic and ideological consensus within Thailand behind a policy of regional cooperation as there was in Indonesia, or perhaps Malaysia, and despite the general continuity in Thai diplomacy there were more *ad hoc* responses to ASEAN initiatives which depended on individual, and necessarily occasional, efforts. Considering the vagueness of Collective Political Defence as an umbrella concept, there was no national masterplan for ASEAN which officials at a lower level could follow, or which could facilitate coordination between the various national agencies. There existed no clear policies covering all potential areas of cooperation, certainly no roadmap, which suggests that perhaps more than in any other member country ASEAN was largely regarded as a foreign policy project in Thailand. At the same time, Thailand was not alone among the ASEAN members in adopting a piecemeal approach, and part of the explanation for the slowness of formal cooperation within the Organization laid in the uncoordinated approaches, given the primary concern with flexibility. There were, however, clear elements of continuity, certain basic principles which were adhered to by all administrations in Bangkok, with aspects common to its participation in various regional organizations during the 1960s and 1970s. Beyond the general affirmation of support for the Organization, these included adherence to an essentially political but non-military structure for cooperation, and by extension, the maintenance of an informal organizational structure. What did change was the

increasing nature of the commitment to ASEAN, within the confines of Thailand's overall foreign policy transformation during the 1970s.

The historical analysis of the evolution of Thailand's diplomacy from its origins to the founding of ASEAN has suggested that the Kingdom may indeed be regarded as a major player in Southeast Asian history. As a country entertaining an extensive interaction with Southeast Asia, Thailand has had a regional vision, albeit this was couched in largely continental terms. Throughout its long independent history, its diplomacy was characterized by a flexible and cautious appraisal of national interests. Due to the immediacy of threat perceptions, primary concern was placed on the preservation of national independence and security, which meant dependence on the US for much of the period under study for defence against communism. Up until the 1960s, the extent of bilateral cooperation with the US led one to question whether alternatives were seriously considered to attain foreign policy objectives. Indeed, the scale of US involvement was such that it tended to dominate foreign policy, and even more so the scholarship on the period, to the neglect of other aspects, although what has been described as the traditional flexibility in Thai diplomacy was indeed lacking in much of the period concerned. However, it is the conclusion of this study that there has been too much talk of policy inflexibility, for Thailand was able to manage the relationship to a certain extent. Thailand's policy on regional cooperation showed how attempts were made to maintain some degree of flexibility although such attempts, including the idea of ASEAN itself, were initially exploratory in nature. The key role played by Thai

diplomats in the founding of the Organization suggests that it is perhaps misleading to regard ASEAN as arising solely out of the resolution of *Konfrontasi* and that the convergence of interests among the founding members should be more emphasized. There was a complex interplay of external and domestic factors motivating Thailand into a policy of regional cooperation, including the promotion of regional stability, enhancement of bargaining power and desire for economic development. It was not, however, a reversal of the alignment with the US. In its initial stages, it was designed both as a long-term alternative and short-term supplement to current policy approaches. At the time of the creation of ASEAN in 1967, therefore, the Thai policy on regional affairs was already marked by: the strong role of the MFA in creating options; a general focus to the subjects of regional cooperation; as well as a common approach to such issues, regardless of the institutional mechanism involved. It was not a mere token attachment as some have tended to suggest, and represented a deliberate line of policy even if not pursued with much enthusiasm by the government as a whole in the initial stages. In particular, the timing of the creation of ASEAN reinforces the impression that Thai participation in the Organization was inspired by broader concerns than short-term preoccupations with alleviating the Thanom regime's policy difficulties in 1965-1967.

In the overall evolution of its strategic perception, Thai policy has relied on a number of fundamentals, including regional as well as extra-regional ones. Extra-regional factors emerged as a priority after the Second World War, and given this perspective regional cooperation within Southeast Asia was

initially used only as a supplementary policy instrument. Thailand's security perspective has been, despite formal adherence to organizations such as SEATO, essentially bilateral. Given the conservatism of policy-makers, the preference was for a tried and tested formula centred on bilateralism to ensure Thailand's security, rather than to place total reliance on a more innovative framework that was personified in indigenous regional cooperation. Nevertheless, the concept of balancing force through regional cooperation was of some importance as it attempted to provide more in terms of policy options than merely military means, and became more substantive as the value of alignment declined during the late 1960s. It reflected part of the pendulum to open options, given the increasing material commitment to the US as from 1964-65. However, that commitment was so substantial and personally entrenched within the leadership up to 1973 that any move to open options was tentative and restricted, such that in certain respects such initiatives served more in symbolic terms to mitigate alignment rather than signalling any substantive move away from it. Indeed, it was probably precisely this aspect that led many within the government leadership previously unconcerned with regionalism to support such initiatives. After 1973 a greater flexibility enabled policy-makers to devote more resources to and place increased conviction on regional solutions, although extra-regional factors continued to exert an important influence.

The Thai policy on ASEAN reflected the nature of the decision-making structure within the country. At the time of the founding of ASEAN, the structure was hierarchic, dominated by the bureaucracy and particularly the military. This restricted

the policy-making role of traditional foreign policy bodies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which was not entirely autonomous in the period under study. The military dominated discussions on security and the servicing of bilateral relationships which were dominated by the regional role of the US, up to 1973, with the MFA being largely limited to an implementing function. However, the evidence suggested that there was substantial flexibility on issues of regional cooperation based on the understanding of long-serving Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman with the military leadership. In this regard, the role of personality appeared to have been important in gaining acceptance for policy initiatives. The study has demonstrated the influential role of Thailand's Thanat Khoman within ASEAN and in determining Thai attitudes towards the Organization, at least until 1971-1972. Although his successors were generally well known to their ASEAN counterparts, they perhaps lacked the personality of Thanat and his personal relationships with the various ASEAN leaders. It thus appeared that subsequent Thai leaders lacked the degree of leverage over their ASEAN colleagues that were exercised by Thanat. Moreover, in this period Thai Prime Ministers played a relatively small role within ASEAN compared to their counterparts in the other member countries, despite the substantial investment in bilateral summitry on Thailand's part. The lack of continuity at the highest level of cooperation meant that it was difficult for Thai personalities to match the stature of Suharto, Lee, Razak or Marcos, and in this respect, it may be said that Thailand's participation was somewhat handicapped by domestic political circumstances. Probably more than any other ASEAN country in this period, Thailand suffered from a

lack of coherence and continuity. Nevertheless, participation at the officials level ensured that an element of continuity was maintained and much of the initiative filtered down to the officials level, which at the same time compounded problems of coordination. Certainly, ASEAN's value to Thailand extended beyond the personality of Thanat Khoman and Thailand's commitment to the Organization was maintained after his departure. Under the military leaders, Thailand maintained its commitment to ASEAN as long as it brought concrete benefits and did not conflict with their own policy agenda. Given this momentum, the MFA constituted the element of continuity in Thailand's participation through the transformations in Thai diplomacy. Policy on ASEAN generally reflected the MFA line and attitudes, as well as more negative bureaucratic and institutional prejudices which might have impeded a broader participation. Cooperation depended on the implementation of national interests, but also on the preferences of the various policy organs and the way they perceive their own interests, as well as their interpretation of national requirements. As ASEAN cooperation expanded to cover different fields, participation in the cooperative process also widened to cover, for example, the main economic agencies who were responsible for implementing ASEAN trade liberalization and industrial cooperation. In the early years, however, it could be said that much of the distinction between participation in political and other areas of cooperation has been artificial, given the hands-on approach of the founding fathers.

In this manner, the study has highlighted Thailand's governmental approach to ASEAN. There was an extremely

limited ASEAN community within Thailand during the period, a feature which was nevertheless shared by all its partners and characterized the early years of the Association. Within the broader population, ASEAN was but shallowly entrenched. Yet while the governmental approach has highlighted the key role of the MFA in this period in determining Thailand's policies towards ASEAN, for much of the time Thai foreign policy reflected a dichotomy between the respective positions of the MFA and the military, which were not always identical. The resolution of such discordances depended on the balance of power within the government, as well as the ideological orientation within the topmost echelons of power. With this in mind, a critic of Thai policy in this period has written that:

So long as commitment to Washington D.C. took first priority, cooperation was merely in name. The predominant policy was the anticommunist fight and continued reliance on the US for the mode of existence to which the leaders were accustomed.¹

However, not only has the study shown that regional cooperation was an integral of the anti-communist struggle in stimulating national and regional resilience, as well as enhancing international bargaining power vis-à-vis friends and enemies alike, but the evidence also tends to suggest that during its first years, ASEAN was complementary to existing security arrangements with the US. If regional cooperation was to be seen as a substantive new policy direction from the very beginning, then one is bound to be disappointed. However, if it is seen as

part of a longer-term process of probing for options in keeping with Thailand's cautious diplomacy, then it was indeed significant. At another level, it may partly be seen as an attempt by the MFA to recapture the initiative in foreign affairs from other players within the bureaucratic framework. By deliberately multilateralizing to a certain extent initiatives on regional political affairs, the MFA could have a larger and more constructive role to play in Thai foreign policy as a whole, given that bilateral lines of communication to regional states were dominated by the military and security establishments. It is perhaps not stretching it too far to suggest that at a certain level it represented a Canning-esque attempt at 'calling in the new to redress the balance of the old.' It is therefore a conclusion that in theoretical terms, regional cooperation was indeed a commitment to regionalism among its proponents. However, such proponents laid mainly within the MFA at the beginning, and thus in effective terms it initially acted as a complement to alignment as put forward in the initial hypothesis, and hence an apparent paradox. This paradox may partly be explained by the existence of multiple tracks and players in foreign policy. In a further attempt to resolve this paradox, this study also suggests that one should look at the issue less in terms of *regionalism versus alignment*, than in terms of *multilateralism versus bilateralism*. With the prevailing atmosphere of 'realism' among top decision-makers, there was a certain pessimism about the potential of international institutions in safeguarding national interests. For Thailand, as for other countries in the region, bilateral tools remained potent symbols of state power, and bilateral objectives within the scope of ASEAN were crucial to

the various member countries. Commitment to regionalism widened as part of the transformation in the Thai political system during the mid 1970s, but threat perceptions at the end of the period ensured that a wider multilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries continued to complement bilateral military arrangements to secure policy objectives. In this regard, 'complementary' could be defined as policy which ran parallel to the main thrust of foreign policy, but which nevertheless formed an integral part of foreign policy as a whole and was backed upon when required.

The original constitutional structure of ASEAN revealed the formal basis of the Organization as an association for economic and functional cooperation. However, it has been shown that this merely reflected an outward response to ideological polarization within Southeast Asia, and that Thailand had envisaged the body to be all-encompassing from the beginning. The evidence indicates that Thailand, as the one ASEAN country with no handicap regarding the state of bilateral political relations with its partners, pushed for ASEAN's political cooperation over the reticence of certain other members. Political cooperation became even more central as the pace of regional changes accelerated following 1968, though perhaps it became more significant vis-à-vis the overall activities of the Organization than even Thailand had expected, suggesting an important degree of improvisation. This further reflected the original theme of the MFA that ASEAN should be regarded primarily as a tool of foreign policy: ASEAN has been the most successful when viewed from the standpoint of its original promoters, the foreign policy community. As an aspect of overall

policy, political concerns had priority over economic ones beyond the period under study into the early 1980s. Thai policymakers saw the value of political consultations with like-minded countries within Southeast Asia, which also served to backstop the assertion of policy independence from the US. Nevertheless, Thai policy on various aspects of ASEAN political cooperation were framed with wider regional dynamics in mind, particularly the role of China and the countries of Indochina. In other words, Thai actions within ASEAN were framed more by players outside ASEAN rather than within, which was not always the case with its ASEAN partners, many of whom had bilateral problems with each other. In contrast to its partners, leverage was aimed by Bangkok at not so much within the Organization as outside. Efforts were made within ASEAN by Thailand not to demonstrate to fellow ASEAN members, but more externally to third parties, that Thailand was a responsible member of the Southeast Asian community which was not tied to any external power. In this manner, for Thailand at least, external dynamics were more important than the general state of internal relationships with its partner in the Organization.

Thailand played a relatively constructive role in the launching of ZOPFAN, contrary to all expectations, although it is shown that it entertained its own ideas on deeper questions of neutrality. Most importantly, ASEAN political cooperation became central to the policy of accommodation with the countries of Indochina after 1975. Thailand's attempts to find a *modus vivendi* with Indochina was significantly multilateralized through the formula of ASEAN. Accordingly, it may be asserted that even before the onset of the Kampuchean crisis, an ASEAN

approach to Indochina has been deemed important by Thai policy-makers. A continuity is shown in the policy on political cooperation, for the Thai stance in political terms had always been for the creation of options: whether in the creation of ASEAN itself, promoting political discussions as part of Collective Political Defence; supporting the Declaration on ZOPFAN; and in a variegated response to the Kampuchean crisis incorporating a role both for great powers and regional ones. These positions incorporated its own distinct views on regional order, and Thailand's long interaction with foreign powers has led it to see the benefit of cooperation with them and yet maintain a healthy scepticism. Instead, faith was placed in diplomacy, and diplomatic skills were relied upon when facing great powers, for total self-reliance was regarded as impossible to obtain. Within the context of the Cold War, Thailand's overall perception of threat was clear, given that the preoccupation throughout the period was fear of communism. However, precisely because ASEAN was not intended to be fully comprehensive in that it avoided military implications, ASEAN could not, and did not, entirely satisfy Thailand's policy requirements. It is a conclusion that, by and large, policy-makers avoided multilateral military cooperation within ASEAN. Rather, given that Thailand saw ASEAN in political terms as a useful and timely complement to its bilateral and collective security commitments, political action within ASEAN went hand in hand with the retention of bilateral military ties, as long as the latter proved useful. Thailand's ASEAN policy reflected its well-known pragmatism, and in this respect, the central hypothesis that on the whole Thailand regarded ASEAN as a

complement to alignment is further supported by the evidence. In the broader perspective, Thailand's policy, when put alongside those of Singapore and to a large extent the Philippines, meant that great powers had an integral role to play in regional affairs, a feature which Indonesia and Malaysia were keen to minimize.

Meant as a supplement to arrangements of collective security, ASEAN as an organization was not necessarily designed at the beginning to stand on its own. It fitted into a design of concentric rings of cooperation emanating from Southeast Asia. It helped to demonstrate Thailand's policy independence, and it has been shown that this reflected an innovative reinterpretation of a common theme in Thai diplomacy through the years, that of using international organization to assert the Kingdom's international respectability. Accordingly, a major aim was the maintenance of the Organization itself. Hence Thailand's participation had an important element of symbolism, and as a corollary it came to see the preservation of the unity of the Organization as a primary goal. This symbolic value behind its attachment to the Organization in turn led Thailand to consider issues within the ASEAN framework from an essentially political perspective. Moreover, as Thailand has used ASEAN in symbolic terms, this has reinforced its tendency to remain at arms' length from security concerns within the Organization. Meanwhile, in recognition of the overall value of the Organization, Thailand maintained a fairly consistent approach to organizational issues, and a flexible structure was maintained. The importance of symbolism in Thailand's attachment to ASEAN had further implications, the most important being that the thrust of many of its policies was directed outwards, namely towards Indochina.

Within Thailand, it was seen that a policy of alignment did not exclude regional cooperation or vice versa, and ASEAN emerged as a powerful tool for the reassertion of Thai independence of action and relative neutrality. At the same time, ASEAN should not be regarded as being a peripheral part of Thai policy, for it constituted a central bargaining tool vital to the sustenance of a constructive policy towards great powers such as the United States and the People's Republic of China. A further conclusion is therefore that ASEAN reflects the dichotomy of Thailand's attempt, as a state with a long tradition of diplomacy, to maintain both firm bilateral links as well as forge fresh multilateral ties. To some extent, ASEAN also reveals the ambivalence of Thailand as a mainland state regarding the maritime world. With its primary security preoccupations headed east, its ASEAN policies tended to serve wider security concerns within Southeast Asia more than transactions within ASEAN *per se*. In this perspective, ties with great powers were not so much a rejection of the idea of regional cooperation, but a reflection of traditional security concerns.

Although the period covered in the study only involved three years of ASEAN's enhanced economic cooperation, Thailand's basic policy on issues of economic cooperation may already be distinguished in this period. In general terms, multilateral economic cooperation was regarded in positive terms as contributing to Thailand's national development, and thus as one multilateral instrument ASEAN served this end. The evidence suggests that there were three basic requirements behind Thai objectives in ASEAN economic cooperation: that of increasing Thailand's bargaining power and voice in

international arena; promoting economic linkages with ASEAN partners; and promoting national development. Some concrete benefits were gained from ASEAN cooperation in this field, and ASEAN's enhancement of its members' bargaining position in international economic negotiations was greatly appreciated. However, on controversial issues such as that of regional trade liberalization, Thailand appeared more concerned with maintaining consensus rather than with advancing cooperation. The wider political objectives of Collective Political Defence seemed to dominate the economic aspects of its cooperation, revealing its limitations as a prescriptive policy. In this manner, the long-term link between security and development has often fallen by the wayside in favour of shorter-term concerns for ASEAN solidarity, as well as crucial considerations of national advantage. While the planning for ASEAN cooperation, particularly in the early years, may indeed have been holistic from the point of view of Thailand, this was not so in terms of implementation. The discrepancy between planning and implementation was in fact echoed by the problems encountered by the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) in coordinating national development policy. In terms of implementation, moreover, it has been shown that in the absence of political will or high-level direction or coordination, political decisions made by political leaders were often not translated into action by officials at the working level who bargained for maximum national advantage both with respect to regional trade liberalization and industrial cooperation. In this regard, national economic criteria and not political or strategic concerns stimulated implementation processes. It

revealed that while decision-making at the ASEAN level reflected political decisions, at the national level domestic and institutional factors came into play which altered the emphasis of the initiatives concerned, although further work appears to be necessary in assessing the genesis of Thailand's international economic policy.

Certainly, Thailand's own national priorities were reflected in the importance given to cooperation on food and energy as well as industrial cooperation, which nevertheless reflected the requirements of ASEAN as a whole. In this regard, a substantial continuity seems to have been carried over from Thai attitudes to earlier forms of regional cooperation such as ASA, for ASEAN cannot be merely regarded in either purely political or economic terms. Political efforts in themselves were considered insufficient to maintain the viability of the Organization, for by nature they were occasional and issue-oriented, whereas economic and functional cooperation was more systematic and deliberate. It was in this fashion that functionalist concerns motivated the view that ASEAN had to be seen to work and engage in practical and meaningful cooperative projects. This was a fact that Thailand recognized from the beginning, and hence it saw that economic and functional cooperation would have to be actively pursued. Nevertheless, it could also be asserted that the national experience of Thailand in economic development, whereby the government provided macroeconomic stability which enabled the private sector to take advantage of opportunities to propel economic growth, may be transposed to the ASEAN level, where the Organization provided the political and economic stability to ensure national development. It was largely up to the private

sector to foster economic linkages between each other, a choice which in the event did not lead to greater ASEAN cooperation, albeit the process was little aided by the insistence of bureaucrats in maintaining a grip on the Organization's direction. Moreover, despite the rhetoric regarding issues of technical, social and cultural cooperation, they did not appear to have priority although there was a recognition of their inherent value. Therefore, there was a substantial gap between the substance of policy as set and the way in which it was implemented.

In particular, the case studies of Thai positions adopted at ASEAN meetings, and particularly at the 1976 Bali Summit, tended to support further the contention that ASEAN was largely regarded as a tool of foreign policy above all other considerations. Concrete positions taken at ASEAN meetings thus matched overall foreign policy concerns, particularly those of the MFA vis-à-vis other agencies, to a significant extent. However, by 1976 there were already indications of greater inputs in decision-making beyond foreign policy circles as the subjects and the extent of cooperation widened, such as on economic cooperation and humanitarian issues. Meanwhile, within the ASEAN negotiations, Thai representatives could often be seen to take a middle line, reflecting a desire for consensus. Nevertheless, Thailand may also have been handicapped by a lack of coherence resulting from frequent changes in government, though its participation in regular activities of the Organization did not appear to be greatly affected due to the contribution of permanent officials in the ASEAN process. It did not seem to stress the importance of bilateral relations with any member country in particular, but only on individual issue areas:

Indonesia on the founding of ASEAN, Malaysia on ZOPFAN, and Singapore on questions affecting regional security, particular the Kampuchean issue, although the long-lasting impression is that cooperation has been the most fruitful with Singapore. Thailand emerged with a generally positive image within ASEAN in the first years due to its initial conciliating and mediating role, but this was later obscured by its stance on the Kampuchean issue, such that the enduring image as from the end of the period is that of concessions to the security of Thailand being frequently exerted by other countries in support of its frontline status. From being a net contributor of benefits to ASEAN, it had by the end of the period become a net recipient of the benefits of cooperation therefrom. The emphasis on a common stance vis-à-vis Indochina revealed the importance of a joint ASEAN position for Thailand, but further concretized the Thai move away from a conciliating role. The status of 'frontline state' also reflected Thailand's generally poor relations with other neighbours beyond ASEAN, one that belied the official 'good neighbour' policies of the late 1970s.

At the end of the period studied, Thailand felt that its security was immediately threatened by the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. Hence it sought and obtained recognition from fellow ASEAN members of its status as a 'frontline state' and moved to counter the Vietnamese presence on its eastern borders and prevent a *fait accompli* from being widely accepted by the international community. A joint ASEAN front was crucial in 1979-1980 for Thailand, not only in terms of countering the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, but also in solving the associated refugee question which had placed a great burden on

its resources. At the same time, while this signified the increased importance that Thailand placed on ASEAN, it marked a definite move away from its earlier conciliatory, and indeed perhaps less pro-active role, within the Organization. The Thai stance and that of ASEAN on the Kampuchean issue was to characterize both for much of the subsequent decade. Thailand's position in 1979 may be regarded as a synthesis in its overall position on regional cooperation, with a reliance on both bilateral and multilateral mechanisms and not overemphasizing anyone. This Thai perspective further highlights the importance of external challenges on motivating cooperation within ASEAN, and particularly the indication that Thai policies towards ASEAN were affected by external powers, on the one hand by China and Indochina, and on the other by the attitude of the US. This leads to a further element of continuity, for it may be seen that the other ASEAN countries' approach to Thailand as from the end of the colonial period laid in the concept of the Kingdom as a buffer against instability from the north. Accordingly, it was necessary to give political support to the regime in Bangkok to maintain the stability of the buffer. At the same time, it may be seen that historical baggage has helped to reinforce Thai security concerns, and Thailand's partners in ASEAN were ready to participate in Collective Political Defence on Bangkok's behalf against the context of Thailand's past accommodation to threats. There are indications that such actions were not so much an expression of ASEAN solidarity towards Thailand as a demonstration of traditional concerns among its neighbours over Thailand's response to external stimuli, particularly the adoption of policies of accommodation towards threats. In

acceptance of Thai initiatives towards borderline states, the ASEAN response reflected a recognition of the need for solidarity, but which had its origins in fear of Thai defection, more than from strong Thai diplomatic skills or full acceptance of the Thai position. In this fashion, ASEAN membership has only further consolidated and did not really initiate such mutually supportive tendencies. It did, however, provide a systematic framework under which such responses coordinated.

General conclusions may be made not only of Thai policy but also of the evolution of ASEAN as a whole in this period. Despite the long-term perspective of a search for regional autonomy, ASEAN emerges from the study as a creature of circumstance, motivated by internal and external 'shocks' as shown by the creasing elevation of political issues after 1968. The Organization's inter-governmental framework also reflected its origins as a policy initiative by a restricted circle of bureaucrats and government leaders within all five founding states. The study highlights the existence of common objectives among the participants, but also different ways of obtaining them. National impulses were indispensable in initiating joint action, requiring not only informal lobbying, but also more obvious consultations which has tended to support the embedding of intergovernmentalism. Furthermore, it is shown using the experience of Thailand that although it appears to be a common impression that not much was achieved in terms of ASEAN cooperation between 1967 and 1976, the impression is slightly different if one takes into account the individual interactions each country had with the Organization, and the extent to which national policies were translated into common initiatives,

particularly in the 'informal' political sphere. Most importantly, the Organization's value did not lie merely in joint cooperative projects in the economic, social and cultural fields, but also in less formal political and economic consultations and bilateral deals. It is also revealed that an overwhelming emphasis on policy-level perspectives could sometimes give a misleading view of ASEAN cooperation. At the working or officials' level, the reality was often very different, with specific nuances that sometimes exerted an influential role on the overall cooperation process. This was reflected in positions on ZOPFAN and in the implementation of preferential tariff arrangements. As a diplomatic community, ASEAN was already very much in substance by 1976. At the same time, it must be admitted that the significance of the Organization did increase massively in 1979 with the political stimulus provided by the onset of the Kampuchean problem.

In the analysis of Thailand's policy towards cooperation within ASEAN, three phases may be identified, coinciding not only with changes in the external situation but also with domestic circumstances. The first phase saw a tentative move towards regional cooperation in various forms between 1967-1973, while maintaining overall alignment with the US. The second phase was associated with Thailand's firm identification with ASEAN and regional interests in the years 1973-1978. The third and final phase in a sort of synthesis witnessed renewed cooperation with external powers at the same time as closer links with ASEAN as from 1979 and onwards into the 1980s. What was seen through the three phases was the gradual shift towards greater commitment to regionalism by the government as a

whole, an outcome that was not necessarily foreseen by observers at ASEAN's founding in 1967.

It is probably difficult to escape the conclusion that during the twelve-year period studied, Thailand was generally most influential during the initial and the later stages i.e. between 1967-1971 during Thanat Khoman's term at the MFA and from 1979 onwards. This accounts for the emphasis placed on those years in this study, which also happened to be years during which political issues were in the fore of ASEAN deliberations. At the same time, Thailand's generally uncontroversial, non-adversarial and middle-of-the-road ASEAN policy outside those years should not be regarded as a lack of real commitment to the Organization. Even during the years 1975-1976 when Thailand placed great emphasis on ASEAN as a primary conduit for external interaction, this conciliatory position was pursued. This quiet stance perhaps also reflected the corporate and organizational characteristic of the MFA as much as any national style. Moreover, it reflected an emphasis on maintaining friendships with all ASEAN members, and Thailand had a self-image within ASEAN as a conciliator. Indeed, it may be said that bridging differences was its past role within the Organization, and retains the potential to provide its future role into the 21st Century.

A further conclusion may therefore be made that Thailand was, in fact, a *middle power* within ASEAN *par excellence*. Within an ASEAN of five members and as the Organization's third largest power in terms of population, it naturally took the middle ground. Such a description better describes the role of Thailand within ASEAN in this period than the more general traditional

image of the Kingdom as a small power in the international system, or in the more specific reference to it as forming ASEAN's 'flank.' The description of Thailand as a middle power in regional terms is instructive in highlighting the range of policy options open to such powers on issues of cooperation within a multilateral organization. On issues of common interest, middle powers constituted an important focus of action who would not upset the sensibilities of smaller or larger powers. However, in cases where there was a significant degree of polarization, such as over economics, it is shown that middle and small powers had little room for manoeuvre and were generally unable to force their opinions on other partners, only when there was a rough consensus. As a middle power, it was also often difficult to obtain leverage without gathering informal coalitions, which laid a premium on personal ties. The study of Thailand reveals how middle power states can play important supportive roles in further cooperation, and illustrates that questions of 'size' underlaid the political manoeuvrings within ASEAN, affecting the relative roles of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, as well as Thailand, despite the formal adherence to equality. A middle-of-the-road policy may have been, nevertheless, an indication of an attempt to overcome the discontinuities posed by the frequent changes in government in Bangkok and the lack of clear political guidance in the latter half of the period, as well as partly to preference for concentration on issues closest to national interests, and to maintain a general ASEAN consensus on a majority of issues.

This position held by the Thais was well-recognized and often utilized by certain of Thailand's ASEAN partners. Thailand

acted as an autonomous player within ASEAN. However, there was a degree to which it seemed to have served the interests of some of its other partners in pursuing certain lines of policy. Although Thailand has had continuous problems with its neighbours to the West and East, it has maintained generally harmonious relations with its ASEAN neighbours to the South. Precisely because its detached attitude and interests regarding intra-ASEAN conflicts, Thailand in this period came to be seen as a useful medium which could be persuaded to broker policy initiatives without suscitating as much opposition as the original proposer might cause. For instance, on the issue of economic cooperation, Bangkok was seen as a convenient 'third party' through which initiatives by Singapore and the Philippines could be channelled, without upsetting Indonesia and Malaysia, due to the special circumstances of the countries concerned. Although it also played an occasional initiating role, in its eagerness to contribute positively to the cause of ASEAN despite domestic limitations it willingly, either knowingly or unknowingly, became an instrument for the translation of other countries' initiatives into action. Yet it was no mere catalyst, for those initiatives it brought into fruition it also fashioned to its guise, rejecting elements it did not agree with. In fact, the creation of ASEAN itself, the launching of ZOPFAN, advocacy of regional trade liberalization, as well as opposition to the *fait accompli* in Kampuchea, showed how Thailand emerged as a convenient advocate of certain lines of policy which were also aimed at by various other countries, but which it distinctly fashioned according to its specific interests. It is a further conclusion that Thailand played a buffer role not only between

ASEAN and Indochina, but also between its partners in the Organization. As such, it made a valuable contribution towards eliciting positive results from what might be regarded as a situation of 'creative tension' among the five ASEAN members. At other times, Thailand attempted to keep itself uncontroversial as this was regarded as its best contribution to regional resilience, given internal difficulties within the country throughout the mid 1970s. Thailand's middle policy was thus in part deliberate, and in part dictated by domestic constraints, but was well suited to the capability of its policy resources at the time.

Thailand's participation in ASEAN was nevertheless indicative of an overall policy convergence among the states of Southeast Asia. That approach hinged on greater autonomy for the region vis-à-vis external powers. This was to be achieved by the creation of a regional order conducive to national development, and Thai policy-makers realized the importance of interconnections between the various countries of the region. Thus, on many issues, the Thai position could not be distinguished from that of other members, and it will be misleading to claim that specific national positions could be identified on all issues of cooperation. However, the evidence derived from the study appears to indicate that while multilateralism within ASEAN did complement bilateral arrangements and a premium was placed on the maintenance of solidarity, Thai policies within ASEAN were not merely aimed at the maintenance of the integrity and viability of the Organization had its participation merely been a token one to demonstrate regional solidarity. What is clear is that Thailand has attempted to play an active role within the Organization and at least exert a formal flexibility of

policy, as well as to use ASEAN actively as a political and economic tool. The study has shown that there were certain issues that various members pressed for, and were accepted as ASEAN policy by the rest. Thailand did not have a specific grand design beyond general support for ASEAN objectives and the wish for a successful regional cooperation in all fields. It did not press for the Organization's acceptance of particularly ambitious and far-reaching projects, as with Indonesia's espousal of National and Regional Resilience or Malaysia's advocacy of the neutralization of Southeast Asia. However, Thailand's position on Indochina was a position behind which the other members rallied, and Thailand's stance within the Organization on political issues which reflected its main security concerns were substantially accommodated. It may be seen that on those issues in which its vital interests were not threatened, it was happy to go along with the ASEAN consensus.

Thailand thus received a variety of direct benefits from participation in the Organization in the various fields of formal ASEAN cooperation. Considering its balancing of various options, it may be said that Thailand obtained general satisfaction from its participation in ASEAN in this period. Certainly, there was no convincing argument which would lead it to withhold confidence in the Organization at any stage. Was Thailand's position 'typical' of ASEAN's membership? The Thai case may be regarded as instructive of how national interests were translated into ASEAN policy. As a whole, the ASEAN states were like-minded nations in terms of political and economic ideology, even though perceptions of national interest may have differed. In addition, it may be seen that not only direct benefits

were received according to the Organization's stated objectives, but also derived benefits were obtained from participation in regional cooperation. Thailand benefited from representations exerted on its behalf by 'ASEAN friends' who were members of other international organizations. In this regard, it is necessary to take a comprehensive view of ASEAN cooperation to assess Thailand's major concerns within the Organization. It could be seen that not all its initiatives within the Organization were successfully implemented. It largely failed in its attempt to use ASEAN to demonstrate its independent status in the pre-1975 period. The consensus now is that the level of hostility of the PRC towards Thailand was a function of the Kingdom's participation in US operations in Indochina, at a time when the US was perceived as the greatest threat to China. The level of hostility was even greater within Vietnam, and longer-lasting. With this perspective in mind, Thailand's efforts within ASEAN could not compensate for this negative image. Moreover, its efforts to play a constructive role on economic issues were also relatively unsatisfactory, and yet to speak of the 'failure' of economic cooperation is perhaps to be missing the point. The holistic approach to ASEAN cooperation adopted by Thailand, as driven by political themes, meant that the very existence and symbolism of the Organization was more important than divisive themes, particularly when threat was perceived in tangible military terms. This perception may be seen to have evolved in the present circumstances of the 1990s, and with the decline of external threats it has become more important for ASEAN to tackle such divisive themes.

Finally, recurrent themes have been identified in Thailand's ASEAN diplomacy. Advocacy of certain ventures proposed during the 1970s and highlighted in this study have continued into, or resurfaced, during the 1990s. In the political field, these included ongoing high-level political consultations on regional developments, frequent meetings at the Summit level, as well as an expansion of ASEAN membership to encompass Indochina and Burma as a contribution to regional order, moving towards one Southeast Asia in an ASEAN-10. In the economic field, these centred on a commitment to regional economic liberalization as seen in its promotion of AFTA. Given ongoing Thai enthusiasm at playing a role in regional affairs through cooperation within ASEAN, such preoccupations provide a pointer as to Thailand's concerns into the next century. In addition, the importance of maintaining a *proximate* position, somewhat removed from key relationships but remaining an integral part of the sub-systemic framework, is highlighted. The question of proximity may be illustrated in a wider sphere, such as over regional security dialogues within Southeast Asia in the 1990s. Just as Thailand in previous decades could be found to be useful in brokering deals within ASEAN, so the Organization given its central position within the Asia-Pacific region but proximate position vis-à-vis current tensions in Northeast Asia or bilateral tensions between various players could be given an important role in fostering diplomatic exchanges on strategic questions. One essential element of continuity remains, that of security as being the key to regional stability and economic prosperity. As Prime Minister Banharn Silpa-archa mentioned in the run-up to the 5th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok in

December 1995: "Peace and security will continue to be ASEAN's prime concern because they are fundamental to our development in all fields."² Given Thailand's frontline but peripheral role in the ASEAN security relationship as revealed in the first 12 years of the Organization's existence, Thailand's greatest and ongoing contribution will be to act as broker within the ASEAN power structure. However, it is likely that externalities will always be more important than internal concerns for Thailand, and probably continue to characterize the Kingdom's policy towards cooperation within ASEAN, although once the Organization encompasses the whole of Southeast Asia, Thailand's key concerns will more than ever be treated by its interactions with ASEAN members.

NOTES

¹ Muen, Khun, Luang, Phra, Phraya and Chao Phraya in ascending order of seniority.

CHAPTER I

¹ ANWAR, Dewi Fortuna *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism*. Singapore, ISEAS, 1994, p.15.

² GORDON, Bernard K. *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia*. Englewood Cliffs N.J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966, p.169.

CHAPTER II

¹ See also contemporary definitions: “international regionalism in the descriptive sense is the formation of interstate associations or groups on the basis of regions; and in the doctrinal sense, the advocacy of such formations.” NYE, Joseph S. “Introduction.” In *International Regionalism: Readings*. Collection edited by Joseph S. Nye. Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1968, p.vii.

² See, for example, JAYASURIYA, Kanishka “Singapore: The Politics of Regional Definition.” in *Pacific Review*. Vol. 7, No. 4, 1994, p.411.

³ HURRELL, Andrew “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics.” in *Review of International Studies*. 21 (1995), p.333.

⁴ Article 52(1) of the UN Charter which laid down the provisions that “Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or

agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action, provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations” may be seen to have provided a compromise which catered for the specific requirements of the Latin American regional system, falling under the provisions of Chapter VIII (Regional Arrangements) which was regulated by the Security Council. By contrast, collective self defense under Article 51 (Chapter VII) is not a regional arrangement under the Security Council. *Public International Law Textbook*. Edited by Robert MacLean. London, HLT Publications, 17th edition, 1995, pp.308-311.

⁵ HUXLEY, Tim “Southeast Asia in the study of international relations: the rise and decline of a region.” in *Pacific Review*. Vol. 9, No. 2, 1996, p.199.

⁶ ALAGAPPA, Muthiah “Regionalism and Conflict Management.” in *Ibid*, p.362.

⁷ Haas describes integration as part of the process towards a terminal condition called a “political community,” where claims are settled in a peaceful setting and the actors shift their “loyalties, expectations and political activities” to a new and larger centre with its own institutions possessing or demanding jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states, see HAAS, Ernst B. “International Integration: The European and the Universal Process.” in *International Organization*. Vol. 15, No. 3, Summer 1961, pp.366-367.

⁸ In a free trade area, members have abolished tariff barriers between themselves but maintain individual tariffs with regards to third countries; in a customs union there is a common external tariff with regards to third countries but free movement of all products within; a common market extends this freedom of movement to all factors of production i.e. goods, people, services and capital and finally, an economic union further introduces the integration of financial and monetary policies. See BALASSA, Bela, *The Theory of Economic Integration*. London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1962, p.2. While discussing mainly economic implications, Balassa also admits that there is “a considerable degree of interdependence” between political and economic considerations. *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

⁹ See DEUTSCH, Karl W. et al. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area. International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957, pp.9-10.

¹⁰ See Deutsch's discussion of 'political integration,' which has a lot to do with nationalism and identity, in DEUTSCH, Karl W. "Communication Theory and Political Integration." in *The Integration of Political Communities*. Collection edited by Philip E. Jacob & James V. Toscano. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1964, pp.50-56.

¹¹ See MITRANY, David, *A Working Peace System*. Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1966, pp.180-187.

¹² HAAS, Michael "The ASEANization of Asian International Relations." in *Asia Pacific Community*. No. 6, Fall 1979, p.80.

¹³ Haas questions whether or not the techniques of international and supranational cooperation developed in Europe could not be transposed to Asia and Africa, "presumably it would contribute to world peace by creating ever-expanding islands of practical cooperation, eventually spilling over into the controversy-laden fields which threaten us directly with thermo-nuclear destruction," see HAAS, Ernst B. "International Integration: The European and the Universal Process.", p.366. See also HAAS, Ernst B. *Beyond the Nation State: functionalism and international organization*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1964; 595p.

¹⁴ HAAS, Michael "The ASEANization of Asian International Relations.", p.80. Nevertheless, it seemed that Haas was premature in portraying the ASEAN Secretariat as the motivating force of ASEAN cooperation, and the Organization has continued to be dominated by governmental impulses throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

¹⁵ NYE, Joseph S. "Comparing Common Markets: A Revised Neo-Functionalist Model." in *Regional Integration: Theory and Research*. Collection edited by Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold. Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1971, p.192.

¹⁶ TAYLOR, Paul "Intergovernmentalism in the European Communities in the 1970s: patterns and perspectives." in *International Organization*. Vol. 36,

No. 4, Autumn 1982, pp.741-766. In particular, the emergence of the Council Presidency in European decision-making and the growing importance in overall terms of the European Council was taken as evidence of intergovernmentalism.

¹⁷ For an investigation of the applicability of classical models to the recent evolution of the European process, see MORAVCSIK, "Negotiating the Single European Act: national interests and conventional statecraft in the European Community." In *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 1, Winter 1991, especially pp.21-27; pp.44-56. In particular, a comparison of the negotiations for the European Coal and Steel Community in the 1950s and the Single European Act in the 1980s suggests that: "the factors encouraging a greater commitment to...unity are essentially the same: the convergence of national interests, the pro-European idealism of heads of government, and the decisive importance of the larger member states." *Ibid.*, p.48.

¹⁸ Thus they may be regarded as having held out the hope of a political community as proposed by Ernst Haas. However, a difference lies in the question of shifting loyalties, of integration and institutions.

¹⁹ "The ASEAN experience strongly suggests that the commitment of the member states to the continued maintenance of ASEAN has less to do with its organizational performance on the economic cooperation front and more with its utility as a diplomatic and political tool," which contradicts conventional models of organizations, see KURUS, Bilson "Understanding ASEAN: Benefits and Raison d'être." in *Asian Survey*. Vol. XXXIII, No. 8, August 1993, pp.819-820.

²⁰ For an early application of a systems approach to Southeast Asia, see BRECHER, Michael "International Relations and Asian Studies: The Subordinate System of Southern Asia." in *World Politics*. Vol. 15, No. 2, January 1963, pp.213-235. In Brecher's analysis South Asia constitutes a 'subordinate system' within the 'dominant system' of bipolarity of the superpowers, which itself is part of the 'global system,' although according to Brecher Southern Asia is clearly the most underdeveloped of all contemporary subordinate state systems. See also SINGER, J. David "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations." in *The International System*. Theoretical Essays.

Collection edited by Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961, pp.77-92.

²¹ SANTAPUTRA, Charivat *Thailand's Foreign Policy 1932-1946*. Bangkok, Thammasat University Press, 1985, pp.383-384. See also ROSENAU, James N. "Pretheories and Theories of Foreign Policy." in *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics*. Collection edited by Barry R. Farrell. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1966, pp.27-92.

²² PHUANGKASEM, Corinne *Thailand's Foreign Relations 1964-80*. ISEAS Occasional Paper No. 74. Singapore, ISEAS, 1980, p.10.

²³ Security, autonomy, regime maintenance, national welfare/development and nation-state building are typically mentioned among foreign policy goals, see WURFEL, David & BURTON, Bruce "Introduction." in *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia*. Collection edited by David Wurfel and Bruce Burton. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1990, p.6.

²⁴ ALLISON, Graham T. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." in *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. LXIII, No. 3, September 1969, p.690.

²⁵ See, for example, Interview given by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman to Time-Life and the Financial Times, 29 October 1970. *FAB* Vol. X, No. 2, Oct-Nov. 1970, p.125.

²⁶ See, for example, SANTAPUTRA, pp.409-412; SUPHAMONGKOL, Konthi Karn *Vithesobai Kong Thai Rawang B.E.2483-2495 (Thailand's Foreign Policy 1940-1952)*. Bangkok, Post Publications Co. Ltd., 2nd Edition, 1994, pp.7-9; and CHINWANNO, Anuson *Thailand's Policies Towards the People's Republic of China*. London, Macmillan, 1992, pp.142-144. Four types of powers may be identified in accordance with traditional usage: 'great', 'secondary', 'middle' and 'small' powers, see KEOHANE, Robert O. "Lilliputians" Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics." in *International Organization*. Vol. XXIII, No. 2, Spring 1969, p.296. Within this framework, a middle power is defined in terms of systemic role as: "a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a systemic impact in a smaller group or through an international institution," as opposed to a small power which is "a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small

group, make a significant impact on the system,” although the two may be said to share many characteristics. *Ibid.*, p.296.

²⁷ The perception of ‘weakness’ or ‘smallness’ was shared by many of Thailand’s partners, regardless of size, although it is often questioned whether such impression was justified according to generally-accepted criteria, including that of the UN, and it is to be stressed that this was a self-perception based on assessment of ‘power.’ As one scholar more recently put it: “In fact, it is arguable whether ASEAN can be described as a regional association composed of small states, since only two of its six members have a population of under 15 million.” ANWAR, p.4.

²⁸ See various articles in *The Centennial of Prince Wan*. Bangkok, Amarin Printing Group Co., Ltd., 1991, 84p; *Vichitr Anusorn*. A Cremation Volume: Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn. Bangkok, Office of the Prime Minister Press, 1962, 297p.

²⁹ SANTAPUTRA, p.422.

³⁰ See WEINSTEIN, Franklin B. “Foreign Policy in Indonesia.” in *World Politics*. 24 (1972), pp.366-367.

³¹ JORGENSEN-DAHL, Arnfinn *Regional Organization and Order in Southeast Asia*. New York, St. Marin’s Press, 1980, p.226.

³² Such a view is provided by the writings of various Thai diplomats in this period, see *A Cremation Volume: Nai Visutr Arthayukti*. Bangkok, Prachan Publishers, 1975, pp.169-170.

³³ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Harvey Stockwin of the *Sydney Bulletin* and *London Economist*, Mr. J. Collin of Fairchild Publications Inc., and Mr. Hilaire Du Barrier of *American Opinion Magazine*, Bangkok, 10 March 1969. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. III (1969), p.40.

³⁴ See, for example, Press Release 152-Replies by Secretary of State Rusk to questions submitted by Mr. David Viklund of Dagens Nyheter, Stockholm, 1 July 1967. *Department of State Bulletin*. Vol. LVII, No. 1465, 24 July 1967, p.92.

³⁵ SUPHAMONGKOL, Konthi “From SEATO to ASEAN.” in *Saranrom Journal*. 28 (1978), p.115.

³⁶ See VIRAPHOL, Sarasin as a discussant in *5 Totsawat Karn Tang Prades Kong Thai (5 Decades of Thai Foreign Affairs)*. Bangkok, Office of the National Culture Commission, 1993, pp.271-275.

³⁷ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Thai Television Channel 4 on the Occasion of the Commemoration of the Founding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14 April 1969. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. III (1969), p.224.

³⁸ This clarifies the impression that integration, if at all considered, was perceived by policy-makers as a possible product or final objective, but not as a process, see DOSCH, Jörn and MOLS, Manfred “Why ASEAN Cooperation Cannot Work as a Model for Regionalism Elsewhere-A Reply.” in *ASEAN Economic Bulletin*. Vol. II, No. 2, November 1994, p.213.

³⁹ HOFFMAN, Stanley “Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe.” in *Daedalus*. 95 (3), 1966, p.869.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.901.

⁴¹ ROTHSTEIN, Robert L. *The Weak in the World of the Strong*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1977, p.110. For a recent discussion of the continuing relevance of domestic perspectives on international cooperation, see MILNER, Helen “International Theories of Cooperation among Nations.” in *World Politics*. 44 (April 1992), pp.466-496.

⁴² See WEINSTEIN, p.375.

⁴³ See Review of Somsakdi Xuto's *Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia (1973)* by W. Scott THOMPSON in *JSS*. January 1975, Vol. 63 Pt.1, p.259.

⁴⁴ This was seen in the rejection of the idea of Southeast Asia as a sub-region when placed in the context of wider Asia-Pacific cooperation in the early 1970s, as proposed by Australia. Concerning the sub-regional question, if ASEAN is taken as embodying the idea of Southeast Asia, then it transcends sub-regional status, though until it encompasses all ten countries of the region it remains handicapped in this regard. Moreover, Southeast Asia itself is often taken as a sub-region, but the term may be regarded as being as relevant as that of Western Europe, and both terms are now under threat. Modern sub-regionalism in Southeast Asia, however, may be taken to imply more restricted

trilateral or quadrilateral solutions such as growth triangles or areas. See WEATHERBEE, Donald "The Foreign Policy Dimensions of Subregional Economic Zones." in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Vol. 16, No. 4, March 1995, pp.421-432.

⁴⁵ HUXLEY, pp.216-222.

⁴⁶ Thus late Meiji proponents of Asian solidarity under Japanese inspiration found relatively little sympathy within Siamese elite, lending to widely-held impressions that the Kingdom was uninterested in such impulses, whereas its position may have been due more to threat perceptions than to real preferences, see BATSON, Benjamin "Siam and Japan: the Perils of Independence." in *Southeast Asia Under Japanese Occupation*. Collection edited by Alfred W. McCoy. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1980, p.224.

⁴⁷ STOWE, Judith A. *Siam becomes Thailand*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1991, pp.91-100.

⁴⁸ The spelling "Southeast Asia" used in this study is largely American, with the British version being the hyphenated "South-East Asia," whose use began with the wartime South-East Asia Command (SEAC), see HALL, D.G.E. *A History of Southeast Asia*. London, Macmillan, 4th Edition, 1981, p.3.

⁴⁹ The term "Far East" was thought to encompass Japan, China, Korea and the Philippines in the eyes of many Europeans at the time of the UNGA debate on regional commissions in late 1946. Thus Philippine delegates insisted on inclusion of "Far East" to "Asia" in the formation of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, see SINGH, Lalita Prasad *The Politics of Economic Cooperation in Asia*. A Study of Asian International Organization. Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1966, p.22.

⁵⁰ Recent works have argued that there were common social, political and economic attributes which lent "a coherence to the region as a whole, more clearly evident the larger the unit considered," see REID, Anthony *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680*. Vol. 2: Expansion and Crisis. Bangkok, Silkwood Books, 1988, p.xiv. Yet another view is also proposed that: "Almost every study of this region has had to contend with the dilemma of demonstrating the originality of the Southeast Asian cultural and political

experience while at the same time being reminded of the long centuries of close interaction with its great Asian neighbours, China and India,” see JESHURUN, Chandran “The Southeast Asian Experience of Regional Order: Past and Future Trends.” in *China, India, Japan and the Security of Southeast Asia*. Collection edited by Chandran Jeshurun. Singapore, ISEAS, 1993, p.255.

⁵¹ MARR, David G. *Vietnamese Anticolonialism 1885-1925*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971, p.148. Such discussions suggest that anti-colonialism had a wider Asian dimension.

⁵² The scope of SEAC initially included Thailand but only the southern part of Indochina, and excluded the Philippines, although of responsibility of the body was subsequently redefined, see REMME, Tilman *Britain and Region Cooperation in Southeast Asia 1946-1949*. London, Routledge, 1995, pp.5-30.

⁵³ See STARGARDT, AW. “The Emergence of the Asian System of Powers.” in *Modern Asian Studies*. 23 (1989), pp.585-586.

⁵⁴ In this regard, it is interesting to note the contemporary resurgence of the idea of common “Asian Values,” with some of the most noted exponents being found in Singapore and Malaysia. See, for example, MAHBUBANI, Kishore “The Pacific Way.” in *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 74, No. 1, Jan./Feb. 1995; pp.100-111.

⁵⁵ Opening Statement by H.E. Thanat Khoman at the Special Session of Foreign Ministers of ASA, KL/ Cameron Highlands, April 1962. *Report of the Special Session of Foreign Ministers of ASA, 1962*. Bangkok, Thammasat University Press, 1966, p.33. For another view of Asian cooperation, see also ATTHAKOR, Bunchana *Thai Ambassador's Record*. Bangkok, Aksornsamphan Press, 1971, p.7.

⁵⁶ As Philippine Foreign Minister Narciso Ramos declared at the 1st ASPAC Ministerial Meeting in 1966: “in our honest desire to accelerate regional cooperation, we should not be deluded into adopting solutions only on the basis of geography or race. What unites people is their identity of political convictions and economic interests.” *Documents of the 1st Ministerial and Pacific Cooperation, Seoul, 1966*. Seoul, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1966, p.29.

⁵⁷ SCHUBERT, James N. “Toward a ‘working peace system’ in Asia: organizational growth and state participation in Asian regionalism.” in

International Organization. Vol. 32, No. 2, Spring 1978, pp.440-446. The concept of an 'Asian Way' was also suggested by Michael Haas, involving a commitment to Pan-Asianism, equalitarianism, consensus decision-making, incrementalism, the supremacy of politics over administration and collective self-help. HAAS, Michael "The ASEANization of Asian International Relations.", p.76.

⁵⁸ As Thanat Khoman declared at the 2nd ASPAC Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok in 1967: "regional cooperation is still something new and it is unavoidable that we are groping to find what would be the best way for us to live together, to work together, to meet together and to plan together for our future and for the well-being of our nations. That is why I think it is unavoidable that there will be many patterns of cooperation." *Documents of the 2nd MM of the Asian and Pacific Council. Bangkok, 5-7 July 1967*. Bangkok, MFA, 1967, p.86.

⁵⁹ Ernst Haas asserts that "in the political advocacy of integration by some specific movement, the 'memory' of a historical community may play its part in the construction of a myth, but this does not make the past an active causative agent," and instead points to the example of traumatic events in Europe such as two world wars and the threat of victory by a revolutionary totalitarian movement as instead spurring the process, a combination of circumstances that could not be easily repeated elsewhere, see HAAS, Ernst B. "International Integration: The European and the Universal Process.", p.367. However, it could be maintained that Southeast Asia had experienced its own trauma in the *Konfrontasi* and even more so in the Indochinese conflict, while the threat from communism was also strong.

⁶⁰ Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman at the 16th UNGA, 5 October 1961. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the 2nd-40th Sessions of the UNGA (1947-1985)*. Bangkok, Department of International Organizations, MFA, 1986, p.69.

⁶¹ DHIRAVEGIN, Likhit *Demi-Democracy*. The Evolution of the Thai Political System. Singapore, Times Academic Press, 1992, p.50. For a discussion of China's regional role, see WANG, Gungwu "Ming Foreign Relations in Southeast Asia." in *China and the Chinese Overseas*. Collection edited by Wang Gungwu. Singapore, Times Academic Press, 1991, pp.41-71; SCHWARTZ,

Benjamin I. "The Chinese Perception of World Order." in *Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. Collection edited by John King Fairbank. Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1968, pp.276-285.

⁶² This was why it is asserted that: "ASEAN regionalism...represents in itself a departure from historic and conventional responses" and that the more "modern" the political elites the more support there was for regional cooperation, and that traditional divisions in the region worked against ASEAN. WANG, Gungwu "Introduction: ASEAN Between Tradition and Modernity." in *Understanding ASEAN*. Collection edited by Alison Broinowski. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1982, p.3.

⁶³ See ANWAR, p.45.

⁶⁴ With its concerns with insurgency, it would appear that the Philippines preferred an Asian organization which was anticommunist to a Southeast Asian one for economic development, and President Garcia frequently used the word 'Asian' in connection with his concept whereas the Tunku consistently stressed a Southeast Asian association, see KHAW, Guat Hoon *Malaysian in Southeast Asia 1957-1970*. The Search for Security. IUHEI Thèse No. 227. Singapore, Singapore National Publishers Pte. Ltd., 1976, p.189. This Asian emphasis might also have resulted from the impulse given to Philippine leaders by the 1955 Bandung Afro-Asian Conference which stressed the Asian format.

⁶⁵ Interview given by Felixberto Serrano, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, to Mr. Dick Wilson in *FEER*. Vol. XXX, No. 9, 1 Dec. 1960, p.505.

⁶⁶ NOBLE, Lela Gamer "The National Interest and the National Image: Philippine policy in Asia." in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XII, No. 6, June 1973, p.572.

⁶⁷ "It is necessary for us in Singapore to prepare ourselves now politically, economically and psychologically for a regional existence." Speech entitled "Singapore's Strategy for Survival" by H.E.S. Rajaratnam, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore Society, 30 July 1966. *The Prophetic and the Political*. Selected Speeches & Writings of S. Rajaratnam. Collection edited by Chan Heng Chec & Obaid ul Haq. Singapore, Graham Brash (Pte) Ltd, 1987, p.214.

⁶⁸ Speech by Prince Wan at the 1st SEATO Council, Bangkok, 1955. Quoted in KASEMSRI, MR Kasem S. "Prince Wan: A Diplomat for All Seasons." in *Saranrom Journal* 49 (1993), p.42.

⁶⁹ GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia.*, p.174.

⁷⁰ A noted advocate of neofunctionalist ideas has suggested that: "while the coexistence of conflict and harmony within the same social system can no doubt be achieved without the attributes of a single statehood, the deliberate creation and perpetuation of a new national consciousness can hardly be expected to come about without the presence of formal governmental institutions and practices." HAAS, Ernst B. *The Uniting of Europe.* Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-1957. London, Stevens & Sons Ltd., 1958, p.7. As it will be seen, ASEAN states fell short of creating a new 'supranational' ASEAN consciousness, while the extent of institutionalization has remained limited.

⁷¹ Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman at the 1st AMM, Bangkok, 8 August 1967. *Collected Statements of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman.* Vol. 3 (November 1966-October 1967), p.32.

⁷² REMME, pp.42-43.

⁷³ See, for example, Telegram 1737-The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France, 13 May 1947. *FRUS 1947 Vol. VI The Far East.*, p.97.

⁷⁴ 13-Memorandum from the Ambassador to Thailand (Young) to the President's Military Representative (Taylor), 27 October 1961. *FRUS 1961-1963 Vol. XXIII Southeast Asia.*, pp.30-31.

⁷⁵ "Until early 1954 policy paper after policy paper excluded an American initiative," see COLBERT, Evelyn *Southeast Asia in International Politics 1941-1956.* Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press, 1977, pp.292-293.

⁷⁶ FIFIELD, Russell H. *Americans in Southeast Asia: The Roots of Commitment.* New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1973, p.316. In the formulation of the US position, the role of Walt Rostow, Special Assistant to the President, was influential: "We see in regionalism a way not of returning to isolation but of leaving the nations of the various regions to do as much for themselves as

they can...while preserving the ties of interdependence where they are judged on both sides to be in the common interest.” Montague Burton Lecture at the University of Leeds, 23 February 1967. *Department of State Bulletin*. Vol. LVI, No. 1448, 27 March 1967, p.500.

⁷⁷ The need to consolidate newly emergent states was stressed in the transformation of American policy, and increasingly in autonomous regional organizations as structures in the world order. In this process, Nye identifies 4 major clusters of interests the US has served in regional organizations since 1945: 1) hemispheric influence; 2) containment; 3) economic development; and 4) conflict prevention and management, see NYE, Joseph S. “United States Policy Towards Regional Organization.” in *International Organization*. Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Summer 1969, pp.722-723.

⁷⁸ Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, Bangkok, 5/2/96. On 19 April 1967, for example, Thanat on a visit to Washington declared that Thailand and Indonesia were considering a new Southeast Asian Association. *FEER*. Vol. LVI, No. 4, 27 April 1967, p.152.

⁷⁹ The President’s Reply to the Remarks of Newly Appointed Ambassador of Thailand, Bunchana Atthakor, upon the Occasion of the Presentation of His Letter of Credence, 19 January 1968. Quoted in ATTHAKOR, pp.16-17. These comments may be seen as having constituted an early affirmation of formal US approval for the creation of ASEAN.

⁸⁰ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Tom Wicker of the New York Times, 8 February 1967. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. I (1967), p.24. Connected with this was the theme that while ASEAN served to maintain the security of Southeast Asia, the US security umbrella would repel external aggression, see KASEMSRI, MR Kasem S. “Cooperation for the Security of Southeast Asia.” in *Saranrom Journal*. 21 (1971), p.216.

⁸¹ ATTHAKOR, pp.349-350.

⁸² Press Release 170- “Partnership in East Asia and the Pacific.” Address by William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East and Pacific Affairs, to the Federal Bar Association, San Francisco, 28 July 1967. *Department of State Bulletin*. Vol. LVII, No. 1468, 14 August 1967, p.199.

⁸³ NYE, Joseph S. *Peace in Parts*. Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1971, p.4. By the 1970s this led to encouragement of change in the structure of the international system towards greater multipolarity which would increase the flexibility of the US vis-à-vis other superpowers. Within this new structure, autonomous regional organizations would help inculcate responsibility to the small powers, see NYE “United States Policy Towards Regional Organization.”, pp.735-736.

⁸⁴ Russell H. Fifield claims that in his 1963 work *Southeast Asia in United States Policy* he called for the creation of an ‘Association of Southeast Asian Nations,’ see FIFIELD, Russell H. *National and Regional Interests in ASEAN*. Competition and Cooperation in International Politics. ISEAS Occasional Paper No. 57. Singapore, ISEAS, 1979, p.3. See also GORDON, Bernard K. “Regionalism and Instability in Southeast Asia.” in *International Regionalism: Readings*., in which an ‘Association of Southeast Asian New Emerging Forces’ (ASANEFOS), combining ASA and MAPHILINDO, is advocated as part of the attempt to internalize the role of Indonesia in Southeast Asia, pp.121-122.

⁸⁵ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Tom Wicker of the New York Times, 8 February 1967. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. I (1967), p.20-23. This view has been reiterated more recently in an interview given by Thanat after 1992 to *The Nation*: “The idea of economic integration did not start at a recent ASEAN Summit. Those who are conversant with the matter know for a fact that such a process has been the ultimate goal of our Organization from the beginning, which openly admitted that its model was the European Community, no more and no less.” in *A Cremation Volume: Thanpying Molee Khoman*. Bangkok, Thai Watana Panich Press Co., Ltd., 1995, p.218.

⁸⁶ For personal accounts of the various individual inspirations see, for example, MONNET, Jean *Mémoires*. Paris, Fayard, 1988; SPAAK, Paul-Henri *Combats Inachevés*. Vol. 2. Paris, Fayard, 1969. In this regard, the involvement of the US in Europe is instructive, for Truman fully supported European reconstruction, but believed that the initiative had to come from the Europeans, see REYNOLDS, David “The Origins of the Cold War: the European Dimension, 1944-1951.” in *The Historical Journal*. 28 (1985), pp.497-515.

⁸⁷ RIEGER, Hans Christoph “The Treaty of Rome and its Relevance for ASEAN.” in *ASEAN Economic Bulletin*. Vol. 8, No. 2, November 1991, pp.160-161.

During the ASA period the example of the Nordic Council appeared to have been popular with Malayan and Filipino proponents of regional cooperation, see JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.19.

⁸⁸ KHOMAN "ASEAN-Conception and Evolution." in *A Cremation Book: Thanpying Molee Khoman.*, p. 183.

⁸⁹ SHAFIE, Tan Sri Ghazali "ASEAN-Two and a Half Decades and Then What?" in *ASEAN at the Crossroads Les Cahiers de l'IFRI*. 13, (1994), p.60.

⁹⁰ Speech by H.E. Chatichai Choonhavan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the National Press Club Luncheon, Wellington, NZ, 5 August 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 3, July-September 1975, p.64.

⁹¹ JENKINS, Roy "ASEAN is well-endowed, progressive, diverse." in *FEER*. Vol. 96, No. 21, 27 May 1977, p.33.

⁹² HAAS, Ernst B. *The Uniting of Europe*, p.4. It is further asserted that: "countries dominated by a non-pluralistic social structure are poor candidates for participation in the integration process," particularly with respect to the creation of a political community, although Haas also makes it clear that political impulses are often valuable in compensating for this lack of pluralism, see HAAS, Ernst B. "International Integration: The European and the Universal Process.", p.375.

⁹³ MITRANY, p.204.

⁹⁴ It is asserted that due to more fundamental considerations regarding sovereignty there is little room between the state and society in Southeast Asia, which leads to the paradox that regionalism reinforces rather than diminishes state power. JAYASURIYA, p.419.

⁹⁵ That Thanat envisaged flexibility instead of binding commitments from the beginning is revealed by numerous comments during 1966-68, for example: "Such a grouping or power base need not entail any surrender of national sovereignty in favour of any superpower or supra-national authority. In our conception, those nations in the area which chose to work together shall not be bound by any 'unbreakable tie' and remain forever within the framework of an eventual non-socialist commonwealth," see "Building A Free Southeast

Asia.” Address by H.E. Thanat Khoman at the University of Minnesota, 22 October 1968. *FAB*. Vol. VIII, No. 2, Oct.-Nov. 1968, p.103.

⁹⁶ See THAMBIPILLAI, Pushpa & SAVARANAMUTTU J. *ASEAN Negotiations: Two Insights*. Singapore, ISEAS, 1985, p.7.

⁹⁷ JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.167.

⁹⁸ “The members do not talk only about selling rice or coconuts but they also talk about the political situations...I call it political collective defence,” see Interview given by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman to Mr. Sambanda of The Hindu (Madras), Bangkok, 4 September 1968. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. II (1968), p.87. However, the idea was not radically new, and had been spoken of in various different manifestations since the early 1960s. For example, President Garcia of the Philippines in early 1959 spoke of an organization for “a common economic, political and spiritual defence” among Asian states. KHAW, p.188.

⁹⁹ It is perhaps significant that there appears to have been no reference to Collective Political Defence prior to March 1968 and President Johnson’s announcement that he would not stand for re-election, though perhaps Thanat may have already had the idea in mind but only referred to it subsequent to the formation of ASEAN in August 1967, just over 6 months earlier. What is certain is that the theme was emphasized at the same time as Thanat’s outward ‘conversion’ to creating distance vis-à-vis the US as from 1968.

¹⁰⁰ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. H.M.L. Sutan of the Eastern Sun, Mr. C.K. Lee of the Straits Times; and Mr. James Foo of Radio & TV Singapore. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. II (1968), p.60.

¹⁰¹ See Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Noel Norton of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Bangkok, 9 September 1969. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. III (1969), p.172. This important distinction is made even clearer when it is considered that the words ‘collective’ and ‘political’ could also change places to produce ‘Political Collective Security,’ which Thanat described as a complement or supplement to military collective security, see “Thai Foreign Policy in the Midst of Changing World.” Speech by H.E. Thanat Khoman at the Luncheon Meeting

of the Thai Council of World Affairs & International Law, 30 November 1970. *FAB*. Vol. X, No. 2, Oct.-Nov. 1970, p.74.

¹⁰² See discussion of the evolution of the concept of national security in BUZAN, Barry *People, States and Fear*. Brighton, Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., 1983, pp.1-17. For a contemporary discussion of collective security, see HURRELL, Andrew "Collective Security and International Order Revisited." in *International Relations*. Vol. XI, No. 1, April 1992, pp.37-55.

¹⁰³ Quoted in CHINWANNO, Apichart *Thailand's Search for Protection: The Making of the Alliance with the United States*. Oxford, St. Antony's College, 1985, p.95.

¹⁰⁴ "A Commentary: Collective Political Defence." *The Voice of Free Asia*. 11 July 1972.

¹⁰⁵ MORRISON, Charles E. & SUHRKE, Astri "ASEAN in Regional Defense and Development." in *Changing Patterns of Security and Stability in Asia*. Collection edited by Sudershan Chawla & D.R. Sardesai. New York, Praeger, 1980, p.204.

¹⁰⁶ "The Problems of Southeast Asia." in ATTHAKOR, pp.1023-1024.

¹⁰⁷ Certain studies, nevertheless, have attempted to provide a theoretical approach to ASEAN issues, see, for example, PANIT, Thakur *Regional Integration Attempts in Southeast Asia: A Study of ASEAN's Problems and Progress*. D.Phil. Thesis. Pennsylvania State University, 1980; SCHUBERT, pp.440-446.

¹⁰⁸ HAAS, Ernst B. "Turbulent fields and the theory of regional integration." in *International Organization*. Vol. 30, No. 2, Spring 1976, pp.174-175; p.178. In particular, Haas spoke of the "confusing extra-regional enmeshment." *Ibid.*, p.208.

¹⁰⁹ As Liska also suggests, "The sense of community may consolidate alliances, it rarely brings them about," although he admits that when such a sense of community did exist, it could find "other institutional forms of expression." LISKA, George *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962, p.12. For discussion of the possibilities for a less formal interpretation of such relationships, see OLSON, Theodore

“Thinking Independently about Strategy in Southeast Asia.” in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Vol. 11, No. 3, December 1989, pp.257-282.

¹¹⁰ HURRELL “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics.”, p.349. For a recent discussion of neorealist versus neoliberal interpretations of regional cooperation, as applied in the modern debate on Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), see HIGGOTT, Richard “Competing Theoretical Approaches to International Cooperation: Implications for the Asia-Pacific.” in *Pacific Economic Relations in the 1990s*. Collection edited by Richard Higgott, Richard Leaver and John Ravenhill. Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993, pp.290-311.

¹¹¹ HURRELL “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics.”, pp.358.

¹¹² DEUTSCH *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area.*, pp.5-7. Ernst B. Haas distinguishes the idea of ‘political community’ from ‘security community’ by stressing that the latter does not insist on the presence of a specified institutional structure while both agreed on the centrality of the absence of violence as a means of political action, HAAS, Ernst B. *The Uniting of Europe.*, p.7.

¹¹³ SAIPIROON, Pranee *ASEAN Governments’ Attitudes Towards Regional Security 1975-1979*. Institute of Asian Studies Publication No. 31. Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University Press, 1982, pp.1-5. For a recent in-depth study of the applicability of a regional security community to ASEAN, see ACHARYA, Amitav “A Regional Security Community in Southeast Asia?” in *The Journal of Strategic Studies*. Vol. 18, No. 3, September 1995, pp.176-180.

¹¹⁴ COLBERT, Evelyn “Southeast Asian Regional Politics: Toward a Regional Order.” in *Dynamics of Regional Politics: Four Systems on the Indian Ocean Rim*. Collection edited by W. Howard Wriggins. New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, p.290. See also LEIFER, Michael “The Paradox of ASEAN.” in *The Round Table*. Issue 271, July 1978, p.261. In particular, Leifer suggests that “the security threat is posed in such a way that it is neither practical nor politic for the members of ASEAN to contemplate an alliance role.” *Ibid.*, p.262.

¹¹⁵ MORRISON & SUHRKE, p.201.

¹¹⁶ ACHARYA, p.176.

¹¹⁷ KHOMAN "A Policy of Regional Cooperation." *FAB*. Vol. VII No. 1, August-September 1968, p.3.

¹¹⁸ Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn, however, did make a notable reference to 'Collective Political Security' in his Keynote Statement at the 6th AMM in Pattaya in April 1973, particularly in terms of settling common security problems in the region. *FEER*. Vol. 80, No. 16, 23 April 1973, p.11. Prime Minister MR Kukrit Pramoj on his ASEAN tour in July 1975 also mentioned that ASEAN cooperation was a major contribution to "collective security." Summary of Interviews Given by the Prime Minister to the Press at the Thai Ambassador's Residence, Manila, 24 July 1975. *MFA Press Release*. No. 122/2518. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1976.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, MORRISON & SUHRKE, pp.204-205.

¹²⁰ Specific differences, nevertheless, have been identified: "ASEAN states, like the powers of 1815, walk in dread of anything which they see as a challenge to the established order. But unlike those powers, ASEAN states do not dominate the region but are overshadowed by three great powers, and further face not a defeated revolutionary state but a triumphant and powerful Vietnam," see DRUMMOND, Stuart "Fifteen Years ASEAN." in *Journal of Common Market Studies*. Vol. XX, No. 4, June 1982, p.318

¹²¹ "We will not avail ourselves of the offers from outside nations to play a European Concert or a Western Concert for us," see Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman at the Pacem in Terris II Conference, Geneva, 30 May 1967. *Collected Statements of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. 3 (November 1966-October 1967), p.28.

¹²² Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Chanchal Sakar of All India Radio and Television, 12 March 1969. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. III (1969), p.64.

¹²³ That Thanat Khoman consistently laid emphasis on the maximization of bargaining power was shown, for example, in his advocacy of limited US withdrawal from Thailand in 1969-1970, as well as in his denunciation of precipitous demands for the departure of US forces under the MR Kukrit

and MR Seni Governments in 1975-1976 without their seeking to obtain reciprocal concessions from Vietnam, see KHOMAN, Thanat "American Military Withdrawal from Thailand." in *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1976., p.396.

CHAPTER III

¹ T'ai is used to refer to a racial and language group, to be distinct from the subset 'Thai' populace of the political entity which became known as 'Siam' and then later as 'Thailand.' See OSBORNE, Milton *Southeast Asia: an illustrated introductory history*. Canberra, Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd., 5th Edition, 1990, pp.7-8.

² By contrast, interaction with the Malay kingdoms to the south, while equally constant, has not played a significant part in Thai history until the Chakri era. This is possibly explained by the fact that Thai policy, and thus historiography, has been dominated for a long time by perceptions of threat, and the fragmented Malay kingdoms did not pose a major threat as opposed to the large mainland states. For relations during the Chakri period see, for example, AHMAT, Sharom "Kedah-Siam Relations 1821-1905." in *JSS*. Vol. 59, Part I, January 1971, pp.97-117.

³ OSBORNE, pp.26-27.

⁴ HALL, pp.765-766.

⁵ See, for example, WYATT, David K. *Thailand: A Short History*. Bangkok, Silkworm Books, 1984, p.56, p.104; SYAMANANDA, Rong *A History of Thailand*. Bangkok, Thai Watana Panich Co., Ltd., 5th Edition, 1988, p.27.

⁶ H.R.H. Prince CHULA CHAKRABONGSE *Lords of Life: A History of the Kings of Thailand*. Bangkok, DD Books, 1960, p.203.

⁷ WYATT, pp.184-185.

⁸ WINICHAKUL, Thongchai *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press 1994, p.101.

⁹ See NEHER, Clark D. "The Foreign Policy of Thailand," in *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia*. p.177.

¹⁰ SYAMANANDA, p.135.

¹¹ SUNTARAVANICH, Chalong “Prades Thai Kap Karnmuang Lok: Garn Kow Sue Songgram Lok Krang Ti Song (Thailand and International Politics: Entry into WWI).” in *Nayobai Tang Prades Thai Bon Tang Praeng (Thai Foreign Policy at the Crossroads)*. Collection edited by Chantima Ongsuraks. Bangkok, Thammasat University Press, 1990, p.44.

¹² SANTAPUTRA, p.400.

¹³ *Siam Today*. 1st Issue 1936, p.9.

¹⁴ SUWANNATHAT-PIAN, Kobkua *Thailand's Durable Premier: Phibun through Three Decades 1932-1957*. Kuala Lumpur, OUP, 1995, pp.256-258.

¹⁵ WYATT, pp.253-254. Following the end of the Second World War the English name was changed back to ‘Siam’ between 1945-1949, although the use of the new term was preserved in Thai. However, with the return of Pibulsonggram to power ‘Thailand,’ which meant ‘land of the free,’ was definitively adopted for all languages. For a discussion of the terms, see SYAMANANDA, pp.1-5.

¹⁶ SUWANNATHAT-PIAN, Kobkua *Nayobai Tang Prades Kong Rattaban Pibulsonggram B.E. 2481-2487 (The Foreign Policy of the Pibulsonggram Government 1938-1944)*. Bangkok, Thammasat University Press, 1989, pp.48-50.

¹⁷ SUPHAMONGKOL *Thailand's Foreign Policy 1940-1952.*, p.57.

¹⁸ For an examination of the internal political struggle and its links to foreign policy during this period, see SANTAPUTRA; NGAMKAJORNKULKIJ, Sorasak *Kabuan Garn Seri Thai Kap Kwam Kadyaeng Tang Garnmuang Painai Prades Thai Rawang B.E. 2481-2492 (The Seri Thai Movement and Internal Political Conflict in Thailand 1938-1949)*. Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University Press, 1992.

¹⁹ See TARLING, Nicholas “Rice and Reconciliation: The Anglo-Thai Peace Negotiations of 1945.” in *JSS*. July 1978, Vol. 66, Pt. 2, pp.64-83.

²⁰ SUPHAMONGKOL *Thailand's Foreign Policy 1940-1952.*, p.401.

²¹ See GIBBONS, William C. *The US Government and the Vietnam War*. Part I: 1945-1960. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987, pp.48-63.

²² SUPHAMONGKOL *Thailand's Foreign Policy 1940-1952.*, pp.406-407. France recognized the Bao Dai regime on 2 February 1950, followed by the US on 4 February. Thailand recognized the Associated States of Indochina, namely Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia on 28 February 1950.

²³ For an example of this external perception of Thailand, see Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Rusk) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State (Matthews), 31 January 1951. *FRUS 1951 Vol. VI Asia and the Pacific Pt.1.*, pp.19-20. Subsequently, strong personal relationships were forged between Thai leaders and US representatives, which formed the basis for close bilateral collaboration within Southeast Asia, see SUWANNATHAT-PIAN *Thailand's Durable Premier.* pp.281-285.

²⁴ Policy Statement of the Pibulsonggram Government (6 Dec. 1951-23 March 1952), as declared on 11 December 1951. *Ruam Kam Talaeng Nayobai Rattaban Lae Raychue Kanarathamontri (Compilation of Government Policy Statements 1st-43rd Administrations).* Bangkok, Office of the Parliament Secretariat, (undated), pp.125-135. As a former US Ambassador to Thailand saw it: "While the people have little knowledge of communist doctrine, they realize that an alien attempt is being made to seize their country and destroy their freedom," referring to his talks with Thai leaders on the need for defensive strength. Under these conditions, Thailand was described as America's "best friends in South Asia today." STANTON, Edwin "Spotlight on Thailand." in *Foreign Affairs.* Vol. 33, No. 1, Fall 1954, p.83.

²⁵ For Thai efforts at obtaining security guarantees, see CHINWANNO, Apichart *Thailand's Search for Protection: The Making of the Alliance with the United States.*, pp.293-337; CHINWANNO, Anuson *Thailand's Policies towards China 1949-1954.*, pp.121-138.

²⁶ MODELSKI, George "The Asian States' Participation in SEATO." in *SEATO: Six Studies.* Collection edited by George Modelski. Melbourne, Australian National University, 1962, p.105.

²⁷ CHINWANNO, Anuson *Brief Encounter. Sino-Thai Rapprochement after Bandung 1955-1957.* Bangkok, ISC, 1991, p.12.

²⁸ MODELSKI "The Asian States' Participation in SEATO.", p.110.

²⁹ See speeches by Thai delegates at the Geneva Conference in *Thailand at the Geneva Conference on Laos*. Bangkok, Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1961; 52p. The events of 1959–62 and their impact on Thai diplomacy have been extremely studied by various scholars as a model of decision-making see, for example, SIRIGRAI, Surachai “Thai-American Relations in the Laotian Crisis of 1960–1962.” PhD. Thesis. State University of New York at Binghamton, 1979.

³⁰ NUMNONDA, Thaemsuk “Talaeng Gam Ruam Thanat-Rusk 1962 (The Thanat-Rusk Joint Communiqué of 1962).” in *5 Decades of Thai Foreign Affairs: From Conflict to Cooperation.*, p.162.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.169.

³² MODELSKI “The Asian States’ Participation in SEATO.”, pp.97–99.

³³ For a review of Thai-American relations from the 1950s onwards, see *Thai-American Relations in Contemporary Affairs*. Collection edited by Hans H. Indorf. Singapore, Executive Publications Pte. Ltd., 1982; *A Century and a Half of Thai-American Relations*. Collection edited by Wiwat Mungkandi & William Warren. Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University Press, 1st edition, 1982.

³⁴ MODELSKI “The Asian States’ Participation in SEATO.”, p.99.

³⁵ *Bangkok Post*. Inside Indochina., 2 May 1995.

³⁶ MUSCAT, Robert J. *Thailand and the United States: Development, Security and Foreign Aid*. Bangkok, Thammasat University Press, Thai Edition, 1992, pp.185–188. The big projects launched during the 1950s included massive road building projects, including the Friendship Highway linking Korat at the edge of the Central Plains to Nong Khai on the Eastern border.

³⁷ *Bangkok Post*. Inside Indochina. 2 May 1995.

³⁸ THOMPSON, W. Scott *Unequal Partners*. Philippine and Thai Relations with the United States 1965–1975. Lexington MA, D.C. Heath & Co., 1975, p.101.

³⁹ Thailand attended the ARC, led by the Director-General of the Fine Arts Department, Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, although the delegation laid its stress on cultural cooperation in Asia. This passive stance reflected the

generally cautious diplomacy of the period, see ARPHORNSUWAN, Thanet “The United States and the Coming of the Coup of 1947 in Siam.” in *JSS*. 1987, Vol. 75, p.205.

⁴⁰ *Asian Relations*. Report of the Proceedings and Documentation of the First Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March-April 1947. Asian Relations Organization, New Delhi, 1948, p.2. Nehru’s initiative also meant that instead of being confined to the states of Southeast Asia, it was decided that a more ambitious gathering would be attempted. However, it is also suggested that possibly for the first time, the Conference raised fears among small countries of Southeast Asia of Indian or Chinese domination, given the jousting for power that took place at the Conference between the two powers. This further stimulated ideas for a ‘Southeast Asian grouping,’ see REMME, p.98. As for the Asian Relations Organization, this body never really did take hold, and a second conference planned for 1949 to be hosted by China did not take place.

⁴¹ REMME, p.98.

⁴² CHINWANNO, Apichart, p.89.

⁴³ REMME, pp.105-108. ECAFE has been described as “the product of a modern trend toward functional regionalism, of international concern for the welfare of less-developed countries, and of Asia’s political renaissance,” SINGH, pp.21-23. ECAFE was later renamed the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in 1974.

⁴⁴ Telegram 28-The Minister in Siam (Stanton) to the Secretary of State, 7 January 1947 (see also footnotes). *FRUS 1947 Vol. VI The Far East*, p.57. See also SUPHAMONGKOL *Thailand’s Foreign Policy 1940-1952.*, pp.404-405.

⁴⁵ REMME, p.51.

⁴⁶ PHOLNIKORN, Wongse *Nayobai Tang Prades Ti Pueng Pratana Lae Naew Kwam Kid Kong Tan Pridi Banomyong (A Desirable Foreign Policy and Pridi Banomyong’s Thoughts)*. Bangkok, ASEAN Health Development Institute Press, 1995, pp.23-24.

⁴⁷ KHOMAN, Thanat “Ri Reum Kor Tang Samakhom Prachachart Asia Tawan Ok Chiang Tai (The Founding of the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations-ASEAN).” in *Thai Foreign Policy at the Crossroads.*, p.111. At this stage, the suggestion of a formal equality of states within Southeast Asia was still innovative.

⁴⁸ PHOLNIKORN, p.25.

⁴⁹ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives.* 2-9 August 1947, p.8757.

⁵⁰ Statement by H.E. Arthakitti Banomyong, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 2nd UNGA, 20 September 1947. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.2.

⁵¹ Telegram 332-The Consul at Saigon (Reed) to the Secretary of State, 13 August 1946. *FRUS 1946 Vol. VIII The Far East.*, p.55; Telegram 466-The Ambassador in Siam (Stanton) to the Secretary of State, June 13, 1947. *FRUS 1947 Vol. VI The Far East.*, p.103. Note that during the course of the border negotiations between Thailand and French Indochina in June-July 1947, the French had also proposed a form of ‘Southeast Asian Union’ to the Thais, but there was a generally wary response from Southeast Asian representatives in Bangkok, suspicious of ultimate French intentions, see *The Standard.* July 19, 1947, p.8. See also REMME, p.99.

⁵² One of those associated with the so-called ‘Coup Group,’ future Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan, later gave the view that although Indochina constituted an area of vital interest to Thailand, concerns over Indochinese movements behind the League led to such moves against their activities: “Thailand’s attitude changed...when it felt that some of these movements had been taken over by those who held beliefs which appeared to be a negative of the principles of freedom as we perceived it.” Speech by H.E. Chatichai Choonhavan at the National Press Club Luncheon, Wellington, NZ, S Aug. 1975. *FAB.* Vol. XV, No. 3, Jul.-Sept. 1975, p.58.

⁵³ Thailand was the only country of Southeast Asia not to be represented at the Calcutta Conference, see COLBERT *Southeast Asia in International Politics 1941-1956.*, pp.120-121.

⁵⁴ KHOMAN, Thanat “The Role of Multilateralism in Southeast Asia: Past and Present.” in *A Cremation Volume: Thanpuying Molee Khoman.*, p.152.

⁵⁵ CHINWANNO, Apichart, p.140.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p.145; WYATT, pp.267-269.

⁵⁷ However, India continued for some time to promote regional ventures, and in January 1949 an Asian Conference was convened in New Delhi to discuss Indonesian independence, being one of the first Asian initiatives which had a distinct effect on international opinion. Thailand's growing caution regarding such overtures meant that it remained on the sidelines. COLBERT *Southeast Asia in International Politics 1941-1956.*, pp.100-101; STARGARDT, pp.566-571. Thailand's observer was Thanat Khoman, Chargé d'Affaires in New Delhi, "I took part but as a silent participant as I was instructed to keep a low profile as my Government then did not see its way clear to play an active role in the oncoming decolonization movement." Lecture at Jawarharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 12 November 1993, in *A Cremation Volume: Thanpyuying Molee Khoman.*, p.114.

⁵⁸ SUWANNATHAT-PIAN *Thailand's Durable Premier.*, pp.282-285.

⁵⁹ Memorandum to the Foreign Minister, 21 July 1949, quoted in CHINWANNO, Apichart, p.184.

⁶⁰ BAMRUNGSUK, Surachart *United States Policy and Thai Military Rule 1947-1977.* Bangkok, Editions Duang Kamol, 1988, p.45.

⁶¹ MODELSKI "The Asian States' Participation in SEATO.", p.92; CHINWANNO, Anuson *Thailand's Policies Towards China 1949-1954*, pp.90-92; and CHINWANNO, Apichart, p.183. See also Prince Wan's consultations with the US as Ambassador to Washington in *FRUS 1949 Vol. VII The Far East and Australasia Pt.2.*

⁶² Telegram-The Secretary of State (Acheson) to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, 20 July 1949. *FRUS 1949 Vol. VII The Far East and Australasia Pt.2.*, pp.1170-1171.

⁶³ LITTAUA Ferdinand *The Philippines and Southeast Asia 1954-1972.* IUHEI Thèse No. 245. Geneva, Imprimerie Pflirter frères s.a., 1977, p.19. Australia, Ceylon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia participated in the Baguio Conference, see SINGH, pp.6-7.

⁶⁴ See SUTHIWART-NARUEPUT, Owart “Gam Kow Pen Paki Kong Prades Thai Nai Sondhi Sanya Garn Pongkan Ruamgan Haeng Asia Tawan Ok Chiang Tai (Thailand’s Membership of the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty).” in *Thai Foreign Policy at the Crossroads.*, p.97. However, SEATO reflected more the “inherent right of individual or collective self-defence” under Article 51 of the UN Charter rather than being an expression of regionalism.

⁶⁵ It has been noted that in cumulative terms, Thailand was only classified as a middle-ranking aid recipient, and during the period 1946-1986 received lower amounts of aid than Indonesia and the Philippines, particularly in per capita terms, see MUSCAT, pp.38-39.

⁶⁶ Subsequently, two other Thais became Secretary-General of SEATO, namely, Konthi Suphamongkol (1963-1965) and Sunthorn Hongladarom (1972-1977). The only non-Thai Secretary-General was Jesus Vargas from the Philippines (1965-1972), although the post of Deputy Secretary-General was also occupied by Australians and New Zealanders. See *SEATO Record: 1954-1977*. Bangkok, SEATO, 1977, 70p.

⁶⁷ It was reported that in December 1953, the Thai Ambassador to Phnom Penh had proposed the creation of a Buddhist Union, comprising Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Burma. Although such themes did recur during the 1950s and 1960s, it was the case that religious affinities did not necessarily lead to harmonious relations between Thailand and its Buddhist neighbours, see FISTIÉ, Pierre *L’Évolution de la Thaïlande contemporaine*. Paris, Armand Colin, 1967, p.312. See also SUWANNATHAT-PIAN *Thailand’s Durable Premier.*, p.143.

⁶⁸ IDE, Anak Agung Gde *Twenty Years Indonesian Foreign Policy*. Yogyakarta, Duta Wacana University Press, 1990, p.220. Thailand eventually accepted to attend the Conference upon the urging of the Philippines and the US to represent Free World interests.

⁶⁹ COLBERT *Southeast Asia in International Politics 1941-1956*. pp.328-330.

⁷⁰ “Thailand’s Political Parties II.” by Hubert Freyn in *FEER*. 3 January 1957, p. 12.

⁷¹ CHINWANNO, Anuson *Brief Encounter.*, p.31.

⁷² Policy Statement of the Government of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (9 Feb. 1959-8 Dec. 1963), as declared on 12 February 1959. *Compilation of Government Policy Statements.*, p.159. It is interesting that the reference made to 'self reliance' as seen here would not be made again until 1972. *Ibid.*, p.160.

⁷³ This was probably linked to the escalation of the war in Indochina as well as the establishment of the Thai Nationality Autonomous Area in the Chinese province of Yunnan in January 1953, see MODELSKI, p.95; CHINWANNO, Apichart, pp.289-293. See also Policy Statement of the Government of Marshal P. Pibulsonggram (21 March 1957-16 September 1957), as delivered on 1 April 1957, in *Compilation of Government Policy Statements.*, p.144.

⁷⁴ Thanat also mentioned that since his Doctoral Thesis submitted at the Faculty of Law in Paris, which was consecrated to the concern with "Development of the Sentiment of International Solidarity," such themes as uniting small countries to make their voices heard had been "une sorte d'idée fixe" for him, see KHOMAN, Thanat "De la guerre à la neutralité." in *Preuves*. 2e trimestre 1972, No. 10, p.109.

⁷⁵ Policy Statement of the Government of Marshal Sarit Thanarat (9 February 1959-8 December 1963), as delivered on 12 February 1959. *Compilation of Government Policy Statements.*, p.160. Such themes were expanded upon by Thanat in the first major foreign policy statement of the govt. at the 14th UNGA in Sept. 1959: "There is a growing realization in our part of the world that the nations living in the same region share a common interest and a common stake in their own welfare and prosperity. They feel, therefore, that it is essential for them to develop and strengthen among themselves the ties of regional solidarity which in due course may mature into a form of regional cooperation as envisaged by the Charter." *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.44.

⁷⁶ KHOMAN, Thanat "Introduction." in WONGPIBUL, Boonlert *25 Pee ASEAN: Panitan Lae Polngarn (25 Years ASEAN: Hopes and Achievements)*. Bangkok, ISC, 1992, p.1.

⁷⁷ Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, Bangkok, 5/2/96.

⁷⁸ KHOMAN, Thanat "ASEAN: Conception and Evolution." in *A Cremation Volume: Thanpuying Molec Khoman*, p.182.

⁷⁹ It may be seen that during Sarit's time, there was a constant concern with Thailand being taken for granted by the US. Washington's decision to supply India with grain and rice in May 1960 was greeted with dismay in Bangkok for fear of the effects on Thailand's rice exports to the Subcontinent, and led to a symbolic resignation by Thanat Khoman for "having failed to defend Thai interests." The World Court decision on the Thai Cambodian border dispute granting the disputed Khao Phra Viharn to Cambodia in 1962 caused further consternation, for it emerged that both the US and France, two of Thailand's allies in SEATO, had supported the Cambodian case. See JHA, Ganganath *The Foreign Policy of Thailand*. New Delhi, Radiant Publishers, 1979, pff. 135. See also "Bitter Rice." by the Editor in *FEER*. Vol. XXVIII, No. 25, 23 June 1960, p.1279.

⁸⁰ GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia*, pp.165-167. It is suggested, however, that a joint proposal had been drafted since April 1959 and that Philippine representatives were already advocating it in their visits to South Vietnam and Indonesia in April-May 1959, see LITTAUA, p.43.

⁸¹ Letter from Tunku Abdul Rahman to President Garcia of the Philippines, 28 October 1959, in BOYCE, Peter *Malaysia and Singapore in International Diplomacy*. Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1968, pp.234-235. The eight countries mentioned were: Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia, South Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos.

⁸² In April 1959 the Tunku sent an envoy to discuss the project with the Philippines and Thailand, see Kayser Sung's Interview with Southeast Asian Official Concerned with SEAFET Negotiations in *FEER*. Vol. XXIX, No. 2, 14 July 1960, p.50.

⁸³ Quoted in GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia*., pp.167-168; JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.20. Apparently the Thais wanted to call the body 'Southeast Asia Community Organization' (SEACOR), which was presumably dropped due to fears that it might sound too close to SEATO.

⁸⁴ GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia*., pp.167-168.

⁸⁵ Interview given by Sunthorn Hongladarom to Mr. Kayser Sung in *FEER*. Vol. XXIX, No. 3, 21 July 1960, p.107.

⁸⁶ GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia.*, p.184. Konthi Suphamongkol at that time was Director-General of the Department of International Organizations (1959-1963) and Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁷ Thanat later wrote: “J’ai pris mon bâton de pèlerin pour prêcher la bonne parole...Cependant, l’idée d’appartenir à une groupe particulier répugnait à certains de mes interlocuteurs,” revealing his disappointment at the lack of a positive response. KHOMAN “De la guerre à la neutralité.”, p.109. On 28 July 1960, SEAFET was mentioned by the Tunku as having been replaced by the formula of an Association of Southeast Asian States (ASAS), which was then again shortened to ASA, partly in rejection of formality and a treaty-based formula so as to make it more palatable for prospective members. *FEER*. Vol. XXIX, No. 5, 4 August 1960, p.222. See also “Manila’s image of ASAS.” by Daniel Wolfstone in *FEER*. Vol. XXIX, No. 11, 15 September 1960, p.596.

⁸⁸ *FEER* Vol. XXXI, No. 8, 23 February 1961, p.322.

⁸⁹ In fact, at the tripartite talks in KL in February 1961, the possibility of China’s membership in the UN was also informally discussed. “The Indonesia Issue.” by a Correspondent in *FEER*. Vol. XXXI, No. 10, 10 March 1961, p.433.

⁹⁰ Reply of H.M. The King of Thailand to the Speech by H.M. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong at the Royal Banquet, Istana Negara, KL, 20 June 1962. *Collection of Royal Addresses & Speeches During the State and Official Visits of Their Majesties The King and Queen to Foreign Countries 1959-1967 (B.E. 2502-2510)*. Bangkok, Office of His Majesty’s Principal Private Secretary, Thai Watana Panich Co., Ltd., 1974, p.562.

⁹¹ Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 17th UNGA, 27 September 1962. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegation of Thailand at the UNGA.*, pp.86-87.

⁹² Interview by Mr. Krishna Moorthy with Indonesian Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs, Kusumowidadjo Suwito, in *FEER*. Vol. XXXII, No. 2, 13 July 1961, p.55. ASAS refers to the acronym for ‘Association of Southeast Asian States’ which was the original formula proposed by Malaya. Indonesian opposition to ASA rather helped to cloud the view of Indonesia in Tunku

Abdul Rahman's eyes, which was to have some consequence when discussing the reactivation of regional cooperation in 1966-67. For example, the Tunku mentioned that "in declining to join, Indonesia broke the solemn undertaking given at the Bandung Conference to create an organization for intraregional economic cooperation." TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN "Malaysia: Key Area in Southeast Asia." in *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 43, No. 4, July 1965, p.665.

⁹³ GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia.*, p.162.

⁹⁴ "After the Accord," by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. LII, No. 11, 16 June 1966, p.511.

⁹⁵ KHAW, pp.207-208. In fact, it is suggested that MAPHILINDO was only grudgingly accepted by the Tunku in the first place so as to ensure support for the creation of Malaysia, see IDE, p.479.

⁹⁶ LITTAUA, p.49. Littaua suggests that what differentiated ASA and MAPHILINDO was the relative mixture of economic and political elements. *Ibid.* p.56.

⁹⁷ "Debalkanization" in *FEER*. Vol. XXVIII, No. 8, 25 February 1960, p.391.

⁹⁸ Note, however, that Bangkok may also have been motivated by the absence of the US. See JORGENSEN-DAHIL, pp.16-17.

⁹⁹ NUMNONDA, p.165.

¹⁰⁰ "Thai Lae ASEAN (Thailand and ASEAN)." Interview given by Thanat Khoman to Thira Nuchpiem and Vinita Sukrasep in *ASEAN Nai Gam Muang Lok (ASEAN in World Politics)*. Bangkok, ISIS, 1985, pp.316-317.

¹⁰¹ One contemporary observer spoke of Thai participation in ASA as forming "part of the complex battle of wits that goes on between Bangkok and Washington," see "The three jugglers." by the Editor in *FEER*. Vol. XXXIII, No. 5, 3 August 1961, p.199.

¹⁰² JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.21.

¹⁰³ FUNSTON, Neil John *Thai Foreign Policy from Sarit to Seni: Adaptation During the Second Indochina War*. D.Phil. Thesis. Australian National University, 1989, p.201.

- ¹⁰⁴ ASEAN *Selected Statistics*. (1982-1988) Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1990, p.89.
- ¹⁰⁵ SUCHARITHANARUKS, Vithaya “Thailand Lae Indonesia (Thailand and Indonesia),” in *Thai Kap Puen Ban (Thailand and its Neighbours)*. Collection edited by Ukrit Pathamanand. Bangkok, Institute of Asian Studies, 1996, pp.42-43.
- ¹⁰⁶ It was observed that with the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in August 1965, a new rapprochement between the latter and Thailand was imminent. “Singapore Separation.” by Han Suyin in *FEER*. Vol. XLIX, No. 8, 19 August 1965, pp.349-350.
- ¹⁰⁷ BOYCE, p.229.
- ¹⁰⁸ During 1963, Thai embassies in Manila and Jakarta looked after the interests of Malaysia, while the Thai embassy in Kuala Lumpur looked after Philippine interests. SUCHARITKUL, Sompong “‘Good Offices’ As a Peaceful Means of Settling Regional Differences.” in *Saranrom Journal*. 13 (1967), p.114.
- ¹⁰⁹ This Malayan sympathy for their ethnic brethren in Thailand was expressed as from 1947-1948, in the face of assimilationist policies by the Thai government, see WYATT, p.268.
- ¹¹⁰ However, concerns regarding the lop-sided nature of the economic relationship with Singapore seemed to have affected Malaysia and Indonesia far more than Thailand, see RÉGNIER, Philippe *Singapore-City State in South-East Asia*. London, C. Hurst & Co., 1991, p.81.
- ¹¹¹ This is included commodities such as tin which was smuggled to be processed in Singapore. During periods of high prices, such as in the mid 1970s when the Thai government moved to increase royalty fees, the extent of tin smuggling would increase. AKRASANEE, Narongchai *Thailand and ASEAN Economic Cooperation*. Bangkok, ASEAN Research Unit/ UN Development Institute, 1980, p.42; p.69.
- ¹¹² REGNIER, p.141.
- ¹¹³ FUNSTON, p.202. It is also pointed out that the 1955 Bandung Conference made clear to Foreign Minister Carlos Romulo that the Philippines lacked communication and links with Southeast Asian states, and so attempts were subsequently made to upgrade relations with them, see LITTAUA, p.1.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.15.

¹¹⁵ In fact various similarities between the Philippine and Thai experience have led to a substantial body of literature comparing the two countries, see for example THOMPSON *Unequal Partners.*; YOSHIHARA, Kunio *The Nation and Economic Growth. The Philippines and Thailand.* Kuala Lumpur, OUP, 1994.

¹¹⁶ Aware of problems with neighbours, the historiography of diversity has now come to the fore instead of that of homogeneity. Such is the approach taken by Winichakul, who refers to the non-bounded Southeast Asian state of the 19th Century as “a discontinuous, patchy arrangement of power units where people of different overlords mingled together in the same area while only spies were working close to the frontier towns of one another,” see WINICHAKUL, p.79.

¹¹⁷ HONGTONGKUM, Prayad and UDOMSAP, Prinya “Local Administration and Frontier Disputes.” in *Thailand's Frontiers and Beyond: Conflict or Confluence?* Bangkok, International Studies Centre, 1990, p.67. It is pointed out that border problems are caused by various factors, including: the lack of a comprehensive approach; disputes concerning delimitation and demarcation; uncertainty regarding the binding force of various treaties; differences between schools of thought in relation to interpretation of such treaties, and the fact that certain frontiers are not covered by treaties, see “Introduction.” in *Ibid.*, p.14.

¹¹⁸ As an example, in 1967 Thailand unilaterally denounced its treaty obligations with Laos, see CHUMARK, Sompong “Frontier Issues, Disputes Avoidance & Settlement.” in *Ibid.*, p.97.

¹¹⁹ SUKHAKANY A, Dhavom “Notable Points About Thai-Vietnamese Rivalry From An Historical Perspective.” in *Confrontation and Coexistence. The Future of ASEAN-Vietnam Relations.* Collection edited by William H. Turley. Bangkok, ISIS, 1985, pp.12-18.

¹²⁰ Additional problems were caused by the presence of over 40,000 Vietnamese refugees who had fled across the border to Thailand, primarily from Laos, during the fighting of the late 1940s and early 1950s, with the negotiations on repatriation constantly having to be abandoned, see BURUSAPATANA,

Khachadpai *Thai Kap Puen Ban Indochine (Thailand and its Neighbours in Indochina)*. Bangkok, Prae Pitaya, 1988, pp.118-121.

¹²¹ PHUANGKASEM, p.21.

¹²² FUNSTON, p.91.

¹²³ SIHANOUK, Prince Norodom and KRISHER, Bernard *Sihanouk Reminisces*. World leaders I have known. Bangkok, Editions Duang Kamol, 1990, p.70.

¹²⁴ Scholars regularly refer to the force of history and historical memory in influencing relations in Indochina: "Perhaps nowhere have such memories carried a greater weight than in Cambodian policies towards her neighbours Thailand and Vietnam" JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.xv. See also SMITH, Roger M. *Cambodia's Foreign Policy*. Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press, 1965, pp.140-153; GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia.*, pp.173-179.

¹²⁵ The policy of looking south towards Malay neighbours was described as a "second best" solution for Thailand, considering the importance of its interests in Indochina. "Racial Rapprochement." Editorial in *FEER*. Vol. LII, No. 9, 2 June 1966, p.431.

¹²⁶ As Thanat attempted to argue vis-à-vis ASPAC, common interests could also apply to a larger region, such as that of the Asia-Pacific: "We came with the determination to learn to live together and work together for our own good, to depend primarily on ourselves who belong to the same region rather than on others who are further away and to forge a newly born solidarity which is directed against no one but only at one objective-the increasing welfare of our nations in the Asian and Pacific Area." Opening Statement by H.E. Thanat Khoman at the 1st MM of ASPAC, Seoul, 14 June 1966. *Collected Statements of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. 2 (Oct 1965-Oct 1966) Bangkok, Department of Information, 1966, p.14.

¹²⁷ One prominent historian of East Asian affairs sees in moves to launch ASPAC as from September-November 1964 by South Korea as an attempt by Seoul to act somewhat as a stalking horse for the US, just as the Philippines at Baguio in May 1950, each episode coinciding with the escalation of US involvement in Southeast Asia. In his view, ASPAC was an attempt to unite

Washington's Southeast Asian, Northeast Asian and South Pacific allies even if the US remained outside. JOYAUX, François *La nouvelle question d'Extrême-Orient*. Vol. 2 L'ère du conflit sino-soviétique 1959-1978. Paris, Editions Payot, 1988, pp.162-163. It was also clear from President Park Chung Hee's trip to Asia in February 1966 that he was thinking of an anti-communist alliance, see "An Asian Alliance." by Taipei Correspondent in *FEER*. Vol. LI, No. 8, 24 February 1966, p.351. However, it seemed that the members of ASPAC also had their own firm ideas regarding the aims of cooperation, which were distinct from those of Washington.

¹²⁸ *FEER 1967 Yearbook.*, p.362; TRAGER, Frank "Pax Asiatica?" in *Orbis*. Vol. X, Fall 1966, p.676. Thanat played a personally active role at the Ministerial level in Seoul, while his Assistant, Sompong Sucharitkul, also acted as Vice-Chairman in the Drafting Committee.

¹²⁹ A more informal counterpart to ASPAC was the grouping of the 'Manila Seven,' constituted by the seven troop providing countries in South Vietnam, which met for the first time in October 1966, and which regularly met thereafter following the conclusion of SEATO Council Meetings, With this in mind, it could be asserted that Thailand would have no cause to militarize ASPAC as most of its members already discussed security issues within such alternative fora, see FUNSTON, p.252.

¹³⁰ On study quotes a senior Philippine diplomat involved with ASPAC matters as saying that: "The common economic endeavours of ASPAC are merely the fronts for the real political motives of the Organization," LITTAUA, p.60.

¹³¹ "Banking on Asia." by Charoen Chinalai in *FEER*. Vol. L, No. 7, 18 November 1965, pp.330-332.

¹³² JORGENSEN-DAHL, pp.28-29. See also discussion of Thai proposals to revive ASA in "New emerging force." Editorial in *FEER*. Vol. XLIX, No. 4, 22 July 1965, p.164.

¹³³ "The main motivation which has prompted Asian nations to strengthen regional cooperation lies in their assume greater responsibility in regard to Asian problems and to prevent outside powers from interfering with and dominating the life of Asian peoples." Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 21st UNGA, 27 September 1966. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.146.

¹³⁴ See, for example, KHOMAN, Thanat “ASEAN in the Regional and Global Context.” Speech at the 3rd US-ASEAN Conference, Chiang Mai, 7-11 January 1985, in *A Cremation Volume: Thanpyuing Molee Khoman.*, p.4. Adam Malik also admitted that Thanat had first raised the issue of regional cooperation at the June 1966 Dinner, see Opening Statement by H.E Adam Malik, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, at the 1st AMM, Bangkok, 8 August 1967, in *Statements by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings 1967-1987.* Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1986, p.35.

¹³⁵ In March 1966, Suharto was given extended authorities to act on Sukarno’s behalf, but was not officially appointed Acting President by the People’s Congress until March 1967, see ANWAR, pp.38-41. The salient importance of highlight Indonesia’s role in the founding of ASEAN by Jakarta’s policy-makers is also suggested by the vagaries of domestic politics in Indonesia, with a need to justify the continuation of the traditional ‘free and active’ foreign policy during the political transition, see LEIFER, Michael *Indonesia’s Foreign Policy.* London, George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd., 1983, p.122.

¹³⁶ Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Thailand and Indonesia, 31 August 1966. *MFA Press Release.* No. 4/2509. Bangkok, Dept. of Information, 1966.

¹³⁷ “No camouflage surrender.” by Frances L. Starner in *FEER.* Vol. LXII, No. 42, 17 October 1968, p.155.

¹³⁸ For details of the various moves and counter-moves re. ASA and MAPHILINDO in this period, see JORGENSEN-DAHL, pp.29-33.

¹³⁹ KHOMAN “The Role of Multilateralism in Southeast Asia: Past and Present.”, p.153.

¹⁴⁰ JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.32. In his New Year Observation in January 1966, the Tunku was reported to have remarked: “I am convinced that the (ASA) is the only practical idea that can benefit all its members in the wide spheres of cooperation and closer relations. The MAPHILINDO concept cannot work. It failed from the start, still-born because it was a concept based on a

racial idea, and on the supremacy of the larger elements dominating smaller ones," see "Uplift for ASA?" by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. LI, No. 2, 13 January 1966, p.43. Nevertheless, it seemed that other Malaysian negotiators such as Deputy PM Tun Razak and Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie were more favourably inclined towards Indonesia, although Thai persuasion of the Tunku may have been decisive in swaying the balance, see SHAFIE, Tan Sri Ghazali "ASEAN: Contributor to Stability and Development." in *The Fletcher Forum*. Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1982, p.357.

¹⁴¹ Address by Tun Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman, Minister of Home Affairs, to the Foreign Correspondents Association, Johore Bahru, 23 June 1966. Quoted in BOYCE, pp.236-237.

¹⁴² Nevertheless, while the Philippines continued to make repeated references to MAPHILINDO, it is possible that its actual attachment to the concept was not particularly strong as by 1966, Marcos had replaced Macapagal, who had been one of the original sponsors of MAPHILINDO. Instead, it is suggested that the Greater MAPHILINDO concept was favoured by the Indonesian military. Failing the acceptance of such a project, a new organization would enable Indonesia to "stamp its own imprint on regional cooperation." LEIFER *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, p.120.

¹⁴³ The Meeting concerned was the Pacem in Terris II Conference in Geneva, June 1967, see Telegram 2510/945, Thai FM (Thanat) to MFA, dated 2 June 1967. *MFA L&A Div. File: SEAARC 2510 (23)*.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, Bangkok, 5/2/96. Already, in his speeches at more recent SEATO Meetings, Thanat appeared to be paving the way towards indigenous regional ventures: "taking into account possible future developments, the Thai Government and people have to take by necessity the long-range view that peace and security as well as progress fall primarily within the scope of responsibility of the nations situated in the region." Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman at the 12th Meeting of the SEATO Council of Ministers, Washington, 18 April 1967. *Collected Statements of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. 3 (Nov. 1966-Oct. 1967), p.22.

¹⁴⁵ "Judging Thanat." by A Special Correspondent in *FEER* Vol. LIV, No. 1, 6 October 1966, p.16.

¹⁴⁶ FUNSTON, p.206.

¹⁴⁷ During Johnson's visit to the troops in Vietnam in December 1967, he had declared "the enemy cannot win now" and even held out the hope that some troops could be home for Christmas, see THOMPSON *Unequal Partners.*, pp.84-85. However, optimistic comments by military and government leaders did, to a certain extent, attempt to hide substantial difficulties on the ground. Thai concerns had been raised, moreover, by the upsurge of insurgency in the dying throes of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, as well as China's explosion of its first hydrogen bomb in June 1967, see JOY AUX, p.24.

¹⁴⁸ KASEMSRI, MR Kasem S. "Trends in Thailand's Foreign Policy: From the Cold War to the New World Order." in *Saranrom Journal.* 49 (1993), p.52. See also KASEMSRI, MR Kasem S. "Thailand's Foreign Policy." in *Saranrom Journal.* 43 (1986), p.13.

¹⁴⁹ Statement by the Secretary of State (Rusk), issued 2 March 1967. *American Foreign Policy 1967 Current Documents.* p.811.

¹⁵⁰ Joint Statement Issued by the President of the United States (Johnson) and the King of Thailand (Bhumibol Adulyadej), 29 June 1967. *Ibid.*, p.811. At the Meeting between President Johnson and King Bhumibol, military cooperation was also discussed, see BAMRUNGSUK, p.135.

¹⁵¹ See MARKS, Tom *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the CPT in Structural Perspective.* Studies in Contemporary Thailand No. 3. Bangkok, White Lotus, 1994, pp.62-63. The dispatch of Thai troops to Vietnam was first announced on 3 January 1967. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives.* 1-7 January 1967, p.21804. However, the initial decision approving in principle military assistance to South Vietnam was taken on 3 May 1966, see *Prawat Kong Tap Thai Nai Rob 200 Pee B.E. 2325-2525 (History of the Thai Armed Forces over 200 Years: 1782-1982).* Bangkok, Supreme Command Headquarters, 1982, p.403. Thus the decision on the relaunching of regional cooperation took place at around the same time as the decision on military intervention by Thai troops in Vietnam.

¹⁵² Although there were indications that Britain intended to scale down its forces in Southeast Asia following the end of *Konfrontasi*, the intention to withdraw East of Suez was first communicated to Malaysia and Singapore

during British Defence Minister Denis Healey's Asian visit of April 1967, and made public in the Government's Supplementary Statement on Defence Policy in July 1967, which nevertheless envisaged that forces would remain until the mid 1970s. Only in January 1968 was there notification of an accelerated withdrawal, leading to a first Five Power Conference between Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia and Britain to work out fresh security arrangements. See KHAW, pp.268-270; pp.286-288.

¹⁵³ BUNNAG, Tej "Prades Thai Lae ASEAN (Thailand and ASEAN)." in *Saranrom Journal* 33 (1983), p.243. This argument is reinforced by the fact that it was the MFA which dominated the negotiations on Thailand's behalf. This was in contrast to the case with Indonesia, the other major advocate of ASEAN in 1967, for which the initial contacts towards reconciliation with Malaysia had been promoted by the army, and particularly by KOSTRAD (Strategic Reserve) personalities such as Ali Murtopo and Benny Murdani. The Indonesian military preferred to bypass the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the initial stages due to the strong influence of pro-Sukarno elements among followers of the former Foreign Minister Subandrio, although it was the new Foreign Minister Adam Malik who was to concretize Indonesia's ideas on ASEAN, see ANWAR, pp.42-43; POLOMKA, Peter "The Indonesian Army and Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal." in *Asia Quarterly*. 1972/4, p.375.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

¹⁵⁵ See Review of Corinne Phuangkasem's *Thailand and SEATO* by W. Scott THOMPSON in *JSS*. July 1974, Vol. 62 Pt.2, p.334. In another work, Thompson also claims that from his discussions with Thai diplomats, it appeared that fear of being involved too deeply with the US spread rapidly in Thai diplomatic circles after the despatch of troops to Vietnam, see THOMPSON *Unequal Partners.*, p.97.

¹⁵⁶ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Takashi Oka of the Christian Science Monitor, 20 January 1967. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. I (1967), p.8.

¹⁵⁷ See KHOMAN, Thanat "The Founding of ASEAN." in *Thai Foreign Policy at the Crossroads.*, pp.102-112. Some of Thanat's comments during the course

of the 1980s, however, may have been directed at the political preoccupation with the Kampuchean issue at the time, and thus he appeared to emphasize economic elements of ASEAN cooperation so as to compensate for this over-emphasis.

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, MORRISON & SUHRKE, pp.203-208.

¹⁵⁹ For example, moves to forge links with “new friends” and to distance Thailand from US policy did not extend as far as making an overture to such bodies as the Non-Aligned Movement, for it was felt that they were too politicized and such moves could risk losing the US as a friend. Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96.

¹⁶⁰ ANWAR, p.50.

¹⁶¹ JORGENSEN-DAHL, pp.36-37 FIFIELD, Russell H. *National and Regional Interests in ASEAN*, pp.6-9. See also IRVINE, Roger “The Formative Years of ASEAN: 1967-1975.” in *Understanding ASEAN.*, p.12. Interviews with various Thai personalities involved in the negotiations also reconfirmed initial Thai declarations in 1967 that Bangkok was behind the moves to revive regional cooperation.

¹⁶² See discussion of Adam Malik’s visits in “Southern Cement.” Editorial in *FEER*. Vol. LVI, No. 10, 8 June 1967, pp.515-516; ANWAR, p.51.

¹⁶³ It is argued that as only Indonesian delegates visited various Southeast Asian countries, this indicated a primary role for Indonesia, see ANWAR, p.55. However, it was possible that Thailand had raised the issue of Burmese participation in regional cooperation during Prime Minister Thanom’s visit to Burma between 10-12 November 1966, returning an earlier visit by General Ne Win in September. On 1 July 1967, Burmese Foreign Minister U Ti Han also stopped over in Bangkok on the way back from Japan. That Thailand did not undertake a Southeast Asian tour to drum up support for ASEAN may be attributed to unhappy experience in promoting ASA in 1960, while in the case of Indonesia it was also probably necessary for the new government to undertake to reassure regional states of its new disposition. Moreover, Thailand’s bilateral ties with Laos were not at their best in 1966, while relations with Cambodia remained poor.

¹⁶⁴ Memorandum of Meeting between Thanat Khoman and S. Rajaratnam. No. 0100/13006 from MFA to the Prime Minister, 4 May 1967. *MFA L&A Div. File: SEAARC 2510 (23)*. Thus the crucial Singaporean decisions appeared to have been taken after indications of British withdrawal from the region, see note 271.

¹⁶⁵ JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.34. This was in the aftermath of the visit by Philippine Vice-President Fernando Lopez to Bangkok on 22 May 1967.

¹⁶⁶ Telegram 2510/841-From MFA to RTE, Brussels (Sompong for FM), dated 31 May 1967. *MFA L&A Div. File: SEAARC 2510 (23)*. At that stage, it was still apparently unclear whether the crucial meetings would take place in Bangkok or in Jakarta.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96; Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, Bangkok, 5/2/96.

¹⁶⁸ See Verbatim Record of Proceedings, Bangkok, 8 August 1967, ASEAN/Doc./3. *MFA L&A Div. File: ASEAN/3/ FM 2510 ASEAN Declaration*.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96.

¹⁷⁰ This draft was personally reviewed and corrected by Thanat. *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ JORGENSEN-DAHI, pp.38-43. This could, however, possibly be justified by its having been derived from Principle 6(A) of the 1955 Bandung Declaration, to which both Thailand and the Philippines subscribed.

¹⁷² Draft Joint Declaration (Singapore Draft), SEAARC/Doc/1/Amend/4. *MFA L&A Div. File: ASEAN/3/ FM 2510 ASEAN Declaration*.

¹⁷³ Summary Record of the Meeting of Foreign Ministers of ASEAN, Bangkok, 7 August 1967. SEAARC/Doc./6. *Ibid.* In view of speculation about Sri Lanka's interest in the new grouping it was possible that the question of Sri Lanka membership was mentioned to Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake on 30 June 1967 when he visited Bangkok, and subsequently Kuala Lumpur. However, the status of Sri Lanka remained ambivalent and it chose to adopt a wait-and-see attitude given the value of its Rice-Rubber Pact with China. MENDIS, Vernon L.B. *National Security Concepts of States: Sri Lanka*. Geneva, UNIDIR, 1992, p.91.

¹⁷⁴ At the Bangsaen and Bangkok Meetings, the name Association of Southeast Asian States (ASAS) was also approximately used by the Thai secretariat. An Aide Memoire for the Meetings notes that SEAARC “is rather a mouthful and its initials are probably the longest of any international organization.” Moreover, as ASAS means ‘foundation’ in the Malay tongue, it would “sound more native to the region, thus emphasizing the character and spirit of the proposed Association.” However, ASEAN eventually preferred to ASAS as the latter had previously been used in formulating the initial Malayan proposals on ASA, and thus the association with ASA was probably too close for Indonesia’s liking. See Aide Memoire SEAARC/Doc/1/Amend/3, *MFA L&A Div. File: ASEAN/3/FM 2510 ASEAN Declaration*.

¹⁷⁵ See various speeches and Report of the 4th Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of ASA, Kuala Lumpur, 28-29 August 1967. *FAB*. Vol. VII, No. 1, Aug.-Sept. 1967, pp.45-53.

¹⁷⁶ As the Bangkok Declaration was not a formal treaty, there was not even any need for an internal ratification process.

¹⁷⁷ See various documents in *MFA L&A Div. File: SEAARC 2510 (23)*. Interviews with former Thai diplomats revealed an impression that high-level representation by the Thai Government might have led to demands for high-level representation from other countries, which could create complications in view of the fragile nature of regional reconciliation, and so the Meeting was kept restricted to the Foreign Ministers’ level.

¹⁷⁸ That various options were being considered concurrently was suggested by the fact that original Thai intentions to get Indonesia to join ASPAC were abandoned during 1967. Instead, cooperation with Indonesia would be provided under the ASEAN framework, see Tel. 2510/841-From MFA to RTE, Brussels (Sompong for FM), dated 31 May 1967. *Op. cit.*

CHAPTER IV

¹ “The hierarchical principle, symbolized by the monarchy, though it had been modified...never in fact lost primacy over the horizontal one, even after the revolution of 1932,” see COHEN, Erik *Thai Society in Comparative Perspective*.

Studies in Contemporary Thailand No. 1. Bangkok, White Lotus, 1991, p.27. Such principle placed particular emphasis on the three central institutions of Nation, Religion and Monarchy, and was embodied in the bureaucracy whose members are termed as “Servants of the Crown.”

² The term ‘bureaucratic polity’ was pioneered by Fred Riggs, who based much of his research on the study of the postwar Pibulsonggram and Sarit regimes, see RIGGS, Fred W. *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity*. Honolulu, East-West Center Press, 1966, p.211.

³ See, for example, GIRLING, J.L.S. *The Bureaucratic Polity in Modernizing Societies*. ISEAS Occasional Paper No. 64. Singapore, ISEAS, 1981, p.11.

⁴ DHIRAVEGIN *Demi-Democracy*., p.152. Constant complaints with the Thai political and administrative system right up to the present day have centred on arbitrariness and the lack of transparency.

⁵ THEERAVIT Khien “Grabuan Garn Gamnod Nayobai Tang Prades Kong Thai (Thailand’s Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process).” in *5 Decades of Thai Foreign Affairs*., p.268. However, policy statements for much of the period rather reflected the inputs of the bureaucracy, as approved by government leaders, rather than true government statements even when the government was formed from political parties in the 1970s.

⁶ WYATT, p.225; pp.229-230.

⁷ PHOLNIKORN *A Desirable Foreign Policy and Pridi Banomyong’s Thoughts*., pp.11-12.

⁸ PHUANGKASEM, p.8.

⁹ *Democracy in Thailand*. Bangkok, Armed Forces Information Service, Supreme Command Headquarters, 1993, pp.25-27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.27.

¹¹ Nearly 60% of the members of the Kukrit Pramoj Government were businessmen, although it is suggested that business communities only made their presence felt as from 1977, and not really in 1973-1976, see LAOTHAMATAS, Anek “Business and Politics in Thailand-New Patterns of Influence.” in *Asian Survey*. Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, April 1988, p.456.

¹² See DHIRAVEGIN *Demi-Democracy.*, pp.209-224.

¹³ NEHER, Clark D. *State and Society in Thailand.* Paper for Association for Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, 1990, p.23. See also the analogous description of 'high' and 'low' administrative capacity of states to pursue and implement policy objectives, particularly in situations of economic and social readjustments in CROUCH, Harold *Domestic Political Structures and Regional Economic Cooperation.* Singapore, ISEAS, 1984, pp.1-10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹⁵ MODELSKI "The Asian States' Participation in SEATO.", p.119.

¹⁶ See, for example, *A Cremation Volume: Nai Worakam Bancha.* Prawat Lae Rabob Ngarn Kong Krasuang Garn Tang Prades (History and Operations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Bangkok, Prachan Press, 1984, pp.1-25.

¹⁷ After an initial military career as a cavalry officer, Chatichai Choonhavan spent over a decade within the MFA as ambassador, for domestic political reasons. By contrast, Pichai Rattakul was a professional politician and businessman.

¹⁸ FUNSTON, p.112.

¹⁹ For indications regarding Thanat's working style, see "The American shield remains." by Norman Peagam in *FEER.* Vol. 85, No. 37, 20 September 1974, p.14. However, this dependence upon a restricted group of collaborators has often been a feature within the MFA, depending on the administrative style of its leadership and the general heterogeneity of backgrounds.

²⁰ Certainly, Thanat's reputed quick temper was well recognized by contemporaries, see THOMPSON *Unequal Partners.*, p.122.

²¹ See comments by Konthi Suphamongkol concerning Pairote Jayanama's tenure of the post of Permanent Secretary (1962-1967) in *A Cremation Volume: Pairote Jayanama.* Vol. II. Bangkok, Songsayam Co., Ltd., 1995, p.213. At the time, this situation was in contrast to certain of its ASEAN neighbours. In Malaysia, Permanent Secretary Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie was extremely influential, while in Indonesia the Permanent Secretary played a smaller role, and often the Director-General of Political Affairs was considered the senior

post, as shown in Anwar Sani who worked closely with Adam Malik throughout the early period of ASEAN.

²² For many Thai families, a career in the Civil Service or the Armed Forces equated to the attainment of a certain social status, with careers in the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs being highest in term of prestige up until the 1960s, when the modern technocratic ethos took over, and positions in the new functional agencies became more attractive. According to a scholar of Thai foreign policy in this period, the relative commonality of backgrounds tended to produce a rather conservative, anti-communist world view among MFA staff, as well as an “ivory tower complex.” FUNSTON, p.110.

²³ VIRAPHOL, Sarasin *Directions in Thai Foreign Policy*. ISEAS Occasional Paper No. 40. Singapore, ISEAS, 1976, pp.2-3.

²⁴ “No rocking the boat” by T.D. Allman in *FEER*. Vol. LXXII, No. 28, 10 July 1971, p.13.

²⁵ FUNSTON, p.95.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.402. ‘Kitchen diplomacy’ constituted novel attempts taken by Kriangsak Chomanan to foster personal relationships with visiting foreign dignitaries through treating them to his own home cooking in an atmosphere of informality.

²⁷ See KERDPHOL, Saiyud in *Proceedings of the Seminar on ‘New Dimensions of Foreign Relations in Thailand.’* Bangkok, Institute of Foreign Affairs and Chulalongkorn University, 1985, pp.40-44.

²⁸ MARKS, p.99. In 1976, the CSOC was renamed the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) in an attempt to remove the negative ideological impression from the Organization.

²⁹ “Thailand: Enter the General.” by Denzil Peiris in *FEER*. Vol. 87, No. 7, 14 February 1975, p.11.

³⁰ PHIU-NUAL, Chalermkiet *Kwam Kid Tang Gam Muang Kong Thahan Thai B.E. 2519-2535 (Thai-Styled Democracy: Political Thought of the Thai Army 1976-1992)*. Bangkok, Manager Press, 1992, p.110; p.126. Within the Supreme Command, the Directorate of Joint Military Intelligence coordinated the

intelligence activities of the Army, Navy and Air Force, performing liaison functions with different government agencies and designating representatives from the Ministry of Defence to national and international (Including ASEAN) defence activities, see *History of the Thai Army over 200 Years 1792-1992.*, p.398.

³¹ KERDPHOL, p.41. Particularly in the case of relations with neighbours after the events of Spring 1975, the MFA was accused of hastening the establishment of relations without adequately taking into account security concerns. Thus, talks on the re-establishment of relations with Indochinese states in Late 1976 were conducted by the MFA, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defence and the NSC in order to avoid such charges, see BURUSAPATANA *Thailand and its Neighbours in Indochina*, p.128.

³² Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

³³ See *Vichitr Anusorn.*, pp.262-263. The scope of the NSC thus covered internal affairs, foreign policy and economic affairs, as well as military matters where national security was concerned.

³⁴ Interview with Mr. Khachadpai Burusapatana, Geneva, 9/10/96. For purposes of establishing relations with the PRC, Order of the Prime Minister's Office No. 28/2518 (1975) was issued by Prime Minister Sanya Dharmasakdi, setting up a committee to supervise contacts with Beijing, responsible to the NSC and the Cabinet, and comprising the Permanent Secretary of the MFA as Chairman, with representatives from the NSC Secretariat, the Department of Central Intelligence (DCI), the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), the Police Department, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) and the Ministry of Commerce, see *120 Pee Krasuang Gam Tang Prades (120 Years of the MFA)*. Bangkok, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1996, p.243.

³⁵ CHUMARK, Sompong "Garn Gannod Nayobai Tang Prades Kong Thai (The Determination of Thailand's Foreign Policy)." in *5 Decades of Thai Foreign Affairs*. p.18.

³⁶ Interview with Mr. Khachadpai Burusapatana, Geneva, 9/10/96.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ The Department of Central Intelligence became the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) in 1985. FUNSTON, p.97.

³⁹ MODELSKI "The Asian States' Participation in SEATO.", p.119.

⁴⁰ SAIPIROON, p.66. See also "Bangkok's war cries," by a Correspondent in *FEER*. Vol. 94, No. 51, 17 December 1976, p.10.

⁴¹ CHAVANAVIRAJ, Saroj "Multilateral Diplomacy." in *Saranrom Journal*. 27 (1977), pp.297-298.

⁴² FUNSTON, p.121.

⁴³ During his premiership, Prof. Sanya lamented that he had no control over army officers who were "doing their thing," he moaned, and "keeping me totally ignorant of their movements." "Enter the General." by Denzil Peiris in *FEER*. Vol. 87, No. 7, 14 February 1975. The situation approached that of Indonesia in many respects, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs having to combat the defence and security establishments for the Prime Minister's ear, although in the Thai case the effective authority of the Prime Minister was often less than that of the President in Indonesia, see LEIFER *Indonesia's Foreign Policy.*, pp.131-132.

⁴⁴ Address by the Foreign Minister to the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, 2 July 1976. *FAB*. Vol. XVI, No. 3, July-September 1976, p.28. It is also suggested that there were often embarrassing incidents arising from the lack of coordination, see VIRAPHOL, p.58.

⁴⁵ "Challenges for the New Order." by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 94, No. 45, 5 November 1976, p.8; FUNSTON, p.115.

⁴⁶ The extent of the US build-up in Thailand was only publicly admitted by Ambassador Graham Marti on 18 January 1967, although there had been various indications during the course of 1966. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*. March 11-18 1967, p.21924.

⁴⁷ As a specific example, agreements governing the use of the Ramasun radio surveillance facility were negotiated in 1964 and 1965 between Ambassador Martin and Deputy Minister of Defence Thawee, see "Seni ponders the secrets of Ramasun" by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 92, No. 18, 30 April 1976, pp.30-31.

⁴⁸ BAMRUNGSUK, p.118. Concerning the establishment of the Korat, Takhli and Udorn airbases, Thanat later wrote that “in the Thai cabinet, I vehemently protested against this secret deal on the constitutional ground of the collective responsibility of the government,” which he described as having contributed to his being given responsibility for negotiating the U-Tapao agreement. KHOMAN, Thanat “The Current Trends and Future Prospects of US-Thai Relations.” in *A Cremation Volume: Thanpying Molee Khoman.*, p.107.

⁴⁹ BAMRUNGSUK, p.157.

⁵⁰ ATTHAKOR, p.766. It emerged that Thanat had told US Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy that it was up to Bundy’s own discretion whether or not to tell Bunchana, which Bunchana interpreted as being tantamount to a discouragement.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.643.

⁵² A Statement issued by the Office of the Prime Minister on 25 May 1971 attempted to clarify the issue by referring to the Foreign Minister’s previous comments that “Thailand still maintains its foreign policy, that it seeks peace, promotes friendship with all countries which do not attack us and will continue to resist and vigorously suppress enemy aggressors. and reaffirming that, “These statements are in full accord with the policy of His Majesty’s Government.” *FAB*. Vol. X, No. 5, April-May 1971, p.350.

⁵³ “Uneasy future.” by Frances Starner in *FEER*. Vol. LXXVI, No. 19, 6 May 1972, p.19.

⁵⁴ It is thus suggested that “the old duality in Thai statecraft” was accentuated, see THOMPSON *Unequal Partners*, pp.134-135.

⁵⁵ BUSZYNSKI, Leszek “Thailand’s Foreign Policy: Management of a Regional Vision.” in *Asian Survey*. Vol. XXXIV, No. 8, August 1994, p.722.

⁵⁶ Notably Deputy Minister of Defence Air Chief Marshal Thawee Chullasapya, who entertained good relations with Malaysian leaders in particular. In July 1968 the Thai delegation to sign the ‘hot pursuit’ agreement in Kuala Lumpur was led by Thawee, while Prime Minister Thanom also made frequent visits to Malaysia, see JHA, p.128.

⁵⁷ SUWANNATHAT-PIAN *Thailand's Durable Premier.*, p.243.

⁵⁸ THOMPSON *Unequal Partners.*, p.26. Despite personal differences, there was an outward consensus during this period, and those diplomats within the MFA who have written extensively about their doubts on the strongly ideological policy of the 1950s and 1960s and its effects on Thai interests only did so after the 1960s or on their retirement. These included former senior officials such as Konthi Suphamongkol and Wongse Pholnikomn.

⁵⁹ FUNSTON, p.104.

⁶⁰ See discussion of the views of the various political parties during the 1969 elections by a former US ambassador to Thailand in YOUNG, Kenneth "Thailand's Role in Southeast Asia." in *Current History*. Vol. 56, No. 330, February 1969, pp.96-97.

⁶¹ PATHAMASUKON, Prasert *Rattasapha Thai Nai Rob Si Sip Song Pee B.E. 2475-2517 (The Thai Parliament over 42 years 1932-1974)*. Bangkok, Chammnanchang Press, 1974, p.1047.

⁶² LAOTHAMATAS, p.453. At the same time, it is observed that lobbying through formal business and trade associations, especially on international issues, remained limited within the Thai context. *Ibid.*, p.455.

⁶³ Speech by ACM Siddhi Savetsila at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand on "Current Trends: Implications and Repercussions on Thailand's Foreign Policy.", Bangkok, 27 January 1988, in *Saranrom Journal*. 45 (1988), p.6.

⁶⁴ In practice, however, ASEAN officials consider the Bangkok Declaration as binding as if it were a treaty, with accompanying obligations. See MUNTARBHORN, Vitit "Kwam Samphan Dan Gotmai Kong Prades ASEAN (Legal Relations Among ASEAN Countries)." in *ASEAN in World Politics.*, p.196.

⁶⁵ See documents in *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 08-128 ASEAN Secretariat (1) Establishment of Secretariat*. These provisions remain in force, and applied to Thailand's signing of the Treaty on Southeast Asia nuclear weapons-Free Zone in December 1995 which was approved by the Cabinet. *Bangkok Post*. 12 December 1995. As another illustration of the procedures involved, with regards to the TAC, following signing at the Bali Summit in February 1976,

a Cabinet decision on 18 May 1976 permitted ratification, with the instrument of ratification being signed by Foreign Minister Pichai Rattakul on 21 May 1976.

⁶⁶ SA-NGIAMBUTR, Somboon “Gotmai Sondhi Sanya Thai (Thai Treaty Law).” in *Saranrom Journal*. 33 (1983), pp.143-159. Specifically, the Executive (Cabinet) possessed full powers in conducting treaties, but may grant full powers for the Foreign Minister to sign agreements on Thailand’s behalf. If a treaty bound only the Thai government, then there was no necessity to propose new legislation to enforce such an agreement, but if it affected citizens and their rights, a new law was then needed or existing legislation had to be amended to bring it into force.

⁶⁷ Prominent commentators on foreign relations included the English language *Bangkok Post* and *Bangkok World*, and following the merger of these two, *The Nation* as from 1971. Their Thai counterparts include *Siam Rath*, which was associated with MR Kukrit Pramoj, *Prachatipatai* and *Prachachart*.

⁶⁸ *FEER*. Vol. LXIV, No. 24, 12 June 1969, p.606. See also “The state of the press.” by Derek Davies, Leo Goodstadt and T.J.S. George in *FEER*. Vol. LXXIV, No. 41, 9 Oct. 1971, pp.50-53.

⁶⁹ KEYES, Charles F. *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation State*. Bangkok, Editions Duang Kamol, 1989, pp.192-193.

⁷⁰ WYATT, p.295. University education also spread to provincial centres such as Khon Khaen, Chiang Mai and Songkhla. Meanwhile, Ramkhamhaeng, the first open university, was founded in 1971, paving the way for a rapid expansion of higher education.

⁷¹ BUNBONGKARN, Suchit *The Military in Thai Politics 1981-1986*. Singapore, ISEAS, 1987, p.49.

⁷² See *FAB*. Vol. VII, No. 4, February-March 1968, p.378. Within the National Committee on ASEAN, sub-committees were established as required.

⁷³ Interview with Mr. Suthee Natvaratat, Bangkok, 25/8/95.

⁷⁴ This unit in 1967 consisted of the Director-General/ Deputy Director-General as Head of the ASEAN National Secretariat, and four officers ‘borrowed’ from the Department of Economic Affairs. *MFA ASEAN Dept. File*:

26-103 *ASEAN National Secretariat*. That Dr. Sompong Sucharitkul, a close subordinate of Thanat, was assigned to this post is an indication that Thanat wanted to maintain firm control over the Organization's development.

⁷⁵ The Office was upgraded from bureau to departmental level by Announcement of the Revolutionary Party No. 216, dated 29 September 1972. A subsequent Royal Decree in 1977 then divided the unit into 5 divisions, corresponding roughly to the work of the ASEAN economic and functional committees, although it did not formally become a separate department until 1982. *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 26-103 ASEAN National Secretariat*. See also *Bangkok Post*. 7 April 1982.

⁷⁶ These arrangements were enshrined in the 1960 Organizational Structure of the MFA, which divided the Ministry into 7 functional units/departments. See *A Cremation Volume; Nai Worakam Bancha.*, p.33. The 1976 Act Amending the Announcement of the Revolutionary Party No. 216, dated 29 September 1972, divided the MFA into 9 units (including the ASEAN National Secretariat of Thailand), referring to ASEAN as "an important instrument to achieve national economic and political objectives." *Royal Gazette*. Vol. 93, Part 109, 8 September 1976, p.3.

⁷⁷ It is further noted that Indonesian ambassadors to ASEAN countries, and hence ASC representatives, were also likely to be military officers, see ANWAR, p.136; JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.181. However, this was also true of Thailand up to 1973.

⁷⁸ After 1992, the Department of Political Affairs was reorganized and split into regional departments with responsibility for both bilateral political and economic affairs. The Southeast Asian Division of the Department of Political Affairs was thus upgraded to become the Department of East Asian Affairs.

⁷⁹ JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.180.

⁸⁰ This structure remained until 1992-1993, after which it was decided that further restructuring was appropriate.

⁸¹ ANTOLIK, Michael *ASEAN and the Diplomacy of Accommodation*. New York, M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1990, p.101.

⁸² The importance of think-tanks as the “brain and memory of integration processes and conditions” are stressed by DOSCH & MOLS, p.217-218. For the special case of Singapore and ISEAS, which performed a vital “cheerleading function” for regional cooperation, see also JAYASURIYA, p.43.

⁸³ See, for example, TURLEY, William S. & PARIBATRA, MR Sukhumbhand “Introduction.” in *Confrontation or Coexistence.*, pp.1-8.

CHAPETR V

¹ ASEAN Declaration, Bangkok, 8 August 1967. *ASEAN Documents Series.* (1987-1986) Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, Revised Edition, 1986, pp.23-24. As Thanat Khoman later revealed: “We concentrated on economic, social, technical, educational and cultural cooperation. Politics is taken for granted in the lives of all nations. It is unavoidable even if a promise is made not to talk about political matters.” “Thailand and ASEAN.” Interview given by Thanat Khoman to Thira Nuchpiem and Vinita Sukrasep, p.321.

² Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman, Foreign Minister of Thailand, at the Opening Session of the 3rd ASA Ministerial Meeting, Bangkok, 3 August 1966. *Collected Statements of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman.* Vol. 2 (Oct. 1965-Oct. 1966), p.21. The response to the call from within Asia was generally disappointing, although it was welcomed in Western capitals, see “No time to think.” by A.B. Santos in *FEER.* Vol. LIII, No. 12, 22 September 1966, p.559.

³ “Regional unity: slow progress.” by John Stirling in *FEER.* Vol. LIV, No. 4, 27 October 1966, p.320.

⁴ PRINCE WAN “Phume Lang Garn Ruam Mue Suen Phumipak (The Background behind Regional Cooperation).” In *Saranrom Journal.* 19 (1969), p.8.

⁵ FIFIELD *National and Regional Interests in ASEAN.*, pp.12-13. The Thai Ambassador in Jakarta, Luang Phinit-Akson, also happened to be the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, which served to enhance his influence in the process of soothing tensions between various diplomatic representatives in Jakarta and the Indonesian government.

⁶ Such activities were in line with Thanat’s previous interests and his suggestions at the 16th and 18th UNGA in 1961 and 1963 respectively, for the

establishment of a “watchdog committee” or a “service for peace committee,” as well as with his call for an Asian settlement of the Indochina issue in 1966, see *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, pp.60-63; pp.97-99.

⁷ Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96. As one official involved with the initial ASEAN negotiations as well as Thanat Khoman’s subsequent attempts to bring Malaysia and the Philippines together on the Sabah question, ML Birabhongse was of the view that the existence of the Association helped other countries to focus on regional issues rather than on contentious bilateral problems.

⁸ Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, Bangkok, 5/2/96.

⁹ “Thailand and the Future of Southeast Asia.” Address by H.E. Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, Prime Minister of Thailand, at the dinner given by the Hon. Kenneth T. Young, President of the Asia Society, New York, 7 May 1968. *FAB*. Vol. VII, No. 5, April-May 1968, p.440.

¹⁰ PACHUSANOND, Chumporn “Legal Dimensions of Boundary Disputes.” in *Thailand’s Frontiers and Beyond: Conflict or Confluence?*. p.124.

¹¹ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to New Zealand Reporters, 7 September 1967. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. I (1967), p.55.

¹² In the Thai Paper submitted to the 1st ASPAC Ministerial Meeting in Seoul in June 1966, there were proposals in the political and security fields, involving “periodic reviews and exchanges of views regarding the situation likely to affect the peace and security of the region or any such area forming part of the region” for the former, and “exchanges of information and assessment” for the latter. *Documents of the 1st Ministerial Meeting for Asian and Pacific Cooperation Seoul, 1966*. Seoul, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1966, p.96.

¹³ Report of the 5th Meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on ASA-ASEAN and ASPAC Affairs, 19 August 1968. *MFA L&A Div. File: Reports of the Interdepartmental Committee on AS A-ASEAN and ASPAC Affairs 1968-1969*.

¹⁴ The Meeting was reported to have discussed “a number of matters pertaining to regional cooperation.” *FAB*. Vol. VIII, No. 3, December 1968-January 1969, p.206.

¹⁵ Kor Tor 0100/13216, From Special Envoy (Thanat) to Chairman of the NEC (Thanom), dated 19 April 1972. *MFA L&A Div. File: ASEAN 3/EM/2525/1 Special Meeting of Foreign Ministers of ASEAN, Manila, 13-14 July 1972.*

¹⁶ Voice of Free Asia's Commentary on the Manila Informal Meeting of ASEAN, July 1972. *FAB*. Vol. XI, No. 6, June-July 1972, p.259.

¹⁷ Joint Communiqué of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting to Discuss International Developments Affecting the Region, Manila, 13-14 July 1972. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, p.114.

¹⁸ See Joint Communiqué of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting to Assess the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam and to Consider Its Implications for Southeast Asia, Kuala Lumpur, 15 Feb. 1973. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, pp.115-116.

¹⁹ See, for example, WU, Yuan-li *The Strategic Land Ridge*. Peking's Relations with Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Hoover Institution Publication 147. Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1975, pp.13-38.

²⁰ As an example of Thailand's central and perhaps symbolic role in this process, see the ASEAN Announcement agreeing to recognize the Royal Government of the National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK) which was issued following a meeting of ASEAN ambassadors in Bangkok, 18 April 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 2, April-June 1975, p.52.

²¹ "Any United Nations action which is tantamount to a change of national leadership in the Khmer Republic is a sheer interference in the domestic affairs of the Khmer people and would create such an undesirable precedent that a movement-in-exile of any independent state may challenge the legally constituted government within the state itself." Statement by H.E. Mr. Charoonphan Israngkun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 29th UNGA, 1 October 1974. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.268. For a discussion of such moves in successive years, see "Lon Nol: A year to live or die." by Louis Halasz in *FEER*. Vol. 83, No. 1, 7 January 1974, p.21; "Lon Nol: Tactics for Survival." by Louis Halasz in *FEER*. Vol. 86, No. 49, 13 Dec. 1974, p.22.

²² SRIDHARAN, Kripa *The ASEAN Region in India's Foreign Policy*. Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1996, pp.90-92.

²³ KOH T.T. & LAU T.S. "Regional Cooperation in South-East Asia." in *Asia and the Western Pacific. Towards a New International Order*. Collection edited by Hedley Bull. Canberra, Thomas Nelson (Australia) Ltd./AIIA, 1975, p.117.

²⁴ Hesitancies about political cooperation and coordination in ASEAN were of a different nature from equivalent discussions in Europe at that time, where the concerns of some of the small states prevailed, TAYLOR, pp.748-755.

²⁵ WONGPIBUL., p.22.

²⁶ For a discussion of the concept, see for example, VAN DER KROEF, Justus M. "National Security, Defense Strategy and Foreign Policy Perceptions in Indonesia." in *Orbis*. Summer 1976, pp.481-483.

²⁷ LEIFER *Indonesia's Foreign Policy.*, p.146.

²⁸ POLOMKA, *Peter Indonesia's Future and South-East Asia*. Adelphi Papers No. 104. London, IISS, 1974, p.27.

²⁹ "A clash of cannon-balls." by George Lauriat in *FEER*. Vol. 96, No. 20, 20 May 1977, p.72. Thailand ASEAN countries to declare an EEZ in 1981, following the Philippines in 1978 and the other ASEAN countries in 1980. PACHUSANOND, p.119.

³⁰ TANGSUBKUL, Phiphat "ASEAN States: The Law of the Sea and Fisheries Jurisdiction." in *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1979., pp.88-92.

³¹ Some have asserted that one of the earliest examples of neutralization within the Southeast Asian context, ironically, was when France and Britain by the Joint Declaration of 1896 designated Siam and the Chao Phraya Valley as a buffer or neutral zone between their respective zones of influence, see for example SOPIEE, Noordin "The Neutralization of South-East Asia." in *Asia and the Western Pacific.*, p.133. For discussions of the 1896 Declaration, see JESHURUN, Chandran "The Anglo-French Declaration of January 1896 and the Independence of Siam." in *JSS*. Vol. LVIII, Pt.2, July 1970, pp.105-126. In terms of importance for the subsequent Thai experience, the significance of this episode laid in that it was an 'imposed' neutralization.

³² This issue is a source of some ambiguity and thus controversy within Thailand. Outwardly neutral, the Kingdom was nevertheless heavily

dependent on a privileged relationship with a dominant power in regional terms, such as Britain in the years before 1932. However, in terms of external conflicts, particularly those involving the great powers, Thailand's initial reactions were to observe neutrality, such as with regards to the two world wars, see SUPHAMONGKOL *Thailand's Foreign Policy 1940-1952.*, p.7.

³³ MODELSKI "The Asian States' Participation in SEATO.", p.88.

³⁴ The policy options often mentioned during this early period were: 1) alignment with a friendly power, 2) neutralism; 3) accommodation with communist powers. It should also be noted that at this time, regional cooperation was not considered as a policy option in itself. However, by the time of the founding of ASEAN, the options had become: 1) neutralism; 2) accommodation or, 3) collective political defence, see KHOMAN "A Policy of Regional Cooperation.", pp.1-4.

³⁵ PANUPONG, Arun "A Profile of Thailand's Policy." Address to the Association for World Affairs, Columbia, Ohio, 29 January 1968, in *Saranrom Journal*. 18 (1968), p.298. Thai representatives also asserted that neutrality had its obligations, and that a country had to have adequate military and economic strength to maintain its neutrality, which Thailand did not have. Speech by Prince Wan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 19 May 1957. *Text of 1 Radio/Television Broadcast by the FM/Deputy FM/Armed Forces Chief of Staff*. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1957, pp.2-3.

³⁶ In this regard, it is useful to clarify the use of various terms relating to this theme in the postwar period: NEUTRALITY-non-participation and impartiality in international conflicts, as defined by international law, with permanent neutrality involving a guarantee by other states and provisions preventing the neutral state from entering into international obligations that might prejudice that neutrality through treaties of alliance; NEUTRALIZATION- the way in which permanent neutrality comes about, involving guarantees for permanent neutrality established by virtue of an international agreement between the neutralized state and guarantor powers; and NEUTRALISM/NON-ALIGNMENT—a political definition of neutrality involving non-alignment towards both of the two blocs and remaining outside great power conflict, but not excluding the non-aligned state from other

types of conflict, such as with neighbours. See HÄNGGI, Heiner *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept.*, Pacific Strategic Papers 4. Singapore, ISEAS, 1991, pp.1-5; *Manual of Public International Law.* Edited by Max Sorensen. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1968, pp.840-843. However, it appeared that certain Thai policy-makers used the terms almost interchangeably, and thus caution has to be observed in examining their statements.

³⁷ On his 1966 visit to Phnom Penh, French President Charles de Gaulle had held out the hope of a political agreement for the restoration of peace: "The agreement, just like the one of 1954, would have the goal of establishing and guaranteeing the neutrality of the people of Indochina and their right to dispose of themselves, as they really are, and leaving each of them full responsibility for its affairs. The contracting parties would therefore be the real powers being exercised there and among the other powers, at least the five world powers." Speech of President Charles de Gaulle at the Olympic Stadium, Phnom Penh, 1 Sept. 1966, quoted in SIHANOUK & KRISHER, p.187.

³⁸ In particular, the one-sided nature of neutralization schemes were denounced by Thai policy-makers, see Opening Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman at the 11th SEATO Council, Canberra, 27 June 1966. *Collected Statements of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman.* Vol. 2 (Oct. 1965-Oct. 1966) Bangkok, Department of Information, 1966, p.16. An ideological factor also came into play in that neutrality was also the policy advocated by the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and the Thai Patriotic Front (TPF).

³⁹ KHOMAN "The Role of Multilateralism in South East Asia: Past and Present.", p.153.

⁴⁰ "A Positive Foreign Policy for Thailand." An Article by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman. *FAB.* Vol. XI, No. 1, August-September 1971, pp.1-2.

⁴¹ Interview given by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman to Mr. Takeo Takagi, Yomiuri Shimbun, Bangkok, 21 March 1968 *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman.* Vol. II (1968), p.39. Thus, the rejection of a 'traditional' neutralization continued and one month after the founding of ASEAN, Thanat asserted that: "We don't want to be dictated neutralization." Interview given by H.E.

Thanat Khoman to Mr. Samuel W. Jameson, Tokyo Bureau Chief of the Chicago Tribune, Bangkok, 14 September 1967. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. I (1967), p.79.

⁴² KHOMAN “A Policy of Regional Cooperation.”, pp.1-2.

⁴³ Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman, Foreign Minister of Thailand, on the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 21 August 1968. *Ibid.* p.45.

⁴⁴ Study with particular emphasis on Southeast Asia had been commissioned by the Senate Comm Relations in 1966. An expanded version of the study was subsequently widely circulated, see BLACK, Cyril et al. *Neutralization and World Politics*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968. In particular, the authors of the study expressed the hope that “neutralization might be given its due in the repertoire of contemporary statecraft as one among several instrumentalities for the management of power.” *Ibid.*, p.vii. In respect of its conceptual contribution, it was also referred to by the authors of the Thai Paper for the 1st SOM in 1972.

⁴⁵ Some have suggested that this was also partly due to Thailand’s experience in the 19th Century during which traditional rivalry with neighbouring countries, which could prove disastrous as seen in the sack of Ayudhya in 1767, was suspended by the colonial presence, leading to a conception of foreign powers as an important source of the elite’s political insurance, see BAMRUNGSUK, p.31. This view, however, tends to overlook the trauma caused by Thailand’s handlings with the colonial powers, such as in 1893 and 1907-09.

⁴⁶ “Southeast Asia After Vietnam.” Address by S. Rajaratnam to the Asia Society, New York, 27 September 1973, in *Asia* No. 31, Autumn 1973, p.5.

⁴⁷ Joint Communiqué issued on the Occasion of the visit by MR Kukrit Pramoj, Prime Minister of Thailand, to Singapore, 24-27 July 1975. *MFA Press Release*. No. 132/2518. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1975, p.2.

⁴⁸ This commonality of strategic perception was often revealed in joint statements: “They shared the view that a just balance among the great Powers with legitimate interests in the region would contribute to the stability of

Southeast Asia and of Asia as a whole. They also expressed the belief that peaceful competition among the great Powers in the region would redound to the common benefit of Southeast Asia and the great powers.” Joint Communiqué issued by President Ferdinand E. Marcos and Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien on the Occasion of the latter’s Official Visit to the Philippines, 20-22 December 1976, reproduced in INGLES, Jose D. *Philippine Foreign Policy*. Manila, Lyceum Press, Inc., 1980, p.291.

⁴⁹ 1969 was significant also for signs of reconciliation from China, as well as increasingly clear signals that Congress would obstruct major commitments being fulfilled in Southeast Asia, as seen in the debate over the revelation of the 1965 Thai-US Taksin Contingency Plan, prompting Thai calls for a first withdrawal of US personnel in Thailand. *IHT*. 26, 27 August 1969.

⁵⁰ This began with the reaction to the invasion of Cambodia in May 1970, with protests in Washington and the passing of the Cooper-Church Amendment in the Senate in June 1970 which limited the period by which US troops could intervene overseas, while the October 1973 War Powers Act stipulated that the President had to consult with Congress intervening with military forces in a situation of armed conflict.

⁵¹ “Thailand: Times are changing” by Michael Morrow in *FEER*. Vol. 88, No. 24, 13 June 1975, p.28.

⁵² Thanat writing in late 1976 already referred to the US-PRC axis as a counterweight, but also drew attention to that axis as weaker at that time than the Soviet-Vietnamese combination, and thus spoke of the need for greater self-reliance: “If Thailand is to survive the impact of this new equation it would seem that it must adopt a policy of ‘equidistance’ to the best of its ability avoiding any deep commitment of a political or military nature with the major outside powers.” KHOMAN, Thanat “The New Equation of World Power and its Impact on Southeast Asia.” in *Orbis*. Vol. 20, No. 3, Fall 1976, p.620. Soon after, Thanat became adviser to the new Tanin Government.

⁵³ Policy Statement of the 1st Government of Prof. Sanya Dharmasakdi (14 Oct. 1973-22 May 1974), as delivered on 25 October 1973. *Compilation of Government Policy Statements.*, p.178.

⁵⁴ Policy Statement of the 2nd Government of Prof. Sanya Dharmasakdi (27 May 1974-14 February 1975), as delivered on 7 June 1974. *Ibid.*, p.185.

⁵⁵ It may be noted that the unusually strong Thai reaction may have resulted from the fact that the actual US operations on 15 May 1975 took place one day before the arrival of a PRG delegation to discuss the question of SVN equipment in Thailand, including at the very base where US forces were deployed, and thus it was even more necessary for Thailand to demonstrate an independence of position.

⁵⁶ Ambassador Anand Panyarachun's Interview by Mr. Martin Agronsky, WETA Television, USA, 13 May 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 2, April-June 1975, pp.11-12.

⁵⁷ HÄNGGI *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept*, p.16.

⁵⁸ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Noel Norton of Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Bangkok, 9 September 1969. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. III (1969), p.172.

⁵⁹ The Soviet Ambassador in Bangkok commented of the proposal that: "This is now the idea and it is necessary to discuss it in detail. We should like to know the opinions of the people of Asia before organizing such as system," see "Asian Security-Soviet Style." by the Review's Correspondents in *FEER*. Vol. LXV, No. 30, 24 July 1969, p.204.

⁶⁰ For contemporary views of the Soviet Collective Security Proposal and its applicability to ASEAN, see VAN DER KROEF, Justus "ASEAN's Security Needs and Policies." in *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 47, No. 2, Summer 1974, pp.154-170; GHEBHARDT, Alexander O. "The Soviet System of Collective Security in Asia." in *Asian Survey*. Vol. XIII, No. 12, December 1973, pp.1077-1078. Soviet intentions in the region were again questioned after the signing of the Soviet-Indian in August 1971 in the usual bilateral Soviet style. See also BUSZYNSKI, Leszek *Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia*. London, Croom Helm, 1986, especially pp.69-90.

⁶¹ It appeared that the first initiative had come from Tun Ismail as a backbencher in the Malaysian House of Representatives in January 1968, during the defence debate launched by the announcement of accelerated

British withdrawal from Southeast Asia. This was supported by then Deputy PM Tun Razak's Statement of 13 June 1968, during which neutralization with guarantees by great powers was specified as a long-term goal of the country. With Tun Razak's accession to the premiership in 1970, this then became official government policy, although Malaysia first attempted to achieve the neutralization through a non-ASEAN format, and only later on approached the ASEAN countries. JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.76; KHAW, p.277. See also SOPIEE, pp.137-138.

⁶² KHOMAN "Thai Foreign Policy in the Midst of a Changing World.", p.76.

⁶³ When interviewed in December 1970, Deputy Foreign Minister Sa-nga Kittikachorn espoused what was regarded as a type of neutrality, a view similar to that often made by Thanat: "We have aggressors, communist and non-communist, and resisted both. We are against no ideology when they do not press on us. We do not hate communist countries only because they are communist." *NZZ*. 17 January 1971.

⁶⁴ Following his visits to Bangkok and Jakarta upon coming to office in December 1970, Tun Razak was forced to admit that Thailand and Indonesia did not agree that the neutralization of Southeast Asia with guarantees from China, the US and the USSR could take place for the time being. *FEER*. Vol. LXIX, No. 52, 26 December 1970, p.4. There was certainly no commitment by Thailand in the Joint Communiqué issued during Razak's visit to Bangkok, which only mentioned that the two sides "exchanged views" on the subject. *FAB*. Vol. X, No. 3, Dec. 1970-June 1971, p.184. Instead, although Thanom insisted that self-reliance was the Thai policy, he maintained that his could be realized through regional cooperation, see Address by the PM at the Banquet in Honour of the PM of Malaysia, 14 December 1970. *FAB*. Vol. X, No. 3, Dec. 1970-Jan. 1971, p.155.

⁶⁵ "An independent line" by Nayan Chanda in *FEER*. No. 28, 10 July 1971, p.14. See also HÄNGGI Heiner *Neutralität in Südostasien*. Bern, Verlag Paul Haupt, 1992, p.128.

⁶⁶ Indeed, it was in this context of multilateralizing Thailand's approach to China given international developments that Thanat Khoman made various

other overtures, such as his proposal of a Bandung-type meeting around this time: "Thailand has...contemplated the possibilities that other ASEAN partners may join in conducting a many-sided dialogue with mainland China, in the hope that such collective talks could pave the way for another Bandung or could themselves assume the character of a Bandung-type conference." KHOMAN "A Positive Foreign Policy for Thailand.", p.8. This was later clarified to be at the Foreign Ministers' level. Interview of the Foreign Minister by the Christian Science Monitor, 11 Aug. 1971. *FAB*. Vol. XI, No. 1, Aug-Sept. 1971, p.34.

⁶⁷ Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 26th UNGA, 30 September 1971. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.217.

⁶⁸ *FAB*. Vol. XI, No. 2, October-November 1971, pp.88-89.

⁶⁹ KHOMAN "De la guerre a la neutralité.", pp.110-111.

⁷⁰ Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, Bangkok, S/2/96. See also HÄNGGI *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept*. pp.16-18.

⁷¹ Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration (Kuala Lumpur Declaration), Kuala Lumpur, 27 November 1971. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, pp.30-31.

⁷² *FAB*. Vol XI, No. 2, Oct.-Nov. 1971, p.89. Note that various other persons were also appointed 'special envoy' by the NEC during this period, including Pote Sarasin, who attended the 7th ASPAC Ministerial Meeting in June 1972 and the Manila Informal Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers in July 1972 in such a capacity.

⁷³ HÄNGGI *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept.*, p.18. As Hänggi also usefully points out, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration was not a declaration of neutrality, but a mere declaration of intent. *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁷⁴ IRVINE, Roger "The Formative Years of ASEAN: 1967-1975." in *Understanding ASEAN*, p.28. In a 1972 article, Thanat further clarified this position by saying that once it appeared convincing that the great powers had solemnly engaged to recognize and respect ZOPFAN, then the countries of

Southeast Asia could disengage themselves from the In the meantime, however, they had to be retained, see KHOMAN “De la guerre a la neutralite.”, p.111. See also comments by Thanat on his return from KL on 27 November that the agreements did not affect joint Thai-Malay operations against “criminal” guerilla activities. *FAB*. Vol. XI, No. 2, Oct.-Nov. 1971, p.89.

⁷⁵ The adoption of this concept by ASEAN as a whole has been described by a scholar of ZOPFAN as constituting in itself a new, ‘political’ definition of neutrality. HÄNGGI *Neutralität in Südostasien.*, p.138.

⁷⁶ LEIFER “Regional Order in Southeast Asia: An Uncertain Prospect.”, pp.311-312.

⁷⁷ *Documents of the General Assembly*. 26th Session, 1st Commission, 1848th Meeting, 10 December 1971, p.12. Regarding the Ceylonese project, which had been launched by Prime Minister Bandaranaike at the time of the Lusaka NAM Conference in 1970, this was passed as Resolution 2832 of the 26th UNGA on 16 December 1971. Malaysia and Indonesia voted in favour, but the other ASEAN countries abstained. Thailand’s objection, while stressing no conflict of objectives between the KL Declaration and the Ceylonese project, was based on the fact that the Indo-Pakistani conflict was still raging, and that it preferred the proposed UN resolution (read ZOPFAN) to be a brief declaration of intention with general objectives and goals, and not precise details. *Ibid.*, pp.11-12. However, the following year it was favourable to the creation of an ad hoc committee to study the Indian Ocean proposals, see *Documents of the General Assembly*. 27th Session, 1st Commission, 1884th Meeting, 6 November 1972, p.21; 1910th Meeting, 5 December 1972, p.2. See also *The United Nations and Disarmament. A Short History*. New York, UN, 1988; 112p.; MENDIS, pp.92-104.

⁷⁸ *Documents of the General Assembly*. 26th Session, 1st Commission, 1857th Meeting, 17 December 1971, p.4. It was also pointed out that the KL Declaration had been communicated to the UN Secretary-General as relevant to item 34 of the agenda of the UNGA on the strengthening of international security, in which the proposed draft declaration (A/C.1/L.604) requested all states to contribute to the settlement of all existing conflicts and situations which constituted a menace to international peace and security.

⁷⁹ At the same time, SOM was not formally institutionalized into the ASEAN framework as the ZOPFAN project was nominally Southeast Asian in scope. This untidiness with regards to institutional structure was to continue for quite some time, but ironically has had the unintended effect of equating all enterprises entered into by the member countries of ASEAN with the Organization itself.

⁸⁰ SOPIEE, p.36.

⁸¹ Drafted in large part by ML Birabhongse Kasemsri and Saroj Chavanaviraj, Thanat's former secretaries in the Office of the Foreign Minister, who had not yet been permanently reassigned following his removal as Foreign Minister, and were thus able to study the issues in detail. Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

⁸² Kor Tor 1305/25430, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Charoonphan) to NEC Chairman (Thanom), dated 7 August 1972. *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 05-110 1st SOM*.

⁸³ Press Statement of the 1st SOM, Kuala Lumpur, 6-8 July 1972. *FAB*. Vol. XI, No. 6, June-July 1972, p.251.

⁸⁴ Report of the Working Group on the Definition of 'A Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.' FSOM 72/W.G.1 Rep.1. *Agreed Summary Record: 1st Meeting of SOM, Kuala Lumpur, 6-8 July 1972*. Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1972 (mimeograph). See also in-depth discussion of the definitions in *HÄNGGI ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept*, pp.22-23. One is tempted to think that the formula of a zone of "peace, freedom and prosperity" such as was current around the time of the founding of ASEAN and ASPAC would have been the preference of Thailand, and that a concession was given to 'neutrality.' As Thanom announced at the Opening Session of the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of ASPAC on 5 July 1967: "Without peace, it would be difficult to conceive of any freedom. Without freedom, the notions of progress and prosperity in bondage would be meaningless." *Documents of the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the Asian and Pacific Council. Bangkok, 5-7 July 1967*. Bangkok, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1967, p.13.

⁸⁵ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

⁸⁶ The Neutralization Proposal: Paper by Thailand. *Agreed Summary Record: 1st Meeting of SOM, Kuala Lumpur, 6-8 July 1972.*, p.6. In fact, Thanat seemed to suggest that the promotion of regional cooperation and the founding of ASEAN itself involved some degree of realization of a 'concerted neutrality.' It was an 'active' and 'positive' neutrality, not only synonymous with non-intervention, but also with developing relations between ASEAN countries and with other countries, in all field except in the military field, see KHOMAN "De la guerre à la neutralité.", p.110. Moreover, it should be noted that as shown in the title of the Thai Paper, neutralization was still only a 'proposal' from the Thai perspective despite the launching of ZOPFAN.

⁸⁷ The Neutralization Proposal., p.20.

⁸⁸ *FEER*. Vol. 77, No. 33, 12 August 1972, p.5.

⁸⁹ "The big-power question." by Richard Butwell in *FEER*. Vol. 77, No. 28, 8 July 1972, p.25.

⁹⁰ Statement by H.E. Mr. Pote Sarasin, Assistant Chairman of the National Executive Council, at the 27th UNGA, 3 October 1972. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA*, p.231.

⁹¹ SHUCK, L. Edward "Thailand: Groping toward Neutrality." in *Current History*. December 1973, p.258.

⁹² *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1970-1979*. Washington DC, ACDA, 1982, p.121.

⁹³ Press Statement of the 2nd Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials, Jakarta, 18-20 December 1972. *FAB*. Vol. XII, No. 2, November 1972-January 1973, p.10. See also INGLES, pp.264-265.

⁹⁴ See, for example, GIRLING, J.L.S. "Thailand's New Course." in *Pacific Affairs*. Fall 1969, pp.346-359.

⁹⁵ Statement by the Special Envoy of the NEC at the Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, Kuala Lumpur, 27 November 1971. *FAB*. Vol. XI, No. 2, Oct.-Nov. 1971, pp.56-57.

⁹⁶ Indonesia was assigned to approach North Vietnam, Thailand was to approach Cambodia and South Vietnam, while Malaysia would try to obtain

the support of Laos and Burma. See discussion of the rather inconclusive results of the approaches in SOPIEE, p.139.

⁹⁷ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to the Voice of the Nation, 26 April 1976. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 2, April-June 1976, p.26.

⁹⁸ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

⁹⁹ "Peace in their time-and terms." by J. Morgan in *FEER*. Vol. LXXIV, No. 49, 4 December 1971, p.6.

¹⁰⁰ Indeed, by the middle of 1972 it was speculated that "the greatest support for the neutral zone may well come from the Philippines," as it was yearning for a new policy look. "The big power questions." by Richard Butwell in *FEER*. Vol. 77, No. 28, 8 July 1972, p.26.

¹⁰¹ LEIFER Michael "The ASEAN States-No Common Outlook." in *International Affairs*. Vol. 49, No. 4, October 1973, p.604. The importance of maximizing Singapore's policy options is often stressed by Singaporeans, and it was felt that neutralization would serve to limit them, see KOH & LAU, p.116.

¹⁰² Interview of S. Rajaratnam by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 85, No. 31, 9 August 1974, p.9. Rajaratnam went on to say that: "as far as Singapore is concerned, we think it is a good idea to have a non-aggression pact with ASEAN. That means we neutralize the potentialities for conflict within the ASEAN group." *Ibid*.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp.15-16. With respect to rejection of a special role for China in Southeast Asia, see also LEIFER, Michael "Regional Order in Southeast Asia: An Uncertain Prospect." in *The Round Table*. Issue No. 255, July 1974, p.312.

¹⁰⁴ "Towards an Asian Asia." by Adam Malik in *FEER*. Vol. LXXII, No. 39, 25 September 1971, p.32.

¹⁰⁵ Regarding progress on the four initial measures to achieve ZOPFAN, the TAC may be seen to have realized the desire to have a regional non-aggression pact. A UN resolution endorsing the TAC was passed in 1992, and although there has not been a resolution endorsing ZOPFAN as a whole, the endorsement of the TAC may be regarded as indirect support for the aims of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration. The association of external powers with

ZOPFAN through acceding to a protocol of the TAC is still under study as at 1997, although all ten Southeast Asian nations have signed the TAC. The Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), whose idea was revived in 1984, was eventually signed in Bangkok at the 5th ASEAN Summit in December 1995. For progress on the initial measures to achieve ZOPFAN, see also HÄNGGI *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept.*, pp.31-33.

¹⁰⁶ This was seen by observers a sign of definite progress on ZOPFAN after months of uncertainty. *NZZ*. 11 April 1974. Malaysia also appeared keen to activate progress on ZOPFAN, although it was reported that after Tun Razak's talks with MR Kukrit in June, Thailand let Malaysia take the initiative. *NZZ*. 24 November 1975.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ A senior Philippine diplomat nevertheless asserts that the TAC should be seen "more than anything as a non-aggression pact as well as a vehicle for regional cooperation and the pacific settlement of disputes." INGLES, p.9.

¹¹⁰ See documents in *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 05-203 ZOPFAN*. In July 1974 the Thai government formally asked the US to stop flying reconnaissance missions over the Indian Ocean from U-Tapao airbase, for the ostensible reason that they contravened the UN Resolution on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, as well as ZOPFAN. "Constitution of 74 leaves Thais cold." by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 86, No. 41, 18 Oct. 1974, p.3.

¹¹¹ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Norman Peagam of the *FEER*, 5 July 1976. *FAB*. Vol. XVI, No. 3, July-September 1976, p.7. At that time, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore were full members of NAM, while the Philippines had been admitted as guest in NAM meetings pending consensus on its observer status. In the same interview, Pichai excluded a Thai presence at the NAM Conference at Colombo that year. *Ibid.*, p.8.

¹¹² Address by the Foreign Minister to the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, Bangkok, 2 July 1976. *Ibid.*, p.27.

¹¹³ BUSZYNSKI *Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia.*, p.117.

¹¹⁴ Policy Statement of the Government of MR Seni Pramoj (20 April 1976-23 September 1976), as delivered on 30 April 1976. *Compilation of Government Policy Statements.*, p.216.

¹¹⁵ Such moves also came soon after Kriangsak apparently made another plea in May for the Indochinese countries to participate in the implementation of ZOPFAN and encouraged ASEAN at the AMM to study all means of promoting such participation. *FEER*. Vol. 100, No. 22, 2 June 1978; Vol. 100, No. 23, 9 June 1978, p.5; *The Nation Review*. 26 May 1978. In turn, Kriangsak's actions may have been influenced by the outcome of a Meeting of SOM in Bangkok in April 1978. See also Speech by Dr. Pracha Gunakasem, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN, at the 10th Extraordinary Session of the UNGA on Disarmament. *Documents of the General Assembly*. 10th Extraordinary Session, 21st Meeting, 7 June 1978, pp.419-420.

¹¹⁶ *The Nation Review*. 16 June 1978. See also "A Game of friends and neighbours." by Rodney Tasker in *FEER*. Vol. 100, No. 26, 30 June 1978, pp.19-21.

¹¹⁷ It was noted that ZOPFAN was all the rage in Southeast Asian diplomatic circles from the middle of 1978, and that while the Joint Declarations issued during Dong's ASEAN visits could mention that Southeast Asia should be "an area of peace, independence, freedom and neutrality," a separate commitment to ZOPFAN was maintained. *IHT*. 2 October 1978. With such discussions, ZOPFAN was given "a new lease of life." *Le Monde*. 7 October 1978.

¹¹⁸ SURYANARAYAN, V. "Neutralization of Southeast Asia: Problems and Prospects." in *India Quarterly*. Vol. XXXI, No. 1, January-March 1975, pp.55-56. pp.419-420.

¹¹⁹ Soon after the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Meeting, however, Cambodian Deputy PM Prince Sirik Matak declared that although the neutralization of Indochina was an ultimate objective, it was necessary to call a halt to aggression and that the great powers provide the necessary guarantees. *Le Monde*. 3 December 1971. Moreover, although Prince Souvanna Phouma of Laos supported ZOPFAN in principle, he also asserted that Laos had to remove its existing treaties before it could implement the concept "On being neutral." by Frances L. Starnier in *FEER*. Vol. 76, No. 23, 3 June 1972, p.19.

¹²⁰ Tun Razak's visit to the Soviet Union 29 Sept.-5 Oct. 1972 only succeeded in "familiarizing" Soviet leaders with the ZOPFAN proposal, in return for which the Soviet side insisted on introducing "considerations on question of safeguarding security in Asia on a collective basis. "Joint Soviet-Malaysian Communiqué reproduced in *Pravda*. 6 October 1972. At the same time the Soviet Union continued to consider ASEAN in negative terms as a replacement for SEATO. BUSZYNSKI *Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia.*, p.87.

¹²¹ *Bangkok Post*. 8 July 1978.

¹²² VAN DER KROEF "ASEA's Security Needs and Policies.", p.162. Positive signals were also received during Tun Razak's visit to Beijing in May-June 1974. BUSZYNSKI *Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia.*, pp.77-78.

¹²³ The first high level Thai-US meeting after the Kuala Lumpur Foreign Ministers' Meeting was when Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Marshall Green visited Thanom in Bangkok on 8 March 1972 to brief him on Nixon's visit to China. *FAB*. Vol. XI, No. 4, February-March 1972, p.177.

¹²⁴ HÄNGGI, *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept.*, p.41.

¹²⁵ In this view, however morally and intellectually desirable and supported by Buddhist teachings, such policy was still far from the basic desires of the Thai people, quite apart from the conditions not being propitious for implementation, considering the Vietnamese presence in Kampuchea, see ANSUCHOTE, Chan "Kwam Pen Glang (Neutrality)." in *Saranrom Journal*. 30 (1980), pp.240-242.

¹²⁶ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96. However, with discussion of an instrument to enable outside powers to associate themselves with the TAC, the Treaty is perhaps thereby encompassing elements of a regional non-aggression pact as well as a non-aggression pact with external powers in a final phase of ZOPFAN.

¹²⁷ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Chanchal Sakar of All India Radio and Television, 12 March 1969. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. III (1969), p.65.

¹²⁸ See Manila Accord of the Conference of the Foreign Ministers of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, 11 June 1963. *Basic Documents of Asian Regional Organizations*. Vol. IV. Collection edited by Michael Haas. New York, Oceana Publications, 1974, p.1261.

¹²⁹ As for Thailand's position, Prime Minister Thanom announced in July 1971 that if invited he would attend a summit meeting as suggested by President Marcos to discuss Nixon's visit to Beijing. Prime Minister's Answers to Questions, 28 July 1971. *FAB*. Vol. X, No. 6, June-July 1971, p.356.

¹³⁰ "Five-way split." By M.G.G. Pillai in *FEER*. Vol. 79, No. 8, 26 February 1973, p.12.

¹³¹ Note that the idea of regular Summit meetings as an integral part of European decision-making was also being discussed within the European Community during the latter half of 1973, and may have played a part in the enthusiasm of ASEAN members for a similar formula. For details of the European negotiations, see TAYLOR, pp.746-749.

¹³² Summary of Interesting News 17/2518. *News and Views*. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1975, (mimeograph).

¹³³ Joint Press Statement between Thailand and the Republic of Indonesia issued on the official visit of H.E. MR Kukrit Pramoj to Indonesia, 13 June 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 2, April-June 1975, p.63.

¹³⁴ The Prime Minister's Press Conference at Don Muang Airport prior to his Departure for the Philippine and Singapore, 21 July 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 3, July-Sept. 1975, p.89. However, it is also suggested that Malik had produced his own proposals concerning a Summit, and that Indonesia was actually rather keen for a Summit on its own terms, see JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.84.

¹³⁵ Press Conference by the Prime Minister on his Return from Visits to ASEAN Countries, Bangkok, 27 July 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 3, July-Sept. 1975, p.92. See also "Riding two horses." by Arun Senkuttuvan in *FEER*. Vol. 89, No. 32, 8 August 1975, p.18, which seemed to hold out the prospects of a Summit in Bangkok by the end of the year.

¹³⁶ *Prachachart*. 28 August 1975.

¹³⁷ The Declaration of ASEAN Concord, Bali, 24 February 1976. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, pp.32-24.

¹³⁸ Responses for the Foreign Minister for Interview by Representative of Japanese Newspaper, December 1978. *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 20-127 Interview-Addition to I File.* In fact, all three previous promoters of Summit Meetings, i.e., the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, had during the course of 1978 spoken of the desirability of holding a 3rd Summit, see ANTOLIK, p.148.

¹³⁹ *20 Pee ASEAN (20 Years of ASEAN).* Bangkok, Department of ASEAN Affairs, 1987, p.98. See also CRONE, Donald "The ASEAN Summit of 1987: Searching for New Dynamics." in *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1988., pp.40-41. Thailand played an active part in driving the economic agenda of the Summit, and the discussions which were generated paved the way for the Fourth Summit in 1992.

¹⁴⁰ For a discussion of Thailand's role in ASEAN Summit diplomacy, see SOLIDUM, Estrella *Bilateral Summitry in ASEAN.* Manila, Foreign Service Institute, 1982. See also ANTOLIK, pp.142-154.

¹⁴¹ Soviet commentators regularly denounced statements by Southeast Asian leaders, including Thanat Khoman, concerning the existence of a 'power vacuum' as paving the way for involvement by outside powers. At the same time, the promotion of such concepts as Collective Political Defence were regarded by the same commentators as signs of ASEAN moving towards a military alliance. "Another Yoke?" by Yuri Zhukov in *Pravda.* 10 April 1970.

¹⁴² Interview of the Foreign Minister by Mr. Neil Kelly of Telepress International News Agency, 8 February 1977. *MFA Press Release.* No. M5/ 2520. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1977. See also *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 20-126 Interviews I.*

¹⁴³ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Shockford, Reporter for Scripps papers Howards, 6 March 1968. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman* Vol. II (1968), p.17.

¹⁴⁴ This was despite certain comments by Prapat that seemed to support military cooperation at the beginning of 1968, see "The fretful wife." by AB. Santos in *FEER.* Vol. LX, No. 18, 2 May 1968, p.264; "Hydra hunting" by Kazuo

Takita in *FEER*. Vol. LX, No. 17, 25 April 1968, p.207. Indeed, the MFA spent much of its time having to deny prospects for an ASEAN military pact which seemed to be indicated by off-the-cuff comments by various Thai military leaders' different occasions.

¹⁴⁵ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Shockford, Reporter for Scripps papers Howards, 6 March 1968. *Op. cit.*, p.17.

¹⁴⁶ See IRVINE, Roger "The Formative Years of ASEAN: 1967-1975.", p.18.

¹⁴⁷ Statement by Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn at the 6th AMM, Pattaya, 18 April 1973. *Statements by the ASEAN Heads of Government at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings 1975-1985*. Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1986, p.25.

¹⁴⁸ See VAN DER KROEF "ASEAN's Security Needs and Policies.", pp.157-158. Such an evolution within SEATO could be seen by 1969: "The Council was convinced that greater emphasis should be placed on political consultations, counter-insurgency, and economic and cultural cooperation, to make the Organization's role more effective and more responsive to the new Communist tactics being employed to undermine the stability and orderly progress of free societies." Joint Communiqué of the 14th SEATO Council Meeting, Bangkok, 20-21 May 1969. *FAB*. Vol. VIII, No. 5, April-May 1969, p.356.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

¹⁵⁰ Press Conference by the Prime Minister at the Thai Ambassador's Residence, Manila, 24 July 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 3, July-Sept. 1975, p.29.

¹⁵¹ SA-NGIAMBUTR, p.146.

¹⁵² See documents containing the respective viewpoints of the NSC Secretariat, the Ministry of the Interior, the Department of Central Intelligence and the Supreme Command in *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 05-201 4th Pre-Summit SOM, Bangkok, 5-6 February 1976*.

¹⁵³ The SOM discussions in Singapore in September 1975 were inconclusive, but specific measures proposed by Indonesia and the Philippines were discussed, including combined ASEAN military exercises and an ASEAN defence college. "ASEAN free trade gathers momentum." by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 90, No. 47, 21 November 1975, p.51. Discussions on security cooperation thus continued at the Bangkok SOM in February 1976.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Mr. Khachadpai Burusapatana, Geneva, 9/10/96.

¹⁵⁵ During the 'Sea Garuda' joint naval exercises between Indonesia and Thailand in February 1975, Vice-Admiral Punmi Punnisri of Thailand was reported to have proposed to his Indonesian counterpart that such joint military exercises among the ASEAN countries should be expanded beyond bilateral arrangements, see ANWAR, p.135. However, such statements should not automatically be taken as constituting government policy, or even that of the Armed Forces as a whole. Similar comments also emerged from Indonesian military leaders from time to time.

¹⁵⁶ ANWAR, p.139.

¹⁵⁷ Such concerns remained valid, as illustrated by comments from a Soviet observer: "Although they have abandoned their efforts to turn ASEAN into an undisguised militarist bloc, its members did not oppose bilateral military cooperation. It is quite possible that this opposition is a preliminary step towards multilateral cooperation and the accumulation of experience for such cooperation. However, it cannot be considered that the question of ASEAN as a military bloc has been removed entirely from the agenda." PLEKHANOV, Y. "ASEAN: Trends in Political Development." in *Far Eastern Affairs*. 3-1977, p.77.

¹⁵⁸ This included the then Lt. General Kriengsak Chomanan, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Supreme Command and the then Air Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy of the NSC, at the 6th AMM in 1973. These two personalities were subsequently to attain high positions within government, and their experience through exposure to ASEAN at a earlier stage in their respective careers became vital to Thailand's ASEAN policy in later years.

¹⁵⁹ The Indonesian concept of National and Regional Resilience invariably contained six elements: ideology, politics, economics, social, cultural and military. It was ostensibly to strengthen the last element that the Indonesian military sought to enlarge the scope of cooperation, as Suharto was reported to have briefed MR Kukrit, see Joint Press Statement on the Official Visit to Indonesia made by H.E. MR Kukrit Pramoj, 11-14 June 1975. *MFA Press Release*. No. 75/2518. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1975, p.2.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, “Moving together.” by O.G. Roeder in *FEER*. Vol. LXXI, No. 7, 13 February 1971, p.12. Indeed, much of Jakarta’s denials of willingness to move to a military pact and its opposition to foreign bases was often a question of rhetoric, and it is suggested that Regional Resilience served Indonesian officials “as a code for some form of nonthreatening, low-profile collective security and defence.” VAN DER KROEF “Indonesia’s National Security.”, pp.488-491.

¹⁶¹ “Malik’s foreign pointers.” by David Jenkins in *FEER*. Vol. 96, No. 23, 10 June 1977, p.37.

¹⁶² Malaysia was perhaps also unwilling to accord a greater security role for Indonesia within the region that would become almost inevitable with ASEAN cooperation in this field, as seen in Datuk Hussein Onn’s resistance to Indonesian pressure prior to the Bali Summit. BUSZYNSKI *Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia*. pp.124-126.

¹⁶³ ANWAR, p.183 LEIFER *Indonesia’s Foreign Policy*, pp.133-136.

¹⁶⁴ “Adam’s Prayer.” by O.G. Roeder in *FEER*. Vol. LXVII, No. 19, 7 May 1970, p.15.

¹⁶⁵ See in-depth discussion of the issue in FUNSTON, pp.309-313.

¹⁶⁶ “The Lovers part.” by Timothy Allman in *FEER*. Vol. LXIX, No. 33, 13 August 1977, pp.23-25.

¹⁶⁷ Statement by the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 July 1970. *FAB*. Vol. IX, No. 5, June-July 1970, p.549.

¹⁶⁸ This did not, however, prevent General Kriangsak Chomanan, by then Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, to make a secret visit to Phnom Penh in June 1974 to assess the possibilities for cooperation, apparently without the knowledge of the MFA or the Prime Minister. “Neutral aid to Cambodia.” by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 85, No. 32, 16 August 1974, p.17.

¹⁶⁹ LEIFER, Michael *Conflict and Regional Order in South-East Asia*. Adelphi Paper No. 162. London, IISS, 1980, p.37.

¹⁷⁰ Aide Memoire dated 31 July 1967 (SEAARC/Doc/1/Amend/3). *MFA L & A Div. File: ASEAN/ 3/FM 2510 ASEAN Declaration*.

¹⁷¹ Denial of political objectives as well as formal structures were made in the speeches at the 1st ASA Ministerial Meeting, see *ASA-Report of the First Meeting of the Foreign Ministers*. Bangkok, 31 July-1 August 1961. FM/61/SR. Bangkok, Thammasat University Press, 1966, pp.2-9; GORDON, *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia.*, pp.167-173.

¹⁷² Comments by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, at the 1st Ministerial Meeting of ASPAC, Seoul, June 1966. *Documents of the 1st Ministerial Meeting for Asia and Pacific Cooperation, Seoul, 1966.*, p.46.

¹⁷³ Memorandum by the Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Kor Tor 0602/325/2533, dated 16 April 1990.

¹⁷⁴ Closing Statement by General Carlos Romulo, Foreign Minister of the Philippines, at the 7th AMM, Jakarta, 9 May 1974. *Statements by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings.*, p.186.

¹⁷⁵ Even then, the Philippines continued to press for a new constitutional framework for ASEAN, including through such for a as the ASEAN-CCI. INGLES, p.251.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Mr. Suthee Natvaratat, Bangkok, 25/8/95. In addition, it could be pointed out that the other agencies were initially involved at the technical level, with their participation being limited to short-term concerns in specific fields, and thus they failed to develop an awareness for the wider ASEAN structure until later on.

¹⁷⁷ See Letter from Jose Ingles to General Sunarso, 14 February 1968. *Minutes, Decisions and Summary Records of the First, Second and Third Sessions of the Standing Committee and of the First Meeting of the Heads of the ASEAN National Secretariats*. Vol. 1. Jakarta, ASEAN National Secretariat of Indonesia, 1968, pp.43-44.

¹⁷⁸ "Economic Cooperation Among Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations." in *Journal of Development Planning*. No. 7. New York, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1974, p.260.

¹⁷⁹ ANWAR, p.60.

¹⁸⁰ "The importance of economic concord." by Anthony Goldstone in *FEER*. Vol. 84, No. 20, 20 May 1974, pp.16-18.

¹⁸¹ Subsequently, Thailand expressed an interest in the post of Director of the Economic Bureau “as a symbol of the importance it placed on economic cooperation,” although a Filipino, Dr. Amado Castro, occupied that post instead, possibly as an exchange between Indonesia and the Philippines, see comments by Chawat Arthayukti, Deputy Secretary-General of the ASEAN National Secretariat of Thailand. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 2, April-June 1976, p.93. The first Thai to occupy a relatively senior position with ASEAN was Dr. Swasdi Skulthai, who became Director of the Bureau of Science and Technology (1977-1980), followed by Mr. Sarawudh Kongsini as Director of the Bureau of Social and Cultural Affairs in 1980.

¹⁸² See various articles by David Jenkins in *FEER*.: “The second time around.” Vol. 99, No. 5, 3 February 1978, p.8; “Exit outspoken Dharsono.” Vol. 99, No. 8, 24 February 1978, p.14; “Last broadside from Dharsono.” Vol. 99, No. 9, 3 March 1978, p.14.

¹⁸³ See MFA Policy Memorandum (ASEAN National Secretariat) on Proposed ASEAN Secretariat, dated 22 June 1973, in *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 08-104 Central Secretariat*.

¹⁸⁴ “If we have failed to implement certain projects or recommendations, we need to find out whether it is due to defects in the existing organizational structure or is it because these projects or recommendations conflict with the domestic policies of certain ASEAN countries.” Statement by the Leader of the Singaporean Delegation. *Report of the 6th AMM, Pattaya, 16-18 April 1973*. Bangkok, ASEAN National Secretariat of Thailand, 1973, (mimeograph).

¹⁸⁵ GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia*, p.168.

¹⁸⁶ Thai Proposal on the Organizational Structure of ASEAN, dated Nov. 1974. *MFA L & A Div. File: ASEAN Secretariat 2517-2518*.

¹⁸⁷ See *Report of the 3rd AEM, Manila, 20-22 January 1977*. Manila, ASEAN National Secretariat of the Philippines, 1977, (mimeograph).

¹⁸⁸ IRVINE, David “Making Haste Less Slowly: ASEAN form 1975.” in *Understanding ASEAN*, pp.57-58.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.56-57.

¹⁹⁰ See *ASEAN: The Way Forward*. The Report of the Group of Fourteen on ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Integration. Kuala Lumpur, ISIS, 1987; 96p.; *ASEAN Economic Cooperation for the 1990s*. A Report Prepared for the ASEAN Standing Committee. Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat/PIDS, 1992; 141p.

¹⁹¹ GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia*, p.171. It is also alleged that at a subsequent stage South Vietnam's interest in membership of ASA was discouraged until such time that membership of some non-aligned countries was obtained, pointing to perception of a need for the Organization as a whole to have an independent image, see SINGH, p.218.

¹⁹² Closing Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman at the 4th ASA MM, Kuala Lumpur, 29 August 1967. *FAB*. Vol. VII, No. 1, August-September 1967, p.53.

¹⁹³ It appeared that the administration of Dudley Senanayake (1965-1970) was interested in ASEAN membership to support national development, given similar export structures between Sri Lanka and many ASEAN countries at the time, but concerns with internal opposition and the position of China led to reluctance in taking the final step. With the accession of Sirimavo Bandaranaike in 1970, Sri Lanka took a more left-wing external orientation, which made its membership less attractive to certain ASEAN members. Thailand initially supported Sri Lanka's inclusion as the latter was regarded as a fellow Buddhist country, though it subsequently became suspicious of its left-leaning policies, and in later years it was Malaysia which became Sri Lanka's champion within ASEAN. See KODIKARA, S.U. "Major Trends in Sri Lanka's non-Alignment Policy After 1956." in *Asian Survey*. Vol. XIII, No. 12, December 1973, pp.1121-1136. After 1980, despite further expression of Sri Lankan interest, there was no consensus on its membership, and Sri Lanka later joined the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which was founded in 1985 with seven members, being Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, see *Annual Report of the ASEAN Standing Committee 1980-81*. Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1981, p.13.

¹⁹⁴ See Charter of the Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, 25 May 1963. *Documents of African Regional Organizations*. Vol. 1. Edited by Louis B. Sohn. New York, Oceana Publications, 1971, p.64.

¹⁹⁵ For an examination of Thailand's role in the widening of ASEAN membership in this period, see KRISHNAMRA, Nadhavathna *Thailand and the Evolution of ASEAN: The Politics of Widening Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia 1967-1979*. DES Memoire. Geneva, IUHEI, 1995, especially pp.45-68.

¹⁹⁶ MF A Press Announcement, Kuala Lumpur, 15 May 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 2, April-June 1975, p.54.

¹⁹⁷ Speech by MR Kukrit Pramoj, Prime Minister of Thailand, at the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Southeast Asia, Raffles Hotel, Singapore, 25 July 1975. *MFA Press Release*. No. 132/2518. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1975, p.2.

¹⁹⁸ "The climate of hope." by Anthony Polsky in *FEER*. Vol. LXVI, No. , 25 December 1969, pp.65-66. Indeed, it could be said that all the ASEAN members at one time or another during the course of 1967-1979 had advocated the widening of ASEAN membership, with the notable exception of Singapore.

¹⁹⁹ "Seeking a sense of direction." by Rodney Tasker in *FEER*. Vol. 100, No. 23, 9 June 1978, P.30.

²⁰⁰ In 1970, this ran into opposition from the anti-communist Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman. "No stopping the Tunku" by Anthony Polsky in *FEER*. Vol. LXVII, No. 2, 8 January 1970, p.5. Meanwhile, Thanat and reported to have no objections to the Indonesian move. *Le Figaro*. 21-22 February 1970. As late as 1973, Suharto was seen to favour moves to expand ASEAN and declared in an interview that: "we would welcome as members Southeast Asian nations like Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and, should they so desire, both South and North Vietnam." *IHT*. 19 March 1973.

²⁰¹ Policy based on enhancing ASEAN cooperation at the Bali Summit, as well as encouraging relations with the Indochinese states through the TAC, was accordingly promoted by Indonesia, see LEIFER *Conflict and Reginal Order in South-East Asia.*, p.31.

²⁰² MURTOPO, Ali "Political, Economic and Strategic Developments of Southeast Asia with Particular Emphasis on the Future Development of ASEAN." in *Indonesian Quarterly*. Vol. IV, No. 2, 3, 4, 1976 Special Issue, p.31.

²⁰³ Speech of H.E. Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachomn at Dinner hosted by the Diplomatic Corps in His Honour, Dusit Thani Hotel, Bangkok, 14 May 1973. *FAB*. Vol. XII, No. 4, May-July 1973, p.2.

²⁰⁴ Joint Press Statement on the Official visit of H.E. Brig.-Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Republic of Indonesia, 8 April 1973. *FAB*. Vol. XII, No. 3, February-April 1973, p.61.

²⁰⁵ "Malaysia leads the way." by Rodney Tasker in *FEER*. Vol. 100, No. 23, 9 June 1978, p.31.

²⁰⁶ Interview given by Phan Hien, Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam, to Ms. Edith Lenart in *FEER*. Vol. 96, No. 25, 24 June 1977, p.19.

²⁰⁷ FROST, Frank "Introduction: ASEAN since 1967." in *ASEAN in the 1990s*. Collection edited by Alison Broinowski. London, Macmillan, 1990, p.21.

²⁰⁸ Around early 1973 Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam was already advocating a wider Asian Forum to include China, but received lukewarm response from ASEAN, except Indonesia. LEIFER "The ASEAN States: No Common Outlook.", p.602. This move was apparently supported by Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, although Whitlam apparently annoyed certain ASEAN countries by referring to their Organization as a "sub-regional grouping." *FEER*. Vol. 80, No. 16, 23 April 1973, p.11. In contrast with Indonesia, moreover, Thailand showed relatively little interest in forming a fresh regional grouping around Australia and Japan.

²⁰⁹ Statement by the Director-General of Economic Affairs, 25 May 1973. *FAB*. Vol. XII, No. 4, May-July 1973, p.32.

²¹⁰ "Changing the course of the Mekong." by Michael Morrow in *FEER*. Vol. 89, No. 38, 19 September 1975, p.59.

²¹¹ "Certain nations are not prepared to join with certain other nations... Therefore, once we cannot have one organization, we then have two...But it is better to have two than not to have any at all." Interview given by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman to Mr. Samuel W. Jameson, Chicago Tribune, Bangkok, 14 September 1967. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. I (1967), p.79.

²¹² “No camouflage surrender.” by Frances L. Starnier in *FEER*. Vol. LXII, No. 42, 17 October 1968, p.159.

²¹³ Statement by the Foreign Minister to the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Thailand, 28 August 1968. *FAB*. Vol. VIII, No. 1, Aug.-Sept. 1968, p.8.

²¹⁴ KHOMAN “A Positive Foreign Policy for Thailand.”, pp.6-7.

²¹⁵ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

²¹⁶ Kor Tor 084/50179, From the Foreign Minister (Chatichai) to the Prime Minister (MR Kukrit), dated 26 November 1975. *120 Years MFA.*, pp.202-203.

²¹⁷ Under Article 10 of the 1954 Manila Pact, the Treaty was to be “in force indefinitely.” The 1975 understanding was made clear in a document published by SEATO in a review of the Organization’s activities: “Despite the Organization’s dissolution, the Manila Treaty remains in effect. This is of particular importance to Thailand, which unlike the Philippines, had no security treaty links with the West,” *SEATO Record.*, p.69.

²¹⁸ “The passing of SEATO.” by Richard Hughes in *FEER*. Vol. 96, No. 25, 24 June 1977, p.27.

²¹⁹ “Thailand and ASEAN.” Interview given by Thanat Khoman to Thira Nuchpiem and Vinita Sukrasep, pp.229-230. As Thanat put it “ASEAN cannot be assimilated to a lump of sugar which can be dissolved in any liquid.” “Is Pacific Economic Cooperation Desirable?” Speech by Dr. Thanat Khoman at the Pacific Economic Cooperation Committee, Bali, 20-23 November 1983, in *Saranrom Journal*. 34 (1984), p.307.

CHAPTER VI

¹ The convergence of political regimes may be demonstrated in that at the 1977 Kuala Lumpur Summit, three of the five ASEAN Heads of Government had been trained as barristers in Britain during the late 1940s and mid 1950s (Tanin, Hussein Onn and Lee).

² This preoccupation stretched back to the days of ASA, “To the Tunku the abandonment of the idea organization in favour of a regional economic organization did not signal a lessening of his apprehension of a communist

threat. It merely constituted a switch to an alternative method of combating the influence and threat of communism.” JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.72.

³ Speech by H.E. Pote Sarasin, Minister of National Development, at the Southeast Asia Session of the 1968 Conference on Asia Far East-America of the Council of Commerce and Industry, New York, 4 October 1967. *FAB*. Vol. VII, No. 2, Oct.-Nov. 1967, pp.129-130.

⁴ The last major incidents of communalist tensions vis-à-vis the Chinese population in Thailand were probably the Victory Celebration incidents of 1945 and the Yawaraj incidents of 1946 prior to the opening of the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok. PURCELL, Victor *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*. London, OUP, 1965, pp.148-154.

⁵ Regional cooperation was described as “a revolution to destroy the shackles of past domination and dependency.” Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 22nd UNGA, 5 October 1967. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.160.

⁶ Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96. This view was very similar to that expressed by the Malaysian “free enterprise...underlining the philosophical basis on ASEAN.” SHAFIE “ASEAN: Contributor to Stability and Development.”, p.360.

⁷ KEYES, p.45; CHULA CHAKRABONGSE, p.58.

⁸ SIAMWALLA, Ammar “Stability, Growth and Distribution in the Thai Economy.” in *Finance, Trade and Economic Development in Thailand*. Essays in Honour of Khunying Suparb Yossundara. Collection edited by Prateep Sondysuwan. Bangkok, Sompong Press, 1975, p.32.

⁹ PHONGPAICHIT, Pasuk & BAKER Chris *Thailand: Economy and Politics*. Kuala Lumpur, OUP, 1995, p.121. When embarking upon such measures, the Finance Minister sought to reassure Thailand’s trading partners with the words: “In regard to tariffs, it is not the intention of Siam to adopt a prohibitive system: her tariffs are for revenue purposes.”, see “Siam’s Treaties with World Powers.” by Luang Pradist Manudharm (Pridi Banomyong). *Siam Today*. January 1937, p.13.

¹⁰ PHONGPAICHIT & BAKER *Thailand: Economy and Politics.*, p.127.

¹¹ STIFEL, Lawrence D. "Technocrats and Modernization in Thailand." in *Asian Survey*. Vol. XVI, No. 2, December 1976, pp.1186-1187.

¹² See *A Public Development Programme for Thailand*. Report of a Mission organized by the IBRD at the Request of the Government of Thailand. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959; 301p.

¹³ The NEDB became the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) in 1972, being one of the agencies falling under the central authority of the Office of the Prime Minister. Although it attempted to provide a basis for overall planning, in effect the NESDB was largely responsible for outlining the public investment programme only, while control over production was given over to the private sector which made the crucial decisions concerning allocation of investment. See CHRISTENSEN, Scott R. & SIAMWALLA, Ammar "Muddling Toward a Miracle: Thailand and East Asian Growth." in *TDRI Quarterly Review*. Vol. 9, No. 2, June 1994, p.17.

¹⁴ EWISON, Kevin *Power and Politics in Thailand*. Manila, Journal of Contemporary Asia Publish, 1989, p.41.

¹⁵ Lecture on "A Policy of Nationalism.", 18 March 1960, in *Vichitr Anusorn*. p.220. At this time Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn was Permanent Secretary of the newly-created Office of the Prime Minister.

¹⁶ Indeed, concerning the crucial industrial sector, the UN Mission asserted that "the Government should not only refrain from seeking to increase its industrial participation, but should try to disengage itself from its present commitments." *A Public Development Programme for Thailand.*, p.96. The focus on the private sector was enshrined in the 5 Year Plans, including the Third Plan (1972-76) which for the first time included a commitment to exports as Renoo Suvarnasathit, Secretary-General of the NESDB, pointed out: "As the Thai economy remains market-oriented, state planning is carried out within this context. The main investments under the Plan will be made by the private sector." *The Times*. 15 October 1971.

¹⁷ PHONGPAICHIT, Pasuk & BAKER, Chris *Thailand's Boom*. Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 1996, pp.5 It is pointed out that Thailand shared the

developmental drive of the Asian Tigers, but that Thailand based its initial development on agricultural expansion and a *laissez-faire* attitude towards business, with three factors serving to distinguish Thai development from that of the Tigers: 1) Thailand had land; 2) growth was based on *laissez-faire* IMF/World Bank doctrines and the fear of dirigisme; and 3) capital markets were allowed to work on their own. *Ibid.*, pp.58-59.

¹⁸ INGRAM, James C. *Economic Change in Thailand 1850-1970*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1971, p.223.

¹⁹ HEWISON, pp.57-58.

²⁰ As an example of the impression among senior Thai personalities at the time, Ambassador to Washington Bunchana Atthakor wrote: "the amount of aid extended to us by the United States...year after year, has always been quite nominal in comparison to those given to Korea and Taiwan." ATTHAKOR, p.1035.

²¹ WYATT, p.285.

²² A scholar of economic cooperation in Asia in the early years has noted that in contrast to other regions, the ECAFE countries "have shown little positive enthusiasm" for regional economic integration, although there has been concerted action in a few specific fields such as trade, transport and water resources development, see SINGH, p.118. In particular, it was noted that problems of intraregional trade were so difficult to resolve with the maintenance of links to European powers by various countries that the issue of trade was not discussed much during the 1950s, until the pressure of the creation of the European Common Market by June 1958. *Ibid.*, pp.120-121.

²³ See, for example, SCHUBERT, p.444.

²⁴ It is noted, nevertheless, that trade promotion talks within ECAFE attended by middle-ranking officials adequate follow-up action since the delegates upon returning to the capitals often failed to convince the respective governments of the ideas developed at the meetings. SINGH, p.123.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.149-150.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.154.

²⁷ “Regional market possibilities in Asia.” by A Special Correspondent in *FEER*. Vol. XXXI, No. 3, 19 January 1961, p.123.

²⁸ “Free trade: cautious steps in Asia.” by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 89, No. 33, 15 August 1975, p.32.

²⁹ “More power to ECAFE’s elbow.” by Daniel Wolfstone in *FEER*. Vol. XXXII, No. 1, 6 April 1961, p.10.

³⁰ SINGH, pp.156-157. Nevertheless, wider approaches continued to be promoted by ECAFE, including the proposal for the establishment of an Organization of Asian Economic Cooperation (OAEC) from an expert group of Indian, Thai and Japanese planners. *Ibid.*, pp.158-159. See also “ASA: Modest results?” by Martin Dale in *FEER*. Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, 5 April 1962, p.8.

³¹ HAAS, Ernst B. “The Study of Regional Integration.” in *Regional Integration: Theory and Research*, p.12.

³² STONHAM, P.E. “Intra-Regional Trade Cooperation in Developing Asia.” in *Journal of Common Market Studies*. Vol. VI, No. 2, December 1967, p.208.

³³ Although as late as June 1967 Air Marshal Perm Limpisawat, Thai Airways’ General Manager, was advocating an ASA airline to operate supersonic aircraft. *FEER*. Vol. LVI, No. 13, 29 June 1967, p.692.

³⁴ In 1959, Malaya and Indonesia had signed a treaty of friendship. Thailand also had a treaty of friendship of 1954 and the Philippines had a commercial treaty of 1963 with Indonesia, which not a member of ASA, see LITTAUA, p.16. See also “Asian Common Market.” by Bernardino Ronquillo in *FEER*. Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, 11 October 1962, p.55.

³⁵ Interview with Mr. Vicharn Nivatvongs, Bangkok, 17/8/95.

³⁶ “Common Market on the Agenda.” by A Correspondent in *FEER*. Vol. XXXIV, No. 8, 23 November 1961, p.382.

³⁷ “Disenchantment.” by Bernardino Ronquillo in *FEER*. Vol. XXXVI, No. 10, 7 June 1962, p.502.

³⁸ Opening Statement by H.E. Narciso Ramos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, at the 3rd ASA Ministerial Meeting, Bangkok, August 1966. *Report of the 3rd Meeting of Foreign Ministers of ASA Bangkok 3-5 August 1966*. p.29.

³⁹ Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, Bangkok, 5/2/96.

⁴⁰ GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia.*, pp.177-178.

⁴¹ SURIYAMONGKOL, Marjorie L. *Politics of ASEAN Economic Cooperation. The Case of the ASEAN Industrial Projects.* Singapore, OUP/ISEAS, 1988, p.47.

⁴² LITTAUA, p.61.

⁴³ Speech by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, at the 2nd ASPAC MM, Bangkok, 5-7 July 1967. *Documents of the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the Asian and Pacific Council.*, p.70.

⁴⁴ It is pointed out the central banks and economic ministries were heavily represented in the first ASA Joint Working Party (JWP), which was strikingly 'functional' in character, containing working parties on economic and related matters, cultural and social questions, and organizational procedures. GORDON *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia.*, p.173.

⁴⁵ "Economic Cooperation Among Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations", p.2.

⁴⁶ When the Report was made public and it was clear that ASEAN would adopt a piecemeal approach, some of UN experts spoke out: "We were misled... Indonesia does not want industrial cooperation," one claimed, "one of ASEAN's leading economic ministers is more interested in ASEAN's relations with the European Economic Community (EEC) than with relations within ASEAN itself. "No will, no way." by Dick Wilson in *FEER*. Vol. 80, No. 24, 18 June 1973, p.49. It was also pointed out that the Foreign Ministers did not have the interest, expertise or mandate to endorse the projects. *Ibid.*, p.52.

⁴⁷ At the time of the founding of ASEAN, regional commentators pointed out that the way ahead laid in diversifying away from primary commodities. However, this laid the emphasis on industrialization as a first step. It was noted that the growth of the traditional primary exports of the region had been slower than that of manufactured exports of developed countries. Moreover, the share of primary products in the imports of developed countries was declining, while the domestic markets for commodities other than food were small. STONHAM, pp.197-199.

⁴⁸ “The Honest Broker.” by Derek Davies in *FEER*. Vol. LXX, No. 45, 7 November 1970, p.34.

⁴⁹ Suriyamongkol in fact places the UN Report (1973) alongside the ADB Report for the 4th Ministerial Conference for Asian Economic Development (1969) and the Asian Industrial Survey for Regional Cooperation (1973) undertaken for the Asian Industrial Development Council (AIDC) in terms of setting the agenda for regional cooperation in Southeast Asia in the 1970s. SURIYAMONGKOL, pp.56-57.

⁵⁰ “Debalkanization” in *FEER*., p.391.

⁵¹ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Oliver Woods of the London Times, 1 May 1969. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. III (1969), p.109.

⁵² Interview given by the Foreign Minister to New Zealand reporters, 7 September 1967. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman* Vol. I (1967), p.62.

⁵³ “Typical reactions,” by A Correspondent in *FEER*. Vol. LVII No. 8, 24 August 1967, p.372.

⁵⁴ Opening Statement of H.E. Narciso Ramos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, at the 4th ASA Ministerial Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, 28 August 1967. *FAB*. Vol. VII, No. 1, Aug.-Sept. 1967, p.51. See also CROUCH, p.57.

⁵⁵ CHARITKUL, Sompong “Some Thoughts on Asian Economic Cooperation.” in *Saranrom Journal*. 19 (1969), p.150.

⁵⁶ See, for example, SIAMWALLA, Ammar “Stability, Growth and Distribution in the Thai Economy.”, NONTAPUNTHAWAT, Nimit “Agriculture, Thailand’s Mainstay.” in *Economic Interaction in the Pacific Basin*. Collection edited by Lawrence B. Krause & Sueo Sekiguchi. Washington D.C., The Brookings Institution, 1980, p.182.

⁵⁷ HONGPAICHIT & BAKER *Thailand: Economy and Politics*., p.128; p.145.

⁵⁸ “The import goods market in Thailand.” by S.Y. Lee in *FEER*. 9 August 1956, p.175.

⁵⁹ Interview with Mr. Vicharn Nivatvongs, Bangkok, 17/8/95.

⁶⁰ AKRASANEE *Thailand and ASEAN Economic Cooperation.*, p.10.

⁶¹ MEYANATHAN, Sahathavan & HARON, Ismail "ASEAN Trade Cooperation: A Survey of the Issues." in *ASEAN at the Crossroads. Obstacles, Options and Opportunities in Economic Cooperation.* Collection edited by Noordin Sopiee, Chew Lay See and Lim Siang Jin. Kuala Lumpur, ISIS (Group of 14), 1987, p.23.

⁶² INGRAM, p.284. For the particular case of the Thai textile industry, see also SUPHACHALASAI, Suphat *Thailand's Clothing and Textile Exports.* ISEAS Occasional Paper No. 89. Singapore, ISEAS, 1994, pp.1-2.

⁶³ THAMBIPILLAI & SAVARANAMUTTU, p.13.

⁶⁴ In 1967, the value of Thailand's exports to ASEAN countries was \$146.9 million, while the corresponding value of imports was a mere \$32 million. At the same time, exports to non-ASEAN countries in Asia, such as Ceylon and Laos, were equivalent to those to the Philippines, revealing that there was no *a priori* case for Thailand's economic cooperation with certain countries within the ASEAN group. *Direction of Trade.* Washington, IMF, various volumes.

⁶⁵ MEYANATHAN & HARON, p.17.

⁶⁶ AKRASANEE *Thailand and ASEAN Economic Cooperation.*, pp.27-30. An additional factor was the attempt to process more of the commodity exports, which in effect meant bypassing Singapore as an entrepot e.g. for rubber. Singapore's trade with ASEAN represented around 30% of its total external trade, while up to 1983-84 ASEAN was Singapore's largest trading partner. REGNIER, p.36.

⁶⁷ However, at the time of the UN Report, the percentage of ASEAN in total exports of Thailand at 18.7% appeared to be second only to Malaysia in showing a strong export linkage with ASEAN, as opposed to the Philippines with 1.8%. "Economic Cooperation Among Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.", p.35.

⁶⁸ See UNGPHAKORN, Puey "Thailand's Economic Prospects." in *JSS.*, Vol. LVIII Pt. 2, July 1970, pp.127-143.

⁶⁹ PHONGPAICHIT & BAKER *Thailand: Economy and Politics.*, p.137.

⁷⁰ *50 Pee Thanakarn Hang Prades Thai (50 Years of the Bank of Thailand)*. Bangkok, Bank of Thailand, 1993, p.242.

⁷¹ YOSHIHARA, p.2; p.109.

⁷² Interview with Mr. Suthee Natvaratat, Bangkok, 25/8/95.

⁷³ RÉGNIER, p.170.

⁷⁴ Between 1967-1971, Singapore appeared to take a minimalist and sceptical attitude to regional cooperation beyond the general goals of political stabilization. Its Finance Minister Goh Keng Swee even went as far as to debunk the idea of a Southeast Asian Common Market and to assert that: “we must base our industrial growth principally on the developed countries of the West, and in due course, Japan when she liberalizes her trade policies.” “Regional Heretic.” by Anthony Polsky in *FEER*. Vol. LXVII, No. 7, 17 February 1970, p.13.

⁷⁵ In the light of early Philippine enthusiasm for ASEAN economic cooperation since 1967, it is suggested that at the Meeting of the ASEAN Permanent Committee on Commerce and Industry in Manila in October 1968 the Philippines called for the formation of a free trade area and even a common market. However, the Philippines also announced its reservations about Malaysia’s sovereignty over Sabah at the same Meeting, and the resultant decline in relations led to the suspension of such discussions for some time, and ASEAN cooperation did not take off again until the 3rd AMM at the Cameron Highlands in December 1969, see JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.55. In any case, Thanat appeared to be sceptical with regards to the project, again pointing to the ASA experience. Interview given to Thai mass media, 4 December 1968. *Collected Interviews of H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman*. Vol. II (1968), p.228.

⁷⁶ The New Society also confirmed the establishment of the commercial and industrial elite in Philippine national affairs, and technocrats were nominated to the key economic posts. CROUCH, pp.55-57.

⁷⁷ FIFIELD *National and Regional Interests in ASEAN*, p.38. This was marked by visits to ASEAN countries by Lee Kuan Yew between 1972-1973, see JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.79. Singaporean moves also took place against the

background of a slowdown of its exports for the first time in many years owing to recession in the industrialized world. *The Times*. 24 July 1975.

⁷⁸ Opening Statement by President Ferdinand Marcos at the 4th AMM, Manila, 12 March 1971. *Statements by the ASEAN Heads of Government at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings.*, pp.20-22. With the reactivation of ASEAN, the Permanent Committee on Commerce and Industry had begun discussing preferential tariffs as early as 1971, see CASTRO, Amado “ASEAN Economic Cooperation.” in *Understanding ASEAN.*, p.82.

⁷⁹ SURIYAMONGKOL, p.97.

⁸⁰ This was exemplified by comments made by the influential head of the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.95-96.

⁸² “Free trade: cautious steps in Asia.” by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 89, No. 33, 15 August 1975, p.32. The Agreement came into force in June 1976, although it was only ratified by five countries, being Bangladesh, India, Laos, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka. It may also be recalled that in June 1974, in a unilateral effort to counter the high cost of imports caused by the First Oil Shock, the Thai government had also effectuated large tariff reductions on 306 items, including consumer goods, raw materials and intermediate products. *AKRASANEE Thailand and ASEAN Economic Cooperation.*, p.18.

⁸³ Joint Communiqué between Thailand and the Philippines issued on the Occasion of the Official Visit of MR Kukrit Pramoj to the Philippines, July 24 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 3, July-Sept. 1975, p.72. President Marcos had earlier mentioned such projects, including “building the scaffolding for a customs union or even a foreign trade payments union,” in his Dinner Speech in honour of the Thai Prime Minister on 21 July, while in response to all these proposals MR Kukrit at his Press Conference at the Thai Ambassador’s Residence in Manila on 24 July said that he agreed in principle to the Philippine ideas. *Ibid.* p.20; p.26. However, MR Kukrit also indicated that he was not thinking as far as an ASEAN Common Market and that he considered the harmonization of industrial and agricultural policies as a first step. *MFA Press Release*. No. 122/2518., 24 July 1975. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1975, p.1.

⁸⁴ There did, however, appear to be a greater stress on economics as an aspect of foreign policy under MR Kukrit, including with regards to relations with China, as MR Kukrit announced: "Our foreign policy must be subject to the economic planning of the country as a whole." "Kukrit Pramoj, politician." by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 86, No. 48, 6 December 1974, p.31.

⁸⁵ KHOMAN "The Founding of ASEAN.", p.124.

⁸⁶ SONDISUWAN, Prateep and SUPINIT, Vijit "Progress, Problems and Prospects in ASEAN Economic Cooperation: A View." in *The ASEAN: Problems and Prospects in a Changing World*. Collection edited by Sarasin Viraphol, Amphon Namatra and Masahide Shibusawa. Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University Press, 1976, p.27.

⁸⁷ Statement by the Foreign Minister on his return from the 9th AMM, 27 June 1976. *FAB*. Vol. XVI, No. 3, July-September 1976, p.63.

⁸⁸ Keynote Statement by President Ferdinand Marcos at the 3rd AEM, Manila, 20 January 1977. *Statements by the ASEAN Heads of Government at ASEAN Economic Minister's Meetings.*, (1975-1985) Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1986, p.18.

⁸⁹ Interview with Mr. Suthee Navaratat, Bangkok, 25/8/95.

⁹⁰ Interview given by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Eckhard Budewig, DPA, February 1977. *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 20-126 Interviews I*.

⁹¹ "Each member of ASEAN has its own problems, such as those regarding the protection of domestic industry. But we may proceed on the basis of commodity-by-commodity, and develop into more activities in each field, which may lead to a free trade zone. The next step will be an Economic Union, and at the end of it may become a Common Market which is what we're heading for. But one has to proceed very cautiously and patiently." Interview given by H.E. Upadit Pachariyangkun to Mr. W.P. Reeves of the Dominion (NZ), Bangkok, 24 June 1977. *MFA Press Release*. No. M23/2520. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1977.

⁹² One commentator suggested that "Thailand, with its host of political and security problems, appears to be content to just follow the others without taking any initiatives." "Economics the key to success." by Rodney Tasker in *FEER*. Vol. 95, No. 7, 18 Feb. 1977, p.28.

⁹³ MEYANATHAN & HARON, p.26.

⁹⁴ Drawbacks within the PTA were reflected in the fact that there was a growth in the number of items accorded tariff preference under voluntary offers, rather than in actual intra-ASEAN trade. AKRASANEE, Narongchai "ASEAN Economic Cooperation." in *The First ASEAN Roundtable: New Directions for ASEAN Economic Cooperation*. Summary Record of Conference held in Bangkok, 7-8 April 1986. Bangkok, ISEAS, 1986, p.15.

⁹⁵ *Annual Report of the ASEAN Standing Committee 1980-1981.*, p.33.

⁹⁶ In February 1979, in an attempt to stem the increasing balance of payments deficit, various forms of import control were implemented, including increases in the tariff rates of consumer goods to an unprecedented level. AKRASANEE *Thailand and ASEAN Economic Cooperation.*, pp.30-31.

⁹⁷ See KURUS, Bilson "The ASEAN Triad: National Interest, Consensus-Seeking, and Economic Cooperation." in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Vol. 16, No. 4, March 1995, p.413.

⁹⁸ TAN, Gerald *Trade Liberalization in ASEAN*. ISEAS Research Notes & Discussions Paper 32. Singapore, ISEAS, 1982, pp.44-45. See also CROUCH, pp.51-57.

⁹⁹ Interview with Mr. Vicharn Nivatvongs, Bangkok, 17/8/95.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Mr. Suthee Natvaratat, Bangkok, 25/8/95. This was a view shared by Thanat Khoman, see KHOMAN "ASEAN in the Regional and Global Context.", p.95.

¹⁰¹ AKRASANEE, Narongchai & STIFEL, David "The Political Economy of ASEAN Economic Cooperation." in *TDRI Quarterly Review*. Vol. 7, No. 3, Sept. 1992, p.4

¹⁰² To the extent that there was a commitment by the ASEAN countries to trade liberalization in Asia, this was held to be most appropriately dealt with at the ASEAN or sub-regional level, as stressed by ASEAN delegations at the ESCAP trade ministers' meeting in New Delhi in 1978. "Stonewalling on Pacific Pact." by Michael Richardson in *FEER*. Vol. 101, No. 27, 7 July 1978, p.48.

¹⁰³ It is suggested that even when in government, technocrats in Thailand carried less weight than their counterparts in Indonesia or the Philippines: “they have no assurance of being able to plan ahead, because there has been a succession of unstable Thai governments. Moreover, an individual minister whose policies are economically sound, although politically unpopular, is unlikely to be supported by the government.” MILNE, R.S. “Technocrats and Politics in ASEAN Countries.” in *Pacific Affairs*. Vol. 55, No. 3, Fall 1982, pp.418-419.

¹⁰⁴ PHONGPAICHIT & BAKER, *Thailand: Economy and Politics.*, p.144. See also CHRISTENSEN & SIAMWALLA, pp.18-19.

¹⁰⁵ PHONGPAICHIT & BAKER *Thailand's Boom.*, p.65.

¹⁰⁶ YOSHIHARA, p.109.

¹⁰⁷ Even in 1981, Deputy PM Boonchu Rojanasathien, formerly associated with business circles and the Bangkok Bank, spoke of the “crawling pace of ASEAN cooperation” and referred to free trade as “a worthwhile step for the countries of ASEAN to adopt as the objective of this decade of the '80s. I believe that if we, in ASEAN, accept the concept of a free trade area during the next ten years, it would be a major achievement on the part of the economic planners of our countries towards achieving all the advantages of the economies of scale, so that we can help our region to grow more quickly.” Statement by H.E. Boonchu Rojanasathien, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, at the 4th General Assembly of the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists, Bangkok, 16 Feb. 1981. *ASEAN Newsletter*. Vol. 1, No. 6, February 1981. Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1981, p.8.

¹⁰⁸ PANYARACHUN, Anand “Towards an ASEAN Common Market-Thailand's Perception: The Private Sector View.” Speech delivered in Kuala Lumpur, 30 October 1986, reproduced in *Saranrom Journal*. 44 (1987), p.56.

¹⁰⁹ See “Economic Cooperation Among Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.”, p.24.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.24.

¹¹¹ SURIYAMONGKOL, p.42.

¹¹² “Economic Cooperation Among Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.” p.24. At the time of the founding of ASEAN in

August 1967, natural rubber prices were at their lowest since 1949, and the need for cooperation was felt by major producers such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. *FEER*. Vol. LVII, No. 12, 21 September 1967, p.543.

¹¹³ AKRASANEE *Thailand and ASEAN Economic Cooperation.*, p.40.

¹¹⁴ *FEER 1968 Yearbook.*, p.233-234. It is suggested that the main incidents of political instability and communal violence in Malaysia have taken place against a backdrop of low commodity prices, and incidents in the 1940s and 1970s were linked to depressed rubber prices, see STUBBS, Richard "The Foreign Policy of Malaysia." in *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia.*, p.115.

¹¹⁵ CROUCH, p.99.

¹¹⁶ "Economic Cooperation Among Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.", p.146.

¹¹⁷ Joint Press Statement on the Occasion of the visit by the Prime Minister of Thailand to Malaysia, 9-11 June 1975. *MFA Press Release*. No. 69/2518. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1975, p.2.

¹¹⁸ Statement by H.E. Mr. Sunthorn Hongladarom, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, Manila, 11 May 1979. *MFA News Bulletin*. No. 6/1979, May-June 1979. Bangkok, Department of Information, 1979, p.13.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Mr. Vicharn Nivatvongs, Bangkok, 17/8/95. See also AKRASANEE, Narongchai "ASEAN and the NIEO: A View from Thailand." in *ASEAN Economic Cooperation and the New International Economic Order*. Collection edited by B.A.R. Mokhzani, Khong Kim Hoong & R.J.G. Wells. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian Economics Association, 1980, p.47.

¹²⁰ XUTO, Manaspas "The Role of ASEAN in North-South Negotiations." *ASEAN in World Politics.*, p.99.

¹²¹ Thai officials quoted in AKRASANEE "ASEAN and the NIEO: A View from Thailand.", p.44. See also comments by the Thai Ambassador to Washington in 1985: "Thailand via ASEAN is now a moderating influence in international arena. ASEAN itself is a conduit between North and South." KASEMSRI "Thailand's Foreign Policy.", p.16.

¹²² The Press Statement at the Conclusion of the 6th AMM, Pattaya, 18 April 1973, included the mention that “The practice of presenting a common ASEAN stand should be further encouraged particularly in dealing with the more developed countries in international organizations and conferences where economic and technical cooperation are discussed.” *FAB*. Vol. XII, No. 3, Feb.-April 1973, p.66.

¹²³ These included representations in Geneva for non-reciprocity on the part of developing countries and their freedom to benefit from the Tokyo Round without having to sign up as GATT members. It should be noted that at this time Thailand was not yet a member of GATT. “Tuning in a single voice for ASEAN.” by Jidbhand Kambhu in *FEER*. Vol. 81, No. 32, 13 August 1973, p.51.

¹²⁴ given by Dr. Manaspas Xuto, Director-General of Economic Affairs, to Vinita Sukrasep in *ASEAN in World Politics.*, p.94.

¹²⁵ Declaration of ASEAN Concord, Bali, 24 February 1976. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, pp.32-34.

¹²⁶ KALIRAJAN K.P. & WONG J. “ASEAN cooperation on minerals: Looking back and looking forward.” in *ASEAN at the Crossroads.*, p.293.

¹²⁷ KONJING, Khaisri “ASEAN cooperation on commodities: Looking back and looking forward.” in *ASEAN at the Crossroads.*, p.240.

¹²⁸ SURIYAMONGKOL, p.115.

¹²⁹ Address by Mr. Danai Tulalamba, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Commerce of Thailand, at the 1st Meeting of the ASEAN Food Reserve Board, Bangkok, 3 November 1980. *ASEAN Newsletter*. Vol. 1, No. 6, February 1981. Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, p.6.

¹³⁰ NOPAKHUN, Ronarong “ASEAN Food Security Reserve.” in *Saranrom Journal*. 23 (1983), p.259.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.268.

¹³² Prime Minister Thanom said to visiting Indonesian Trade Minister Radius Prawiro that it was Thai policy to provide help by selling rice specially and equally to member countries of ASEAN, see *FAB*. Vol. XIII, No. 1, Aug.-Oct. 1973, p.54. Under the scope of the PTA there were also provisions for long-

term supply contracts for fuels and food, and Thailand and Singapore subsequently entered into a bilateral agreement for the delivery of maize, see MEYANATHAN & HARON, p.25. Instead, Thailand was able to obtain 50,000 tons of high-speed diesel from the PRC following Deputy Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan's Beijing visit in December 1973. *Bangkok Post*. 29 December 1973.

¹³³ "Indonesia: developing a future." by Frances L. Starnier in *FEER*. Vol. 83, No. 11, 18 March 1974, p.44. However, it is also pointed out that Thailand had not resorted to Indonesian oil in the past due to its higher price than Middle East oil, as well as its lower sulphur content which made it unsuitable for Thai refineries. AKRASANE *Thailand and ASEAN Economic Cooperation*, p.69.

¹³⁴ See Joint Communiqué Issued on the Occasion of the Official Visit of H.E. General Kriangsak Chomanan, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, to the Republic of Indonesia, 17-20 Feb. 1978. *ASEAN News*. 2/2521. Bangkok, Department of ASEAN Affairs, 1978, p.13.

¹³⁵ JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.60.

¹³⁶ NOPAKHUN "ASEAN Food Security Reserve.", p.268.

¹³⁷ It could be seen that the fall of the Shah of Iran in February 1979 and the Oil Shock which followed led to the Thai government's reaction to try to diversify sources of supply away from the Middle East which provided 90% of its crude supplies in 1977, such as towards its ASEAN partners and to attempt to bypass oil companies and deal on a government-to-government basis. "Bangkok is caught in a squeeze." by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 105, No. 38, 21 September 1979, p.104.

¹³⁸ Thailand, however, was unsuccessful in obtaining recognition of the need to raise the 'trigger' level to activate the petrol sharing scheme from 20% of normal requirements to 10%, see ANWAR, p.81

¹³⁹ JORGENSEN-DAHL, pp.58-59.

¹⁴⁰ *50 Years of the Bank of Thailand*, pp.198-200.

¹⁴¹ AKRASANE "ASEAN Economic Cooperation.", p.29.

¹⁴² In 1971, various schemes from the private sector were also proposed for ASEAN, such as the car production proposal by the Ford Motor Company. "ASEAN: Inching forward." by SM Ali in *FEER*. Vol. LXXII, No. 14, 3 April 1971, pp.15-16

¹⁴³ SURIYAMONGKOL, p.93. Thailand's plentiful rock salt supplies in the Korat Plateau had long been identified as a valuable resource, including by the World Bank Mission. *A Public Development Programme for Thailand*. p.113.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.114-116.

¹⁴⁵ "Without fertilizers, food production in developing countries at the level of the past years will not be ensured and much less, the increase in production for exports." Statement by H.E. Mr. Charoonphan Israngkun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 29th UNGA, 1 October 1974. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.258.

¹⁴⁶ "Assessing Thai requirements." by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 95, No. 12, 25 March 1977, p.52. The project was also expected to create 1,200 jobs and save US\$ 27.2 million a year in foreign exchange through import substitution, see "Complexities of Thai soda ash." by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 99, No. 1, 6 January 1978, p.70.

¹⁴⁷ SKULLY, Michael T. *ASEAN Regional Financial Cooperation*. Developments in Banking and Finance. ISEAS Occasional Paper No. 56. Singapore, ISEAS, 1979, p.6. COFAB was responsible for drawing up the official agreements and organizing funding arrangements, and there was a joint COFAB-COIME Working Group on Industrial Complementation.

¹⁴⁸ LIM, Chee Peng "ASEAN Cooperation in Industry: Looking back and looking forward." in *ASEAN at the Crossroads.*, pp.104-105.

¹⁴⁹ "Tokyo-ASEAN tight-rope." by Tracy Dahlby in *FEER*. Vol. 97, No. 38, 23 September 1977, p.10.

¹⁵⁰ Government external debt had ballooned from Baht 12,301 million at the end of 1975 to Baht 80,498 million at the end of 1980. *Bank of Thailand Quarterly Bulletin*. Bangkok, Bank of Thailand (various issues).

¹⁵¹ Following the withdrawal of the diesel engine project by Singapore, Thailand's BOI authorized the establishment of 3 diesel engine plants in Thailand, see CROUCH, p.98.

¹⁵² RÉGNIER, p.179. Singapore was also reluctant to make any commitments to purchase the products of the other countries' AIPs.

¹⁵³ Keynote Statement by President Suharto at the 6th AEM, Jakarta, 5-6 June 1978. *Statements by the ASEAN Heads of Government at Meetings of the ASEAN Economic Ministers.*, p.32.

¹⁵⁴ PANYARACHUN, Anand in *Proceedings of the Seminar on 'New Dimensions of Foreign Relations of Thailand'*, p.116. Moreover, it has been suggested that "The AIPs were inconsistent with decentralized economic decision-making in private-sector based economies and they collided with national industrial policies. Hence, they violated the principle of subsidiarity and were bound to fail." LANGHAMMER, Rolf J. "ASEAN Economic Cooperation: A Stock-Taking from a Political Economy Point of View." in *ASEAN Economic Bulletin*. Vol. 8, No. 2, November 1991, p.141.

¹⁵⁵ *The ASEAN-CCI Handbook 1978*. Bangkok, ASEAN-CCI, 1978, p.10.

¹⁵⁶ CASTRO, pp.82-84.

¹⁵⁷ SURIYAMONGKOL, pp.194-195.

¹⁵⁸ The Basic Agreement on ASEAN Industrial Complementation (AIC) was signed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in October 1980, while the ASEAN Industrial Joint Ventures (AIJV) had been proposed by the ASEAN-CCI by the end of 1980.

¹⁵⁹ See RIEGER, Hans Christoph "An ASEAN Free Trade Area: A Fresh Look at ASEAN Economic Cooperation." In *The First ASEAN Roundtable*, p.3.

¹⁶⁰ Answers by Dr. Thanat Khoman to *The Nation's* questionnaire in *A Cremation Volume: Thanpuying Molee Khoman.*, p.217.

¹⁶¹ CASTRO, p.75.

¹⁶² Statement by H.E. Dr. Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 24th UNGA, 1 October 1969. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.183.

¹⁶³ Statement by H.E. S. Rajaratnam at the 3rd AMM, Kuala Lumpur, 1969. *Statements by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings.*, p.73.

¹⁶⁴ ANWAR, pp.92-100. In this regard, Ali Murtopo has suggested that: "in the economic field, ASEAN was first concerned to lay the foundations for cooperation with external markets such as the EEC and Japan, in an effort to sell exports common to its member states." MURTOPO, Ali "Political and Economic Development in Indonesia in the Context of Regionalism in Southeast Asia." in *Indonesian Quarterly*. Vol. VI, No. 2, April 1978, pp.43-44.

¹⁶⁵ Keynotes Address by General Boonchai Bamrungphong, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, at the 5th AEM, Pattaya, 2-4 September 1977. *Statements by the ASEAN Heads of Government at Meetings of the ASEAN Economic Ministers.*, p.26.

¹⁶⁶ "In a dither over the dialogue." by Rodney Tasker in *FEER*. Vol. 101, No. 29, 21 Jul 1978, p.20.

¹⁶⁷ ATTHAKOR, p.1035.

¹⁶⁸ In 1972 Thanat Khoman wrote that as the EC had inspired ASEAN cooperation from the beginning, help from Europe was necessary. Specifically, he advocated that economic and technical support from Europe took a multilateral dimension, seeing that joint demarches were already being adopted by ASEAN ambassadors. He also thought that the Europeans could also act as advocates for the 'concerted neutrality' of Southeast Asia through ASEAN and ZOPFAN with the great powers, see KHOMAN "De la guerre a la neutralité.", p.115.

¹⁶⁹ AKRASANEE "ASEAN Economic Cooperation.", p.25.

¹⁷⁰ It could be seen that the dialogue with Australia in fact broke the mould of Australian foreign aid policy away from bilateralism. "Australia moving into a new league." by Kenneth Randall in *FEER*. Vol. 83, No.7; 18 February 1974, p.37.

¹⁷¹ FIFIELD *National and Regional Interests in ASEAN.*, p.327.

¹⁷² SUDO, Suetō *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN*. New Dimensions in Japanese Foreign Policy. Singapore, ISEAS, pp.86-88.

¹⁷³ “Trembling over Tokyo.” by Jidbhand Kambhu in *FEER*. Vol. LXVIII, No. 13, 26 March 1970, p.40.

¹⁷⁴ See SOEYA, Yoshihide “Japan’s Policy towards Southeast Asia: Anatomy of ‘Autonomous Diplomacy’ and the American Factor.” in *China, India, Japan and the Security of Southeast Asia*. Collection edited by Chandran Jeshurun. Singapore, ISEAS, 1993, pp.93-109.

¹⁷⁵ INDORF, Hans H. “Thailand as Indirect Beneficiary of US-ASEAN Relations.” in *Thai-American in Contemporary Affairs.*, p.159.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.161.

¹⁷⁷ MORRISON & SUHRKE, p.208.

¹⁷⁸ From 1979, each member country acted as permanent coordinator for one or more dialogues. Subsequent to 1984, however, the task of coordinating relations with particular dialogue partners was rotated every 3 years between the ASEAN member countries.

¹⁷⁹ THAMBIPILLAI & SAVARANAMUTTU, p.142.

¹⁸⁰ *ASEAN: The First 20 Years*. Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1987, p.123.

¹⁸¹ *From Strength to Strength: ASEAN Functional Cooperation: Retrospect and Prospect*. Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, 1993, p.i. See also the Joint Communiqué of the Kuala Lumpur Summit of August 1977 at which the ASEAN Heads of Government “reaffirmed their conviction that economic, social and cultural development are indivisible components of nations’ and regional stability and a necessary foundation for self-sustaining growth and progress.” *ASEAN Documents Series.*, p.48.

¹⁸² Comments by Adam Malik, Chairman of the 1st ASC, 25 January 1968. *Minutes, Decisions and Summary Records of the First, Second, Third Sessions of the Standing Committee and of the First Meeting of the Heads of the ASEAN National Secretariats*, p.14.

¹⁸³ From 1976-1984, ASOD was known as the ASEAN Drug Experts Group. *From Strength to Strength.*, p.89.

¹⁸⁴ “Thailand and ASEAN.” Interview given by Thanat Khoman to Thira Nuchpiem and Vinita Sukrasep, p.329. In this regard, Haas has suggested that

non-economic tasks have proven more barren in stimulating spillover effects, particularly if the measures were “short-range and non-repetitive.” HAAS, Ernst B. “International Integration: The European and the Universal Process.”, p.372.

¹⁸⁵ ANWAR, p.105.

¹⁸⁶ MUNTARBHORN, Vitiit *The Challenge of Law. Legal Cooperation Among ASEAN Countries*. Bangkok, ISIS, 1987, p.36.

¹⁸⁷ *20 Years of ASEAN.*, p.73.

¹⁸⁸ *ASEAN: The First 20 Years.*, p.167.

¹⁸⁹ *From Strength to Strength.*, p.9.

¹⁹⁰ *Bannanukrom Asia Akanay Suksa Nai Prades Thai (Bibliography: Southeast Asian Studies in Thailand)*. Compiled by Chamvit Kasetsiri et al. Bangkok, The Thailand Research Fund, 1995, p.10.

¹⁹¹ Yet it is observed that even in the 1990s the availability of Indochinese language and cultural training remains limited within Thailand, and that a “Thai-centric” approach to scholarship has predominated. KULICK, Elliot & WILSON, Dick *Thailand's Turn*. London, Macmillan, 1992, p.159. In particular, the policy-oriented approach to research, as opposed to a theoretically-based one, is noted by foreign scholars, see HUXLEY, p.221.

¹⁹² It is pointed out that occupied with difficult neighbours on the continent, Thailand “rather neglects her partners in ASEAN.” KULICK & WILSON, p.159.

¹⁹³ *Bibliography: Southeast Asian Studies in Thailand.*, pp.9-12.

¹⁹⁴ HUXLEY, p.198.

¹⁹⁵ AKRASANEE *Thailand and ASEAN Economic Cooperation.*, p.29; pp.55-56.

¹⁹⁶ YOSHIHARA, p.45.

¹⁹⁷ Within ASEAN, Thailand and the Philippines are more closely tied to Hong Kong and other external sources in terms of financial integration, whereas Malaysia and Indonesia are strongly linked with Singapore's finances, see RÉGNIER, p.124.

¹⁹⁸ Given the general laissez-faire attitude of government in Thailand as from the 1960s, this put economic activity into the hands of the private sector, particularly in the allocation of resources, such that it is observed that economic impulses were more market-driven than in comparison with Northeast Asia. MACINTYRE, Andrew “Indonesia, Thailand and the Northeast Asian Connection.” in *Pacific Economic Relations in the 1990s.*, pp.254-257.

¹⁹⁹ SKULLY, pp.39-40.

²⁰⁰ “ASEAN.” in *Bangkok Bank Monthly Review*. Vol. 22, No. 4, April 1981, p.133.

²⁰¹ Indeed, it is increasingly recognized that regional economic interdependence may not exist without formal, institutional economic integration, while institutional economic integration can exist without mutual economic interdependence, see YAMAMOTO, Yoshinobu “Regionalization in Contemporary International Relations.” in *Regionalization in the World Economy*. NAFTA, the Americas and Asia Pacific. Collection edited by Van R. Whiting Jr. New York, Macmillan, 1996, p.22.

²⁰² YOSHIHARA, pp.45-48.

²⁰³ See LIM, Chee Peng “ASEAN cooperation in industry: Looking back and looking forward.”, p.108.

CHAPTER VII

¹ RIEGER “The Treaty of Rome and its Relevance for ASEAN.”, p.163. However, it may be asserted that the European style thus tended towards unanimity rather than consensus.

² It is, for example, pointed out that *musjawarah* and *mufakat* when transposed to the international level loses the element of authority essential in traditional consensus-building. The absence of authority as vested in the village elder is compounded by the novel principle of formal equality among the participants. JORGENSEN-DAHL, pp.166-168. It may be seen, however, that this has perhaps over time magnified the influence of certain ASEAN ‘elder statesmen,’ such as President Suharto of Indonesia, within the ASEAN process.

³ See, for example, WONGPIBUL, p.9; SURIYAMONGKOL, pp.80-94.

⁴ THAMBIPILLAI & SAVARANAMUTTU, p.13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁶ “Thailand and ASEAN.” Interview given by Thanat Khoman to Thira Nuchpiem and Vinita Sukrasep, p.319.

⁷ It is in fact suggested that Malaysia and Thailand were just as concerned as Singapore and the Philippines on the question of foreign bases, but that “as long as there was somebody to fight the battle for them, they were content to take a back seat.” JORGENSEN-DAHL, pp.38-41. However, it may be seen that Thailand had to keep a particularly conciliatory profile at the Meeting, in order to be able to guide the Declaration as a whole through the process of adoption.

⁸ Hence the necessity for prior consultations through diplomatic ‘feelers’ and informal channels. THAMBIPILLAI & SAVARANAMUTTU, pp.14-15.

⁹ Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96.

¹⁰ Discussions with former members of the MFA, Bangkok and Geneva, 1995-1997.

¹¹ HÄNGGI *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept.*, pp.16-17.

¹² Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that MR Sangkhadis Diskul, the Thai Ambassador to Kuala Lumpur since 1970, who was present around the Meetings, was formerly of the Army Directorate of Intelligence and thus it is likely that the military would have been informed of the details of the negotiations, if not from Thanat himself.

¹³ “Peace in their time-and terms.” by James Morgan in *FEER*. Vol. LXXIV, No. 49, 4 December 1971, p.5.

¹⁴ “Thailand and ASEAN.” Interview given by Thanat Khoman to Thira Nuchpiem and Vinita Sukrasep, p.325. Another version of events is that the ASEAN members requested Thanat’s attendance. It was possible, nevertheless, that Thanom was approached by his ASEAN partners to send Thanat as the latter had been entrusted by his ASEAN colleagues with producing the draft declaration to be discussed, while Thanat’s presence would have had the added

benefit of serving to reaffirm Thailand's attachment to the Organization following the coup d'état.

¹⁵ On his arrival in KL, Thanat declared that Thailand would not change its foreign policy and that SEATO would continue to remain "as long as exists a menace to peace and freedom," although he also indicated that Thailand was favourable towards neutralization which it saw as "desirable." *Le Monde*. 26 November 1971.

¹⁶ HÄNGGI *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept.*, p.17.

¹⁷ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

¹⁸ See various internal Thai reports in November-December 1971 on the progress towards ZOPFAN in *MFA L&A Div. File: ASEAN/3/ FM 2514 Meeting of FMs of ASEAN, KL. 25-27 November 1971.*

¹⁹ Declaration for Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, Kuala Lumpur, 25-27 November 1971. *MFA L&A Div. File: ASEAN/3/FM 2514 Meeting of FMs of ASEAN, KL. 25-27 November 1971.*

²⁰ Draft Declaration. *Op. cit.*

²¹ It was observed "that which had been done probably owed more to pressure from the foreign ministers than to the officials seeing eye to eye." "Peace in their time-and terms." by James Morgan in *FEER*. Vol. LXXIV, No. 49, 4 December 1971, p.5.

²² *Ibid.*, p.5.

²³ Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration (Kuala Lumpur Declaration), 27 November 1971. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, pp.30-31.

²⁴ Statement by the Special Envoy of the NEC at the Closing Ceremony of the Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, Kuala Lumpur, 27 November 1971. *FAB*. Vol. XI, No. 2, Oct.-Nov. 1971, p.55.

²⁵ HÄNGGI, *ASEAN and the ZOPFAN Concept.*, p.17.

²⁶ Such intimacy and informality has been described as "the Bangsaen spirit." Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96.

²⁷ *ASEAN: The First 20 Years.*, p.61.

²⁸ During the course of 1975, internal consultations were held, particularly on the new ASEAN institutional structure. Thai Participants in the existing permanent and ad hoc committees were consulted for their views on the proposed structure e.g., the Department of International Trade of the Ministry of Commerce in respect of the ASEAN Permanent Committee on Commerce and Industry.

²⁹ Interview with Mr. Khachadpai Burusapatana, Geneva, 9/10/96. The Policy Council of the NSC met in June 1975 and produced its recommendations, which the NSC Secretariat conveyed to the MFA with its own comments.

³⁰ Interviews given by MR Kukrit Pramoj at the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Southeast Asia and the Singapore Press Club, Hilton Hotel, Singapore, 25 July 1975. *FAB*. Vol. XV, No. 3, July-Sept. 1975, p.50.

³¹ The Meeting of ASEAN Economic and Planning Ministers in Jakarta in November 1975 had already dampened prospects for a substantial leap forward in economic cooperation through trade, due to Indonesian opposition, see "Afer Razak, regional uncertainties." by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 4, 23 Jan. 1976, p.13; "Indonesia: Frustrating ASEAN ambitions." in *Ibid.*, pp.47-52.

³² *News and Views*. (2519) Bangkok, Department of Information, 1976, p.68.

³³ *Prachachart*. (Weekly) 28 August 1975.

³⁴ "Full steam ahead for Bali." by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 5, 30 January 1976, p.10.

³⁵ These included joint land, sea and air exercises, standardization of weaponry and procedures and the establishment of ASEAN staff training facilities, see IRVINE, David "Making Haste Less Slowly: ASEAN from 1975.", p.45.

³⁶ Singaporean Foreign Minister Rajaratnam on arriving at Pattaya claimed that there was no point in inviting anyone unless they were "prepared to substantially assist ASEAN," see "Miki reaches first base with the Five." in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 9, 27 February 1976, p.24.

³⁷ *Siam Rath*. 11 February 1975; *Siam Mit*. 13 February 1975.

³⁸ *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 6, 6 February 1976, p.5.

³⁹ "A broad canvass for ASEAN development." by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 11, March 12, 1971, p.45

⁴⁰ "Slow steps towards the Summit." by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 8, February 20, 1976, p.29.

⁴¹ *Prachachart*. (Weekly) 5 February 1976.

⁴² *Ibid*. 12 February 1976.

⁴³ *Prachachart*. 12 February 1976.

⁴⁴ Nevertheless, by this stage the formalities for the less controversial documents, such as the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Secretariat, were already completed, with the Thai Cabinet on 10 February 1976 authorizing signing of the document by the Foreign Minister. *MFA ASEAN Dept. File: 08-128 ASEAN Sect. (1) Establishment of ASEAN Sect.*

⁴⁵ "ASEAN free trade gathers momentum." by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 90, No. 47, 21 November 1975, p.51.

⁴⁶ The Philippines Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs has subsequently stressed that it was President Marcos himself who was the author of the new draft of the Declaration of ASEAN Concord which the Philippines submitted at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and which caused such extensive debate due to controversial elements. INGLES, p.166.

⁴⁷ "Indonesia: Fears bar progress." by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 5, 30 January 1976, p.48. Observers noted, nevertheless, that Thailand's attitude at Bali was generally positive towards free trade. *Le Monde*. 26 February 1976.

⁴⁸ It has been pointed out that differences were so significant that the Foreign Ministers had to continue their work until 3.00am, particularly in finalizing the more specific recommendations in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, see SURIYAMONGKOL, p.103. See also "A compromise consensus." by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 10, 5 March 1976, p.11.

⁴⁹ SURIYAMONGKOL, p.104.

⁵⁰ "A compromise consensus" by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 10, March 5, 1976, p.11. See also IRVINE, David "Making Haste More Slowly: ASEAN from 1975." in *Understanding ASEAN.*, p.47.

⁵¹ Formal closed-door discussions between the five Heads of Government took only around 2 hours, although there were opportunities for the Heads of Government to discuss matters of concern on a more informal basis. *Le Monde*. 26 February 1976.

⁵² This Report was referred to by Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie as the "confidential companion" to the Declaration of ASEAN Concord, and major parts of it were included in the Declaration. SHAFIE "ASEAN: Contributor to Stability and Development.", p.364.

⁵³ However, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie mentioned that due to the fluidity of the situation the ASEAN leaders decided not to make firm pronouncements on this matter, and this partly led to demands for a Second Summit. *Ibid.*, p.364.

⁵⁴ ANTOLIK, p.153.

⁵⁵ "Hussein talks ASEAN." by K. Das in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 7, 13 February 1976, p.11.

⁵⁶ RIÉGER "An ASEAN Free Trade Area: A Fresh Look at ASEAN Economic Cooperation.", p.2.

⁵⁷ Opening Statement by H.E. MR Kukrit Pramoj, 23 February 1976. *Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government, Bali, 23-24 February 1976*. Jakarta, ASEAN National Secretariat of Indonesia, 1976, pp.4-5.

⁵⁸ "Communications gap on Summit Island." by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 91, No. 11, 12 March 1976, p.30.

⁵⁹ *Siam Rath*. 28 February 1976.

⁶⁰ Joint Press Communiqué of the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government, Bali, 23-24 February 1976. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, pp.41-42.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.41.

⁶² Closing Statement by H.E. MR Kukrit Pramoj, 24 February 1976. *Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government. Bali, 23-24 February 1976.*, p.3.

⁶³ “What price human rights?” by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 97, No. 29, 22 July 1977, p.14.

⁶⁴ Interview with Mr. Suthee Natvaratat, Bangkok, 25/8/95.

⁶⁵ Documents for the Meeting of the National ASEAN Committee, Bangkok, 14 June 1976. *MFAL & A Div. File: ASEAN 3/2520 Meeting of National ASEAN Committee in Preparation for Kuala Lumpur Summit*.

⁶⁶ “Enter the Japanese.” by Rodney Tasker in *FEER*. Vol. 97, No. 33, 19 August 1977, p.27.

⁶⁷ “Stocktaking at ASEAN.” by Rodney Tasker in *FEER*. Vol. 97, No. 32, 12 August 1977, p.8.

⁶⁸ Opening Statement by H.E. Mr. Tanin Kraivixien at the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government, Kuala Lumpur, 4 August 1977. *The Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government, Kuala Lumpur, 4-5 August 1977*. Kuala Lumpur, ASEAN National Secretariat of Malaysia, 1977, p.47.

⁶⁹ This was widely regarded as the strongest public position taken by any ASEAN personality at the Meeting. *Le Monde*. 6 August 1977.

⁷⁰ “Travellers’ tales.” by Derek Davies in *FEER*. Vol. 97, No. 33, 19 August 1977, p.13. However, a Malaysian minister was reported to have told the press that too much emphasis was being given to trade and industry, whereas ASEAN countries were largely commodity exporters. “ASEAN takes the cue.” by Anthony Rowley in *FEER*. Vol. 97, No. 33, 19 August 1977, p.29.

⁷¹ “Battles along the border.” by Nayan Chanda in *FEER*. Vol. 97, No. 32, 12 August 1977, p.16.

⁷² “Response for the Prime Minister for Interview by Jacques-Thierry Roland of RTB, August 1977. *MFA ASEAN DEPT. File: 20-127 Interviews-Additions to I File*. However, observers felt that the Final Communiqué was very conciliatory towards Indochina and did not reflect the stridency of Tanin’s Opening Statement. Instead, the picture of a “moderate Asia” was enshrined vis-à-vis Indochina. *Le Monde*. 7-8 August 1977; 9 August 1977. Thus, to a certain extent, positive comments by Thai leaders regarding support may have reflected efforts at trying to put the best face on a difficult situation.

⁷³ See an in-depth discussion of the Report in “How the Five see Indochina.” by Michael Richardson in *FEER*. Vol. 98, No. 52, 30 December 1977, pp.7-8.

⁷⁴ Joint Communiqué of the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government, Kuala Lumpur, 4-5 August 1977. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, p.48.

⁷⁵ ANTOLIK, p.146.

⁷⁶ At the subsequent meeting of the ASC (Bangkok, 23 November 1977) it was decided that the ASC Chairman should send a note to the UNHCR drawing attention to the stand of the ASEAN Heads of Government and calling on the UN refugee agency to provide full support for relief efforts and take measures to ensure resettlement of the refugees. *ASEAN News*. 1/2521. Bangkok, ASEAN-Thailand, 1977, p.56.

⁷⁷ Joint Communiqué of the Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government, Kuala Lumpur, 4-5 August 1977. *ASEAN Documents Series.*, p.48.

⁷⁸ “Enter the Japanese.” by Rodney Tasker in *FEER.*, pp.20-27.

⁷⁹ SURIYAMONGKOL, p.176.

⁸⁰ Quoted in ANTOLIK, p.140.

⁸¹ INDORF, Hans H. “The Kuala Lumpur Summit.” in *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1978., p.36.

⁸² An important distinction is made by Indorf of the requirement for a basic unanimity of views: “such a consensus was assured in Bali which turned into a conference by declaration, the KL Conference was to achieve implementation, and this was eminently more difficult.” *Ibid.*, p.39.

⁸³ Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96.

⁸⁴ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

⁸⁵ See, for example, LIM, Joo-jock “Southeast Asia: Political Crosscurrents.” in *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1976., p.24.

⁸⁶ RÉGNIER, pp.186-188; ANWAR, p.225.

⁸⁷ See ANTOLIK, p.18.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.68. Antolik also extends this definition of 'flank' to Thailand's front-line status in the late 1970s.

⁸⁹ It is pointed out that certain more negative aspects of Indonesia's political and strategic weight in the region, which determined the speed of ASEAN economic cooperation, differed from Deutsch's concept of 'core areas' propelling cooperation, see JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.231.

⁹⁰ "Let me assure you that if ASEAN is important to Thailand, Thailand is even more important to ASEAN." Speech by Mr. Lee Kuan Yew at the Dinner in Honour of the Prime Minister of Thailand at the Istana, Singapore, 26 February 1978. *ASEAN News*. 2/2521. Bangkok, ASEAN-Thailand, 1978, p.58. As a former Indonesian Foreign Minister also pointed out: "Thailand's commitment to ASEAN is important as it guards the gate to the Malay peninsula which, as experience during WWII has proven, is critical to the defence and security of maritime Southeast Asia." KUSUMA-ATMADJA, Mochtar "Some Thoughts on ASEAN Security Cooperation: An Indonesian Perspective." in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Vol. 12, No. 3, December 1990, p.167.

⁹¹ COLBERT "Southeast Asian Regional Politics: Towards a Regional Order.", p.255.

⁹² Comment by Sir Robert Thompson, British Ambassador to Thailand, 14 December 1948, as quoted in REMME, p.156

⁹³ In this perspective, Malaysia is often treated as a "smaller brother" by Indonesia, while Singapore was on the other hand mistrusted as an 'outsider' and the Philippines somewhat removed from the picture, see KOH & LAU, p.118.

⁹⁴ ANTOLIK, p.21; VAN DER KROEF "National Security, Defense Strategy and Foreign Policy Perceptions in Indonesia.", p.478.

⁹⁵ Address to the Nation by Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien, 13 October 1976. *FAB*. Vol. XVI, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1976, p.14.

⁹⁶ "Constitution of 74 leaves Thais cold." by Norman Peagam in *FEER*. Vol. 86, No. 41, 18 October 1974, p.4.

⁹⁷ After the Betong incidents and resultant anti-Malay demonstrations in Thailand, the Malaysian Ambassador to Bangkok was recalled for

consultations. "Border breaking point." by K. Das in *FEER*. Vol. 92, No. 20, 14 May 1976, p.10.

⁹⁸ "Back in hot pursuit." by K. Das in *FEER*. Vol. 95, No. 11, 18 March 1977, p.10.

⁹⁹ "The thoughts of Thanat." by Michael Morrow in *FEER*. Vol. 88, No. 25, 20 June 1975, p.34.

¹⁰⁰ KHOMAN "ASEAN in the Regional and Global Context.", p.95.

¹⁰¹ COLBERT "Southeast Asian Regional Politics: Toward a Regional Order.", p.236.

¹⁰² It may be asserted that such an approach has continued to the present day, with strong Singapore interest in regional initiatives such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), but yet preferring others countries, most notably Thailand, to host the initial preparatory meetings and take the front stage to offset the image of an over-activist Singaporean role which might rankle the pride of certain of its larger partners.

¹⁰³ Singapore's outspokenness was often of use to its ASEAN partners, such as on North-South issues, see LIM, Robyn "Conclusion: East-West and North-South." in *Understanding ASEAN.*, p.249. Sometimes, however, this proved a double-edged sword and Singapore's outspoken and often idiosyncratic views of its partners' foreign policies did on occasion give rise to dismay in Bangkok as to how they could be perceived by outside powers, such as in Lee Kuan Yew's comments in September 1976 on Thai policy options: "No Thai government can contemplate neutralization as a serious policy choice... It is not a solution any government with a feel for Thai history can consider other than as a prelude to total submission," and also over the Kampuchean question, see RAJENDRAN, M *ASEAN's Foreign Relations-the Shift to Collective Action*. Kuala Lumpur, Arenabuku Sdn. Bhd., 1985, p.28.

¹⁰⁴ THAMBIPILLAI & SAVARANAMUTTU, p.18.

¹⁰⁵ PORTER, Gareth "Vietnam's Evolving Policy Toward Thailand: Implications for the Future." in *Confrontation or Coexistence.*, p.47.

¹⁰⁶ See a discussion of the results of the survey in DHIRAVEGIN, Likhit Garn Muang *Garn Pok Krong Thai (Thai Politics and Government)*. Bangkok, Thammasat University Press, 3rd Edition, 1996, pp.224-227.

¹⁰⁷ Comments by Dr. Likhit Dhiravegin, a discussant, in *The ASEAN: Problems and Prospects in a Changing World.*, p.110.

¹⁰⁸ The Malaysian title which Thanat Khoman was granted by the Malaysian king (by virtue of the decoration *Seri Maharaja Mangku Negara*) gave rise to the popular reference to Thanat within the ASEAN circle as ‘Tun Thanat’, lending him a privileged ASEAN status beyond the boundaries of Thailand., although in Thai *Tun* is also a general honorific term meaning ‘Excellency.’ Among other Thai personalities at this time, MR Kukrit Pramoj as well as General Kriangsak Chomanan were also given the Malaysian title ‘Tun’.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, Bangkok, 5/2/96.

¹¹¹ THAMBIPILLAI & SAVARANAMUTTU, p.17.

¹¹² LIM, Linda Y.C. “The Foreign Policy of Singapore.” in *The Political Economy of Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia.*, p.129. One Singaporean foreign policy analyst has opined: “For ASEAN to decide anything, to do anything, we (Singaporeans) have to do the legwork and convince the others, without taking the credit.” “The Mini-Middle Kingdom giving ASEAN reality.” by Susumu Awanohara in *FEER*. Vol. 105, No. 32, 10 August 1979, p.47.

¹¹³ FIFIELD *National and Regional Interests in ASEAN.*, p.29.

¹¹⁴ THAMBIPILLAI & SAVARANAMUTTU, pp.17-18.

¹¹⁵ “Finding a new equilibrium.” (Singapore ’73) by Harvey Stockwin in *FEER*. Vol. 81, No. 32, 13 August 1973; pp.5-6. These comments may in fact be taken as a reflection of popular national images and cultural stereotypes, with the Chinese being seen as hard-headed “materialists,” while Malays are seen as “dreamers,” with the Thais probably somewhat in between, though probably leaning towards the more relaxed style of the Malays, see JORGENSEN-DAHL, p.230.

CHAPTER VIII

¹ The name 'Kampuchea' is used in this Chapter to refer to the regime of the Khmer Rouge which was regarded as the legitimate government of the country from 1975 onwards. However, 'Cambodia' is still used for the preceding period and for the period subsequent to 1992.

² Just as Thailand had been concerned in the past with the situation to its east and west, conflict within Southeast Asia has traditionally followed an East-West and not North-South axis. Since the 1960s scholarly attempts have thus been made to study how polarization on a Thai-Viet axis could be avoided, see *Neutralization and World Politics.*, pp.159-161.

³ Interview given by MR Kukrit Pramoj, leader of the Social Action Party (SAP). *Asiaweek*. 22 October 1976. In the view of Thai policy-makers, a policy of rapprochement with the PRC was desirable partly due to its balancing effect against Vietnam. Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96.

⁴ In April 1975 it was noted that "there was an enormous flight of capital...a record number of requests for information about immigration and a record number of applications." After the holding of Thai-Vietnamese negotiations in April-May, however, there was a growing mood of confidence within the general population, or at least a feeling that invasion was not imminent. DAWSON, Alan "Implications of a Long-term Conflict on Thai-Vietnamese Relations." in *Confrontation and Coexistence.*, p.148.

⁵ Interview with Mr. Phan Wannamethee, Bangkok, 28/8/96. Thailand's Foreign Minister, Maj.-Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan, also publicly debunked the idea of a monolithic Indochina at the 20th SEATO Council Meeting in New York, September 1975, see *120 Years MFA.*, p.207.

⁶ See CHANDA, Nayan *Brother Enemy: The War after the War. A History of Indochina Since the Fall of Saigon.* New York, Macmillan, 1986, pp.150-151.

⁷ Upadit had brought with him in terms of contribution towards ASEAN at a crucial period in its development a long diplomatic experience within the MFA, including involvement in ASA as well as ASEAN as Director-General

in the early 1970s, which generally enabled an effective defence of Thai interests within ASEAN.

⁸ See, for example, SAIPIROON, p.64. Actions such as the December 1976 agreement whereby the Thai Government purchased the US's stockpile of ammunitions in Thailand were regarded as hostile by Vietnam. In this regard, the visit of US Assistant Secretary of State Oakley and Deputy Secretary of State Christopher in July 1977, the highest-level visit by US leaders since the events of April 1975, were seen as the sign of a new rapprochement. *Le Monde*. 26-27 July 1977.

⁹ Keynote Address by General Kriangsak Chomanan, Prime Minister of Thailand, at the 11th AMM, Pattaya, 14 June 1978. *Statements by the ASEAN Heads of Government at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings.*, p.51.

¹⁰ It is pointed out that Vietnamese readiness to deal with ASEAN as an organization for the first time as expressed in June 1978 prior to the 11th AMM in Pattaya coincided with the commencement of Vietnam's unpublicized bombing of Kampuchea, see CHANDA, p.718. Vietnamese moves were also coordinated with the Soviet Union, as the former became more dependent on Soviet support during the course of 1977. BUSZYNSKI *Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia.*, p.134.

¹¹ "Thailand: Back in the game." by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 102, No. 45, 10 November 1978, p.24.

¹² Opening Statement by H.E. Upadit Pachariyangkun at the 12th AMM, Bali, 28 June 1979. *Statements by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings.*, p.328.

¹³ See, for example, *IHT*..7 October 1978. Upadit also disclosed that during Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping's visit to Thailand on 5-9 November 1978, the issue of Kampuchea was discussed and Deng communicated his belief that Kampuchea would be attacked and that Phnom Penh would fall, see PACHARIYANGKUN, Upadit "Muea Kaphajao Pai Yuen Kampuchea (When I Visited Cambodia)." in *Saranrom Journal*. 49 (1993), p.89.

¹⁴ THEERAVIT, p.40.

¹⁵ BURUSAPATANA *Thailand and its Neighbours in Indochina.*, p.206.

- ¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Khachadpai Burusapatana, Geneva, 9/10/96.
- ¹⁷ *Thai Kap Panha Kampuchea (Thailand and the Kampuchean Problem)*. Conversations between MFA Officials and Thai Academics. Bangkok, Institute of Asian Studies, 1985, p.4; p.9.
- ¹⁸ HURST, Steven "Regionalism or Globalism? The Carter Administration and Vietnam." in *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 32, (1) 1997, pp.81-95.
- ¹⁹ "Thailand's rush to rearm." by John McBeth in *FEER*. Vol. 106, No. 42, 19 Oct. 1979, p.28.
- ²⁰ See *The Military Balance 1978-1979*. Washington DC, ACDA, 1980, p.68.
- ²¹ Statement by the Secretary of State (Muskie) before the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 28 June 1980. *American Foreign Policy, 1977-1980: Basic Documents*. Washington DC, US Government Printing Office, 1983, p.937.
- ²² CHANDA, p.325.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p.349. That this so-called 'secret' meeting on 13 January 1979 took place immediately after consultations between Deng Xiaoping and Ieng Sary in Beijing, as well as ASEAN consultations in Bangkok on 12-13 January, was regarded as highly significant.
- ²⁴ *Beijing Review*. No. 32, 11 August 1980, p.7.
- ²⁵ CHANDA, p.261.
- ²⁶ The visit to Moscow by Kriangsak also reflected Thai attempts to employ the Soviet Union to put pressure on Vietnam to tone down its actions, in return for which Thailand was prepared to make certain political assurances. BUSZYNSKI *Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia.*, pp.225-230.
- ²⁷ Thailand, however, participated in the refusal to have Vietnam name the Kampuchean delegation to the Meeting. "Waiting for the Kampucheans." by Peter Fish in *FEER*. Vol. 103, No. 8, 23 February 1979, pp.89-90.
- ²⁸ Statement by H.E. Dr. Upadit Pachariyangkun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 34th UNGA, 10 October 1979. *Statements by Chairmen of the Delegations of Thailand at the UNGA.*, p.321.

²⁹ “In the Swim together.” by François Nivolon in *FEER*. Vol. 104, No. 15, 13 April 1979, p.28.

³⁰ One Thai official in late 1979 noted that there was “a correlation between the special overflight requests and activities in Indochina,” and suspicions that the Soviet Union was airlifting equipment to help Vietnam’s expected dry season offensive in Cambodia instead of for humanitarian reasons led to the suspension of the facility, see “Skywatches are seeing red.” by John McBeth in *FEER*. Vol. 106, No. 40, 5 Oct. 1979, p.16.

³¹ “Walking the tightrope again.” by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 106, No. 4, 2 November 1979, p.12.

³² PHIU-NUAL., p.48. Nevertheless, as shown in the discussion of ZOPFAN, Thai policy circles tended to regard with some scepticism the practicability of international guarantees of neutrality.

³³ *The Nation Review*. 23 July 1980. Had it been accepted; such a proposition would have represented an advance upon previous Thai views on ZOPFAN, with the hope being held out of a formal neutralization by treaty.

³⁴ Vientiane Statement of 18 July 1980. *Documents on the Kampuchean Problem*. Bangkok, Department of Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1985, pp.148-151.

³⁵ “Time to reassess old fears.” by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 103, No. 4, 26 January 1979, p.12.

³⁶ See discussion of the results of the survey in VIRAPHOL, Sarasin “Thailand’s Perspective on Its Rivalry with Vietnam.” in *Confrontation or Coexistence.*, pp.27-29.

³⁷ GURTOV, Melvin *China and Southeast Asia-The Politics of Survival*. A Study of Foreign Policy Interaction. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975, p.45. It is suggested that China’s traditional policy towards Southeast Asia has been dominated by the conception of a balance of power among the smaller states, and it is striking how traditional the PRC’s approach to Indochina has been from the beginning, see CHANDA, p.126; LEIFER *Conflict and Regional Order in South-East Asia.*, p.14.

³⁸ MARKS, pp.188-190.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.196-201.

⁴⁰ Statement by the Indonesian Foreign Minister as Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee, Jakarta, 9 January 1979. *Documents on the Kampuchean Problem.*, p.73.

⁴¹ "Condemnation but no confrontation." by Rodney Tasker in *FEER*. Vol. 103, No. 4, 26 January 1979, p.25.

⁴² 'LUK THEP' "Khmer 4 Yok (4 Rounds on Cambodia)." in *Saranrom Journal*. 30 (1980), pp.308-309. The four rounds on Cambodia in 1979 were seen as being, respectively: the Security Council debate on the Vietnamese attack; the Security Council debate on the Chinese 'lesson'; the credentials issue; and the UNGA debate.

⁴³ *Security Council Official Records*. 34th Year, 211th Meeting, 15 January 1979, pp.4-5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 34th Year, 2129th Meeting, 16 March 1979, p.4. Other groups were unwilling this time to present a resolution, forcing ASEAN to act even though it was wary of identification as a participant in the dispute. 'LUK THEP,' p.314.

⁴⁵ PACHARIYANGKUN, p.91.

⁴⁶ 'LUK THEP,' p.315.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.319.

⁴⁸ Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Bangkok, 1/2/96. As an illustration, the November 1979 vote on UNGA Resolution 34/22 counted 91 votes for, 21 against, with 29 abstentions, while the vote on Resolution 35/66 in 1980 counted 97 votes for, 22 votes against, with 22 abstentions, see UNGA Resolution 34/22 in *Documents on the Kampuchean Problem.*, pp.126-127.

⁴⁹ Closing Statement by H.E. S. Rajaratnam, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, at the 12th AMM, Bali, 30 June 1979. *Statements by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at ASEAN Ministerial Meetings.*, p.339.

⁵⁰ *Special Report: Comprehensive Plan of Action*. The Indochinese Exodus and the CPA. Geneva, UNHCR, 1996, p.16.

⁵¹ BURUSAPATANA, Khachadpai *Phu Oppayop Lipae Indochine (Indochinese Refugees and Asylum-Seekers)*. Bangkok, Prae Pitaya, 1993, pp.70-71.

⁵² Opening Statement by H.E. Tanin Kraivixien, Prime Minister of Thailand, at the 2nd ASEAN Summit. *Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government, Kuala Lumpur, August 1977.*, p.48.

⁵³ "The forgotten 140,000." by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 102, No. 51, 22 December 1978, p.12.

⁵⁴ See Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951 and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees of 31 January 1967 in *Collection of International Instruments Concerning Refugees*. Geneva, UNHCR, 1990, pp.10-44.

⁵⁵ In fact, Kriangsak had uttered words to that effect in December 1978, and Thailand was reported to have acted in such manner since 1977. "Pulling up the welcome mat." by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 102, No. 49, 8 December 1978, p.14.

⁵⁶ "An island in the stream." by David Jenkins in *FEER*. Vol. 104, No. 21, 25 May 1979, p.19.

⁵⁷ Joint Statement of the Informal Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, Kuala Lumpur, 15-16 August 1979. *Documents on the Kampuchean Problem.*, p.80.

⁵⁸ The Vietnamese dry season offensive was also accompanied by an increase in border tensions with Thailand, and between October and December 1979, six letters were addressed to the UN Secretary-General by the Thai Permanent Representative in New York complaining of various violations of Thai territory by Vietnamese troops. See, for example, Letter to the Secretary-General dated 23 October 1979, S/13597. *Security Council Official Documents*. Supplements Oct., Nov., Dec. 1971, p.50.

⁵⁹ Interview with Mr. Khachadpai Burusapatana, Geneva, 9/10/96.

⁶⁰ 128,058 and 102,564 refugees were accepted for resettlement in third countries in 1980 and 1981, respectively, see BURUSAPATANA *Indochinese Refugees and Asylum-Seekers.*, p.112.

⁶¹ “Fukuda’s Hanoi-ASEAN house of cards has collapsed.” by Toru Yano in *FEER*. Vol. 103, No. 12, 23 March 1979, pp.39-41.

⁶² Indeed, as early as December 1978, on Lee Kuan Yew’s visit to Bangkok the question of Kampuchea was discussed. Following the Meeting, one of the participants disclosed that: “Singapore would now like to see Thailand carry more of the burden of ASEAN leadership.” “Diplomacy against an invasion.” by Richard Nations in *FEER*. Vol. 102, No. 51, 22 December 1978, p.19.

⁶³ At a conference in November 1981, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie declared his firm conviction that “China has dangerous ambitions of her own in the region which she has refused to renounce. Indeed, she continues to maintain her links by openly giving moral and political support to the illegal communist parties which are striving to overthrow by violent means the legal governments in ASEAN.” SHAFIE “ASEAN: Contributor to Stability and Development.”, p.372.

⁶⁴ LEIFER *Indonesia’s Foreign Policy.*, p.161.

⁶⁵ ANTOLIK, pp.118-119; ANWAR, p.188.

⁶⁶ Joint Statement by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the Situation on the Thai-Kampuchean Border, Bangkok, 25 June 1980. *Documents on the Kampuchean Problem*. p.81.

⁶⁷ “Peking lays a snare for Kriangsak.” by A Correspondent in *FEER*. Vol. 104, No. 20, 18 May 1979, p.15.

⁶⁸ Thailand saw the importance of the Khmer Rouge as the only significant military force that could keep up the military pressure on Vietnam. Nevertheless, Thailand and Singapore also played an important role in convincing China that wider international support for resisting the *fait accompli* depended on reducing the prominence of the Khmer Rouge, see WEATHERBEE, Donald E. “The Diplomacy of Stalemate.” in *Southeast Asia Divided*. The ASEAN-Indochina Crisis. Collection edited by Donald E. Weatherbee. Boulder, Westview Press, 1985, p.4. See also CHANDA, p.391.

⁶⁹ KUSUMA-ATMADJA, p.166.

⁷⁰ ASEAN had not taken action then in 1977 as it was regarded as premature, see Report of the Committee on Transport, Aviation and Communications (COTAC), 28-30 March 1978 in *Report of the 6th AEM, Jakarta, 5-7 June 1978*. Jakarta, ASEAN National Secretariat of Indonesia, 1978, p.7.

⁷¹ "A dispute comes down to earth." by Susumu Awanohara in *FEER*. Vol. 106, No. 45, 9 November 1979, p.75.

CHAPTER IX

¹ VIRAPHOL, p.14.

² Replies to Questions posed to H.E. Banharn Silpa-archa, Prime Minister of Thailand, December 1995. *Bangkok Post*, 12 December 1995.

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Interview with ML Birabhongse Kasemsri, Principal Private Secretary to the King, former Thai Diplomat (Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador to Washington), conducted in Bangkok, 1 February 1996.

Interview with Dr. Thanat Khoman, former Minister of Foreign Affairs (1959-1971) and Deputy Prime Minister, conducted in Bangkok, 5 February 1996.

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Informal discussions were also held with various current and former members of the Department of ASEAN Affairs, as well as other units within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, during the course of 1995-1997.

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a) Library and Archives Division, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Saranrom Palace, Bangkok.

These files are organized using a classification system based on that of the US State Department (*Records Classification Handbook*. Washington D.C., Department of State, 1965; 73p.).

Political Affairs Files (POL) and International Organizations Files-ASEAN (ASEAN)

1 to 3 - Meetings

6 - Membership

7 - Visits

8 - Committees

- 17 - Buildings
- 23 - International Security
- 27 - Military Operations

For example: *MFA L&A Div. File: ASEAN/3/FM 2510 ASEAN Declaration = Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Library and Archives Division, ASEAN Affairs Conference Files (Foreign Ministers) B.E. 2510 (1967) on the ASEAN Declaration. Note that Thai documents are dated according to the Buddhist Era (B.E.) which antedates the Christian Anno Domini (A.D.) by 543 years. Thus B.E. 2510 less 543 years is converted to A.D. 1967.*

b) Secretariat to the Department, Department of ASEAN Affairs, Phaholyothin Place, Bangkok.

These files are organized using a classification system developed internally by the Secretariat to the Department as follows:

- 01 - Summit
- 02 - AMM-PMC
- 03 - ASC
- 04 - DGs
- 05 - SOM and sundry officials' meetings
- 06 - Budget Committee
- 07 - Audit Committee
- 09 - ASEAN Secretariat

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THAILAND AND ASEAN 1967-1979

A Commitment to Regionalism or Complement to Alignment?

NADHAVATHNA KRISHNAMRA

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Thailand's policy on cooperation within ASEAN should indeed be seen as an aspect of its overall policy within Southeast Asia, its traditional and main area of interest.

In general terms, Thailand's policy was to fully support ASEAN cooperation as an important tool of foreign policy. There was some initial ambiguity as to the extent of its faith in regional cooperation as a policy tool, but by the end of the period studied, it may be concluded that ASEAN was indeed one of the cornerstones of Thai policy. Furthermore, it is more accurate to talk of "policy", reflecting political, economic and social & cultural dimensions.



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