CHAPTER 6: ASEAN AND THE MATURATION OF REGIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Introduction

There is a variety of research on ASEAN encompassing its international relations, economy, politics and others. Many scholars research on history of ASEAN, but most of them focus on the history of inter-ASEAN countries and the development of the regional organisation. Although the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which is one of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community, was already formed at the end of 2015, little attention has been paid to the origins of ‘ASEAN identity.’ This chapter discusses the period between the formation of ASEAN and the Summit in 1976, which was in a sense the time of declaration to set a goal to pursue and create the identity.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Although ASEAN was nominally set up for economic and cultural co-operation, political co-operation between the members was inevitable due to the Vietnam War. After a discussion of this, the next section will discuss the concept of ZOPFAN, which was targeted to neutralise the entire region of Southeast Asia, not only of ASEAN region. ASEAN itself has decided to focus on the scope of the Southeast Asian region. The third section examines how some countries which were keen on joining ASEAN had been excluded by the ASEAN countries at early stage. The last one analyses how members pursued greater awareness and consciousness of the ‘ASEAN region,’ which led to the formation of an ‘ASEAN identity’ and ‘ASEAN Community’ in the future.
Early steps to political co-operation

The end of the conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia in 1966 led to a revival of regional activities. Although ASA became dormant in 1963 because of Indonesia’s Confrontation (Konfrontasi) against Malaysia and the Philippines’ claim on Sabah, the end of the Confrontation after the fall of Sukarno and the installation of the new president of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, who ‘soft-pedalled the Sabah claim’¹ contributed towards a resurgence in regional activities. The relations between Malaysia and Indonesia normalised through the mediation of the Foreign Minister of Thailand, Thanat Khoman, in 1966.² Tun Razak, the Deputy of Prime Minister of Malaysia and the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Adam Malik were the representatives of both the countries and the key figures to end the Confrontation.³ When Thanat Khoman met Adam Malik for the first time, he sought ‘the possibility of Indonesia joining an enlarged organisation which would replace the outdated ASA.’⁴

Indonesia also had no intention to join ASA because Indonesia accused ASA of being a colonial tool and an extension of SEATO. In addition, ‘Indonesia was too proud to become a junior member of an association in which it would be the largest and most populous state.’⁵ Instead of joining, Indonesia was an active mover in creating a new regional organisation for the purpose of removing distrust among the Southeast Asian countries and raising its credibility as the largest country in the region. The Indonesian Foreign Minister produced a draft of a South East Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SEAARC) and presented it to Burma,

³ As Adam Malik was the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Malaysian counterpart should have been the same position. However, the Tunku, the Prime Minister also held the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1960 and 1970. Properly speaking, the same position should negotiate each other, but the negotiator of Malaysia passed to Tun Razak, because the Tunku was the head of the government.
⁴ Quote from M. Rajendran, ASEAN’s Foreign Relations: The shift to collective action, Kuala Lumpur: Arenaabuku, 1985, p. 16.
Cambodia, the Philippines and Thailand. Though Burma and Cambodia stated that they would not oppose it, they did not intend to join. The Philippines and Thailand favoured joining, and the latter held discussions with Indonesia to revise the draft. The revised draft was sent to Malaysia through the Thai Foreign Minister. The obstacle in the formation of this new organisation was Malaysia’s response. In June 1966, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tun Dr. Ismail, urged for the expansion of membership in ‘a regional association embracing Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.’

The Tunku as the founder of ASA insisted on enlarging the regional organisation, and hesitated to the creation of a new regional organisation, being wary and afraid that President Sukarno might return to take power. The Tunku expected in 1963 that ‘more countries would join in and add strength to it (ASA) … because through it strong ties of friendship would be formed and with it peace and stability in this region.’ He insisted later that ‘I would not like to see us sacrifice ASA … to create a wider regional association, which I am convinced in the present circumstances has little chance of success.’ However, for the purpose of expanding its membership, Malaysia accepted the formation of a new regional organisation under a new name: the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was established in Bangkok on 8 August 1967. Malaysia decided to join the new regional organisation because of Thailand’s persuasive urging, Malaysia’s continuous commitments towards regional relations, and the awareness by Foreign Ministry officials that Indonesia’s membership in ASEAN would be beneficial in tying

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10 This is the original spelling. Since the 1970s the organisation started to use ‘the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.’
Malaysia to the region as a whole. What is important here is that as Indonesia joined the organisation, Burma and Cambodia, non-ASEAN countries in the early period, appreciated the spirit of regional co-operation. Although the two non-ASEAN countries opposed ASA at the time of the formation, they did not clearly object to ASEAN.

It is said that the term ‘ASEAN’ was originally coined by Adam Malik, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, as he proposed the name of the new regional organisation, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), on the eve of its formation, and the other four members accepted it. Dewi Fortuna pointed out that the term ASEAN was invented by an American political scientist, Russell Fifield, who proposed the formation of ‘ASEAN’ as early as 1963 in his book, _Southeast Asia in United States Policy_. However, according to her, the Indonesian Foreign Minister had not read this book before and denied borrowing the acronym from the book. There is no clear evidence as to whether the name of the regional organisation was created by Indonesia. Initially Malik proposed a new organisation name, SEAARC, but Thanat Khoman objected to the name because it sounded as ‘shark.’

In spite of it being a regional organisation, ASEAN was not able to cover the entire Southeast Asia at its inception. This was partly because North Vietnam, a communist-dominated country, was not invited to join, and other states in the region also refused to join. Most scholars agree that this was partly because all the members i.e., Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, had anti-communist stances in their foreign policies. In other words, this new organisation was regarded as a group of anti-communist nations seeking to defend themselves. One of

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the priorities of ASEAN was to thwart the expansion of communism in Southeast Asia. The permanent secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Malaysia, Ghazalie Shafie said in 1965 in the context of China’s communist threat that Southeast Asian countries would ‘create a common will not merely to survive but to triumph over imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism … South East Asia must unite, will have no choice but to unite, in the face of the massive threat confronting us and perhaps continuing to confront us for several decades.’

Southeast Asian countries have, as mentioned in the Introduction, different languages, religions, government regimes, among others. The five member states had almost nothing in common except for the fact that they were once colonised, although Thailand had retained its own independence. In this context, it almost seemed that the anti-communist stance among the five countries were the only thing that they shared and that could serve to solidify their unity. Thus, concerns with regards to national security led the members to create ASEAN. Adam Malik believed that ‘in most cases the original motivation towards regional cooperation has been essentially political in nature’ and explained their motivation to form ASEAN in such words:

It was the fact that there was a convergence in the political outlook of the five prospective member-nations, both with regard to national priority objectives as on the question of how best to secure these objectives in the emergent strategic configuration of East Asia, which provided the main stimulus to join together in ASEAN.

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14 Interview through e-mail with Mr. Marciano R. de Borja, Consul General, Consulate General of the Philippines in Guam, the United States on 9 Aug. 2017. Thomas Daniel, analyst of Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia also agreed this when interviewed through e-mail on 7 Aug. 2017.
16 Adam Malik, ‘Regional Cooperation in International Politics,’ in Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Regionalism in Southeast Asia, Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1975, pp. 157-158.
17 Ibid., p. 161.
Thanat Khoman of Thailand also placed emphasis on the four political rationales of ASEAN, i.e., power vacuum with the withdrawal of the colonial powers, ineffective SEATO, strengthening the member countries’ positions and protecting themselves against the rivalries of big powers.\textsuperscript{18} In other words, due to the shifting trends in international politics during the second half of the 1960s, the leaders of the countries felt an urgent necessity to regionally unite together, especially by including the largest nation in the region, Indonesia. Although Thailand was not keen on joining MAPHILINDO in 1963 because of a confederation of the Malay stock,\textsuperscript{19} it was not concerned with this factor because Thailand was more worried with being isolated in the region rather than being fearful of its majority of Malay neighbours.\textsuperscript{20}

If the founding members disclosed that the association was formed for political co-operation, this would create antipathy from non-members within and outside the region. To avoid such a scenario, the founding members decided to create the regional association on the basis of economic and cultural co-operation.\textsuperscript{21} However, forging economic co-operation was not easy task because the economic structure in each member country had their own vulnerabilities and, as Rajendran pointed out, ‘the existing political differences, the effect of mutual suspicions among some of the members and the different levels of economic and industrial development ... were important factors working against concentration on regional economic problems.’\textsuperscript{22} In addition, as Adam Malik said, ‘differences in levels of development are to be regarded as a major impediment towards regional cooperation among developing countries.’\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{18} Thanat Khoman, ‘Forward to The ASEAN Reader, ASEAN: Conception an Evolution,’ in Ooi Kee Beng et al., The 3rd ASEAN Reader, Singapore: ISEAS, 2015, p. xiv.
\textsuperscript{19} See the Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{20} Interview through e-mail with Marciano R. de Borja, Consul General, Consulate General of the Philippines in Guam, the United States on 9 August, 2017.
\textsuperscript{22} M. Rajendran, ASEAN’s Foreign Relations: The shift to collective action, Kuala Lumpur: Arenabuku, 1985, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{23} Adam Malik, ibid., p. 164.
As a number of scholars stated, the progress made in forging economic co-operation was quite slow and visible results from regional economic co-operation was hardly achieved in the early stage. The Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew revealed in his opening speech in the 1972 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting that:

In the first year, August 1967 to August 1968, there were 102 recommendations. None were implemented. In the second year, August 1968 to December 1969, of 161 recommendations, 10 were implemented, i.e. 6.2%. In the third year, December 1969 to March 1971, of 207 recommendations, 22 were implemented - 10.6%. In the fourth year, March 1971 to April 1972, of 215 recommendations, 48 were implemented - 22.3%.24

Rajendran argued that the five members in the period between 1967 and 1974 did not genuinely commit to the purposes of regional economic co-operation because ASEAN did not set up a Secretariat, and then criticised that ‘the economic goals set by the Association represented merely the icing on the “ASEAN cake.”’25 If the member nations had been serious about economic and cultural co-operation within the regional association from the beginning, the economic ministers and ministers of culture-related portfolios of each member country should have held meetings. However, the regional meetings were held by the ministers of foreign affairs, in which the focus was mainly on foreign policies. The economic ministers’ meetings only began in 1975. On the other hand, the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) was established in 1978 to promote co-operation in culture and arts, but the

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25 M. Rajendran, ibid., p. 22.
first meeting of ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA) was held only in 2003. It took thirty-six years for such a ministers’ meeting to be convened.26

Although economic co-operation was minimal, the premier of Singapore stressed that ‘perhaps the most valuable achievement of ASEAN since its inception was the understanding and goodwill created at the various ASEAN meetings which had helped to lubricate relationships which could otherwise have generated friction.’27 His statement is true because indigenous leaders in the region seldom had any direct communications under their colonised regimes. At the end of the Second World War, these nations gained independence and had just begun to establish contact with each other, although some of them had already been communicating with each other before the war. Their independence allowed them to freely and frequently communicate with neighbouring countries. The ASEAN framework provided them with a platform to regularly communicate and interact with each other on economic issues. At the same time, the member nations began discussing political issues related to the ASEAN framework since the beginning of the formation.

As ASEAN was formed for regional economic and cultural co-operation, political issues were not discussed on the official agenda of the formal ministers’ meetings. In informal meetings, however, political issues were frequently discussed. Susumu Yamakage has analysed, between 1967 and 1972 the five countries had held political discussions in informal meetings, which involved meetings held outside the ASEAN framework.28 He stated that these informal meetings originated from a meeting held on 6 August 1966. The meeting was convened the day after the third
formal meeting of ASA foreign ministers, and Tun Razak of Malaysia, Narciso Ramos of the Philippines, and Thanat Khoman of Thailand participated. The three ministers announced a joint declaration known as the ‘Bangkok Peace Appeal.’ As ASA was formed for the purpose of economic co-operation, this political communiqué was unusual and out of place. The ministers were fully aware of this, and so the communiqué stated that the three Foreign Ministers of ASA ‘availed themselves of the occasion to consult together on matters of common interest outside the framework of ASA.’ In response to Dr. Mahathir Mohamad’s questions, Tun Razak emphasised in parliament in the same month that ‘We are forcing no-one nor is it made under the auspices of ASA which is an association for co-operation endeavours in the cultural, economic and social fields. The move since it is political was made outside the framework of ASA.’ Informal meetings of Foreign Ministers were also adopted within ASEAN. After the formation of ASEAN, an informal meeting was held on 7 August 1968 in Jakarta after the Second formal Foreign Ministers’ meeting. In this unofficial meeting, regional security issues were discussed. These included Vietnam peace talks in Paris, American presence in the region, British military withdrawal from the region, and the failure of some states to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

The anti-communist countries had no choice but to hold discussions towards political co-operation because the U.S. government had shifted its policy on Indochina in the first half of 1968 and the issue of military withdrawal from the region arose.

29 See the details in Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1966, pp. 12-13. The ministers expressed the following unanimous opinions:
1. The present conflict constitutes a grave threat to the peace and stability of South East Asia.
2. Such threat to peace is a major obstacle to the sound and steady economic development of the region and the resulting political instability prevents the full enjoyment of the economic progress achieved by joint regional undertakings.
3. South East Asian and other Asian countries cannot delegate to others their primary responsibilities for the maintenance of peace, security and stability in their own region, nor can they abdicate to outside Powers (less interested in the welfare of Asia) the fundamental duty of safeguarding regional peace and of seeking a peaceful solution to any conflict within the region.
30 Ibid.
32 Yamakage argued that the first informal meeting was on the eve of the formation of ASEAN.
With the withdrawal plan from the East of Suez by the British government, ASEAN leaders were forced to take measures to prevent a power vacuum in the region. It was the informal meetings after the official ASEAN meetings that served as platforms to discuss political issues. As Yamakage puts it, at the early stages by 1971 the informal meetings were held outside of the framework of ASEAN, and it so happened that those participating in them were ASEAN Foreign Ministers. 34 It is unclear what was being discussed in these informal meetings because they did not issue any communiqués. The meetings were held seven times by 1972. Thereafter it became a regular meeting.

Whether formal or informal meetings were held, from the perspective of regional consciousness in Southeast Asia, ASEAN members more frequently communicated with each other after 1967, and unity within the association grew stronger. As Yamakage also argued, ‘ASEAN had played a significant role to almost forcibly connect the diplomatic channels among the members.’ 35 Similar to how relations between Malaysia and the Philippines improved and then was suspended in 1968, ASEAN members had also to overcome difficulties in holding regional discussions.

The ASEAN countries had slowly enhanced solidarity through regular meetings, but Southeast Asia at that time was divided into two areas: the ASEAN group and the non-ASEAN group, i.e. Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Nevertheless, the ASEAN group always intended to unify the entire Southeast Asia. The Bangkok Declaration in 1967 stated that ‘the Association is open for participation to all States in the South-East Asian Region’ 36 and also declared that one of its aims was:

34 Yamakage Susumu, ibid., p. 142.
35 Ibid.
To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of South-East Asian Nations.\(^37\)

From this, we can see that the founders of ASEAN had intended to build up a community of Southeast Asian states in the future. Tun Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia said on 11 November 1967 that ‘we hope that our neighbours such as Burma, Cambodia, Laos and others will join ASEAN in the near future so that all countries in this Southeast Asian region can excel together towards a glorious era of development, modernity and civilization.’\(^38\) He expected to develop the region together with non-members through ASEAN. More interestingly, Adam Malik, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, re-emphasised that ASEAN ‘should not remain merely a mechanism for governmental co-operation but must gradually become a symbol of a community of the peoples in this region.’\(^39\) While no member countries had the intention to create a regional community during the ASA era, ASEAN members, or at least Indonesia and Malaysia, saw the regional association as a catalyst to unify the whole region. The member countries had the intention to form a single community during the inception of the organisation. Since its inception, ASEAN has been a regional organisation not just for ASEAN members, but for the entire Southeast Asia. However, the political uncertainty and instability of the region, in particular due to the Vietnam War, did not allow it to expand its membership.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 23. Italics are added.


On the other hand, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew argued regarding the scope of Southeast Asia in 1968:

I have always thought it was a grave mistake to classify Vietnam as Southeast Asian. By its history, ethnic affinities and cultural patterns, Vietnam is East Asian, not Southeast Asian. And there are profound differences between these two groups. ⁴⁰

Nevertheless, at the very least Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand had shared a common definition of the region that included Vietnam, because South Vietnam was invited as an official guest to the annual Foreign Minister meetings in 1969 and 1971. ⁴¹

Although the scope of Southeast Asia was self-defined among ASEAN leaders, it was through the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration describing the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) that regional leaders ‘officially’ demarcated the region of Southeast Asia. This declaration resulted from discussions of political issues in informal meetings. Therefore, it is a vital declaration in developing regional consciousness in the future.

ZOPFAN for the entire region

International politics in Southeast Asia before and after the formation of ASEAN experienced drastic changes. First, the British government announced in

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⁴¹ Joint Communiqué of the Third ASEAN Ministerial meeting, Cameron Highlands, Malaysia, 16-17 Dec. 1969, in ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986, p. 51 and Joint Communiqué of the Fourth ASEAN Ministerial meeting, Manila, 12-13 March 1971, p. 52. Laos in 1969 and Cambodia in 1971 were also invited as an official guest. ASEAN invited the two countries to the annual meeting in 1973 as well.
1967 and 1968 its plan to withdraw its forces from the east of Suez. Second, after the Tet Offensive by North Vietnam at the end of January 1968, the U.S. President, Johnson called for peace talks with Ho Chi Minh, the President of Vietnam. The first of these peace talks commenced in Paris on May 1968. After Richard Nixon was installed as the new U.S. President in January 1969, he announced the Nixon Doctrine in Guam in July of that year, which decided on the withdrawal of its forces from Vietnam. As the U.S. government restarted negotiations with North Vietnam to end the war, American policies towards Asia shifted. Further, Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stated the need to create a system of collective security in Asia in 1969. Under these international circumstances, ASEAN countries believed that they should agree on collective security policies. Among the countries, Malaysia was quick to perceive the current international trends, and Tun Dr. Ismail proposed a neutralisation plan for Southeast Asia.42

Neutralism originally emerged in Europe, especially among the smaller nations, at the beginning of the nineteenth century as an option to protect national sovereignty against incursion by the major powers. By the mid-twentieth century, the concept had well pervaded into Asia. As Peter Lyon puts it, neutralism was almost ubiquitous in Southeast Asia in one form or another,43 with its official adoption by Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar in the 1960s. The government of Malaya was in a position to choose a neutral policy when the country achieved independence from the British in 1957, but found it inexpedient to do so. Its neutral foreign policy came to the fore only in 1970 when the concept of ZOPFAN was officially proposed to ASEAN by the second Prime Minister, Tun Razak. However, the cornerstone of the neutral policy had been

laid out earlier, and its origins can be traced back to the period of the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman.44

Extreme anti-communists nations might not be able to propose a neutral policy. In the case of Malaysia, the political leaders had an anti-communist stance, but their stance was quite soft. It can be said that their stance was neutral, i.e. neither pro-communist nor strictly anti-communist. When the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) unleashed its reign of terror in 1948, the British government at that time declared a state of emergency in Malaya. This remained in force till 1960, even after the country gained independence in 1957. Militant members of the MCP killed thousands of local civilians during the Emergency, thus arousing considerable public animosity against them. Nevertheless, the Tunku had a liberal stance on communism as an ideology and his stance was evident even in the early years of his political career. As the Chief Minister of Malaya before independence, the Tunku held a meeting with Chin Peng, the head of the MCP in Baling, Kedah in December 1955, during which he stated his stance on communism. The purpose of this meeting was to persuade the communists to renounce violence and to disarm. The Tunku declared that the MCP would not be accepted ‘as lawful and legitimate after the damage they (MCP) have done to the people and the country.’45 When Chin Peng argued that the Communist Party of Australia was functioning legally, the Tunku retorted that ‘[t]he communists were not pressing armed struggle in Australia’46 and further said: ‘We don’t mind … the communist ideology, so far as you don’t preach violence. In our country, quite a lot of people are communist theorists dedicated to communist ideology but they didn’t carry

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44 See in details in Ito Mitsuomi, ‘The path to Malaysia’s neutral foreign policy in the Tunku era,’ Sarjana, forthcoming.
out any violence, so we allowed them."47 As this statement was from a recollection by Chin Peng, one might be tempted to treat it with some reservation, but the Tunku himself had reiterated it in later years:

I am not anti-communist per se. I am only against those Communist countries who try through subversive and militant means to export the ideology to our country. In this way I am anti-communist. I am not anti-communist if they keep their ideology within their borders.48

This clearly shows that while the Tunku strongly opposed the use of militant means to overturn the government, he was essentially not against communism. On the contrary, the Tunku mentioned that ‘If perchance … we find that some particular method of the Communists can be adopted for the good of our Nation and State, we shall not hesitate to adopt that method.’49 If he were truly anti-communist and a hardliner against communism, he would not have said this.

Other senior government officials who influenced Malaya’s foreign policies also had similar liberal views on communism as the Tunku. During the period of his ambassadorship to the United Nations and the United States, Tun Dr. Ismail also expressed similar views in public, stating that Malaya ‘is the only country in the world today which is involved in a shooting war with adherents of communism.’ However, it was essentially ‘militant communism’ and ‘communist terrorism’50 that he was against. In this respect, Tun Dr. Ismail’s position on communism was clear when he

reiterated in parliament a year later: ‘We are not against communism as ideology, although we ourselves believe in democracy. But we are against its militant form and those countries practicing it, and through subversive and militant means try to export this ideology to other countries.’ Interestingly enough, his view of communism and his differentiating between ideology and militancy echoed the Tunku’s stance in 1955.

The Tunku was one who was liberal towards communism, although his speeches and statements were often erroneously referred to as ‘anti-communist’ in the media. Tun Dr. Ismail also had a tolerant and understanding attitude towards communism, accepting communism as a dogma. Although the political leaders often used the phrase ‘anti-communism’ in public, it would be more appropriate and correct to say that their stance was not ‘anti-communist,’ but actually 'anti-militant communist' or more simply ‘anti-terrorist.’

The Malaya/Malaysian government had adopted a pro-Western foreign policy from the beginning of its independence, but it had to do so because of three main reasons: first, the MCP was still carrying out terrorist activities when Malaya achieved independence, and the state of emergency that was declared in 1948 still remained in force; second, the small Malayan defence forces were not in a position to defend the new nation adequately when independence was granted in 1957; third, the government’s decision in limiting funds for national defence meant that its armed forces could not be expanded.

Malaysia had no diplomatic relations with communist countries by the mid-sixties because the country had to deal with domestic communist guerrillas at the outset of independence, and it was threatened by the pro-communist government of Indonesia during the Konfrontasi era, which had links with China, a major communist

country. However, the government gradually steered towards a middle course after 1967. It formed diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia in 1967 and then with the Soviet Union. This was followed by Romania and Bulgaria in Eastern Europe.52

In July 1967 and again in January 1968 the British government had announced the withdrawal of its armed forces from Malaysia and Singapore by the end of 1971.53 Subsequently, Malaysia held discussions with the other four countries in the Five-Power Defence Conference between 1968 and 1971 and signed the Five-Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) to replace the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA). Should the deal fail to go through, Tun Dr. Ismail proposed in the Dewan Rakyat (Lower House) on 23 January 1968 that the concept of regional neutrality be vigorously pursued as an alternative. He emphasised that the entire Southeast Asian region should pursue a policy of neutrality guaranteed by the three powers, viz. the United States, the Soviet Union, and the People’s Republic of China.

The key figures in the government reacted favourably to the proposal. The Tunku, the Prime Minister, commented: ‘This is something which is worth giving thought to,’54 adding that the government would try to discuss with the countries in and outside the region, including the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia with which it had diplomatic relations by 1968. Moreover, he remarked that ‘we might persuade them to agree to peaceful co-existence, agree to non-aggression pacts and at the same time agree to the neutralisation of certain zones, in particular, South East Asia.’55 Tun

55 Ibid., col. 4308.
Razak, the then Deputy Prime Minister, also praised the proposal as a possibility to endorse the neutralisation policy for the region’s long term objectives.\(^{56}\) To achieve the goal of neutralisation, Tun Razak tried to persuade the Soviet Union to guarantee the independence and neutrality of the countries in the region when he visited Russia in May 1968. The communist country responded by only agreeing to adhere to the principle of co-existence.\(^ {57}\) It is worth noting that both the Tunku and Tun Razak accepted the idea of neutralisation and, interestingly enough, the latter started to work towards the neutralisation of the region immediately after the proposal was made.

Unfortunately, a bitter ethnic riot occurred in May 1969, and the Tunku was not able to keep his position and finally resigned in September 1970. The new Prime Minister, Tun Razak, appointed Tun Dr. Ismail, who proposed the neutralisation plan, as the Deputy Prime Minister. This appointment showed that the new government was at the helm of the regional neutralisation plan.

The policy towards the neutralisation of Southeast Asia characterised his administration. Originally this plan was suggested as an alternative in case of the failure of the FPDA, but the Malaysian government also focused on implementing this plan as its foreign policy because it believed that the security of the entire Southeast Asian region was directly linked to its own national security. Before allowing the big powers outside the region and non-ASEAN countries in the region to accept it, Malaysia needed to persuade the ASEAN countries, but the four ASEAN countries did not express their support immediately. This was mainly because of the failure of Laos and Cambodian to neutralise in the 1960s, in which the ASEAN leaders knew that a neutral policy would not necessarily bring peace and security.

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\(^{56}\) Ibid., cols. 4333–4334.
\(^{57}\) The Straits Times, 27 May 1968, p. 1.
Fortunately, Tun Razak obtained support for the neutralisation plan from Thailand and Indonesia when he officially visited both countries. During the United Nations General Assembly in October 1971, the Prime Minister of Malaysia presented the plan. After addressing in the assembly, he met ASEAN foreign ministers in New York, in which they decided to meet in Kuala Lumpur on 25 November 1971. More importantly, the New York meeting endorsed the plan to work towards a neutral Southeast Asia. In passing, this meeting also discussed matters regarding subsequent discussions that were to be held in Kuala Lumpur regarding the Asian summit. This was proposed by Marcos immediately after the U.S. President, Nixon announced his visit to China.

The Kuala Lumpur Declaration of 1971 made during the special ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ meeting was the first declaration that expressed political co-operation among ASEAN countries, in spite of the fact that ASEAN was established for economic and cultural co-operation. In this respect, the meeting was special and exceptional for ASEAN. The Declaration was, as Yamakage pointed out, to neutralise the whole region of Southeast Asia, not merely the ASEAN region. After the long preamble, only two clauses were written as the body-text. The second clause declared that ‘South East Asian countries should make concerted efforts to broaden the areas of cooperation which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship.’ Tun Razak believed that regional co-operation would engender conditions of stability in the region and a sense of solidarity and cohesion among

South-East Asian countries.\textsuperscript{64} And, through close co-operating among the region’s countries, a regional community would be born. He said in the Malaysian parliament that ‘[f]or us in Malaysia our vision for the future is that of a Community of South-East-Asia.’\textsuperscript{65} In short, the Declaration expressed the desire and hope of ASEAN leaders to create a regional community in the future. The joint statement after the Kuala Lumpur meeting also stated that the Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy agreed that ‘they would bring the contents of their Declaration to the attention of the other countries of Southeast Asia and would encourage them to associate themselves with the aspirations and objectives expressed in the Declaration.’\textsuperscript{66} Tun Razak explained this plan to President Nixon in New York in October 1971, but apparently the ASEAN countries did not inform the other Southeast Asian countries about the plan at that time except for South Vietnam and Laos.\textsuperscript{67} The ASEAN countries had since then attempted to get approvals from not only the major powers but also non-ASEAN countries for the plan. However, it took time for the non-ASEAN countries in Southeast Asia to accept the plan.

In the context of regional consciousness in Southeast Asia, the significance of the Declaration is that ‘ASEAN country members came to bear in mind to keep stable and friendly relationships among Southeast Asian countries.’\textsuperscript{68} Although the five countries originally grouped together to co-operation against communism, they did not create an ASEAN bloc, but attempted to neutralise the whole Southeast Asian region including its communist countries instead. The ASEAN members focused on how to stabilise the entire region and develop the region’s economy regardless of


\textsuperscript{65} Federation of Malaysia, Penyata Rasmi, Dewan Ra’ayat, Parlimen Ketiga, Penggal Parlimen Pertama, Jil. 1, Bil. 31, 26 Julai, 1971, col. 3718.


\textsuperscript{68} Yamakage Susumu, ibid., p. 165.
ideology. In the same manner the Declaration was the document that expressed the region’s readiness for co-existence and a sharing of prosperity within the regional unit.

ZOPFAN also bore significance for the countries of Indochina: they had begun to see a link between regional security and their own national security, and came to realise that regional co-operation was important after the end of the Vietnam War. Vietnam and Laos criticised the neutralisation plan in 1975 and 1976, and Laos proposed the ‘Zone of Peace, Genuine Independence’ as an alternative to ZOPFAN in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting in 1975. Regardless of what the proposed alternatives were, the countries of Indochina had begun realizing the importance of creating a security zone in co-operation with the entire region.

Under these circumstances the ASEAN countries made great efforts to reach out to non-ASEAN countries, in particular the countries of Indochina. Among the ASEAN members, Indonesia played a significant role in doing so, such as holding a conference in Cambodia in 1970 and participating in the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS) which functioned to oversee the ceasefire process in South Vietnam in January 1973. Other ASEAN members also attempted to reach out to these countries in the first half of the 1970s. As mentioned previously, some of these countries were invited to the annual ASEAN Foreign Ministers meetings. In addition, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1973 agreed to set up the Coordinating Committee for the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Indochina States, which was to assist the war-devastated countries of Indochina in rehabilitation and redevelopment.

ZOPFAN contributed to the development of the Southeast Asian region and to the creation of a much stronger regional consciousness. In this regard, it was also important that the five countries defined the scope of the region to which the

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neutralisation process could be applied, thus demarcating the region of Southeast Asia. At the same time, this demarcation excluded some countries from the region. The next section discusses the countries left out from the framework of the Southeast Asian region.

**Excluding countries from Southeast Asia**

This section examines the regional perspectives of the Southeast Asian region held by the governments of Ceylon (later renamed as Sri Lanka) and Pakistan/Bangladesh. If the region of Southeast Asia is roughly defined as the geographic space situated between the east of India, the south of China and the north of Australia, these three countries should be included in Southeast Asia. Examining these regional perspectives here is important because, as we saw in chapter one, some scholars prior to the 1960s regarded these three territories as being part of Southeast Asia. We will now examine how these governments perceived the region as a whole, and also the perceptions of ASEAN leaders as to whether these countries belonged to the region of Southeast Asia.

Sri Lanka is situated in the Indian Ocean off the south-eastern tip of India. The island country has a plural society comprising immigrants mainly from India. After being colonised by the Portuguese and Dutch, it became a British colony in 1815. The country gained peaceful independence in 1948, but severe ethnic conflicts have continued since.⁷⁰ Although the major ethnic groups in the island are the Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils, Malays also reside there as one of the smaller minorities, and adhere to Islam. The name of the country, Ceylon, was changed to its current name, Sri Lanka, in 1972. Its foreign policies by the mid-1950s actively helped to unite

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Asian countries. The island nation, under the then Prime Minister’s initiative, hosted the Colombo Conference in 1954, inviting Burma, India, Indonesia and Pakistan to participate. This conference subsequently led to the Asia Africa Conference in 1955.

The issue as to whether the island country belonged to the region of Southeast Asia became controversial among scholars in the 1950s, as we saw in chapter one. According to the then Prime Minister of Ceylon, Sir John Kotewalawa, when Queen Elizabeth II visited the island in April 1954 and broadcast a special speech, she remarked that Colombo was ‘in the heart of South-East Asia.’ It is probable that Kotewalawa did not perceive anything wrong with this phrase. When the Colombo Conference was held in 1954, the Prime Minister called the conference ‘The South-East Asian Prime Ministers’ Conference.’ He believed that the five participating countries were part of the region. In fact, his perception that the region of Southeast Asia included these five countries was reasonable, because the South-East Asian Command (SEAC) that was set up in 1943 during the Second World War was set up in the island country, and its headquarters established there as well. It was thus that Kotewalawa perceived Ceylon as being part of the region.

After the formation of ASA on 31 July 1961, one of the ministers of Ceylon stated his private views that ‘if the scope of the organisation is enlarged to take in a wider area, there is no reason why we should not come in too.’ Apparently the minister recognised that the island nation was not in Southeast Asia. Immediately after that, there were sources that stated that ‘the geographical extent of South-East Asia was not defined when ASA was set up’ and suggested that Ceylon could become a member. Ceylon expected to join the organisation, but the Tunku opined after a year that India and Ceylon were not considered as potential members of ASA.

71 Sir John Kotewalawa, ibid., p. 112.
72 Ibid., p. 120.
73 The Straits Times, 8 Sept. 1961, p. 5.
74 Ibid, 9 Sept. 1961, p. 11.
because they were not in the region.\textsuperscript{75} The Tunku had a clear definition regarding the scope of Southeast Asia.

However, the Tunku later changed his mind. He became keen on bringing Ceylon into the new regional organisation: ASEAN. He said before the formation of ASEAN that he would support any form of wider organisation for regional co-operation and subsequently stated that ‘Ceylon should be in with us.’\textsuperscript{76} With the establishment of ASEAN, the Tunku stated again regarding admitting Ceylon: ‘If Ceylon desires to join ASEAN, although geographically she is not in South-east Asia, Malaysia will support her entry,’ adding that the question of Ceylon joining ASEAN had not arisen since Ceylon had not formally applied to be a member.\textsuperscript{77} The Philippine government regarded the island country as a ‘highly qualified partner’ and expressed approval for admitting the island country after discussions with Indonesia.\textsuperscript{78} The Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Malik, also said immediately after the formation: ‘geographically India was not included in Southeast Asia. ASEAN … was confined to countries located in Southeast Asia. However … Ceylon was in Southeast Asia.’\textsuperscript{79} In other words, ASEAN countries had no consensus as to where Ceylon belonged.

Despite the fact that the island country was invited to be an ASEAN member, the government of Ceylon hesitated to join. The Ceylonese Prime Minister reasoned that he was not sure whether ASEAN was aligned to SEATO, which the opposition parties in Ceylon were strongly against. As the island nation pursued a non-alignment foreign policy, he said that joining the organisation depended on whether ‘ASEAN is

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 31 July 1962, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 23 April 1967, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 30 Sept., 1967, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 8 Oct. 1967, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{79} Quoted in Kripa Sridharan, \textit{The ASEAN Region in India’s Foreign Policy}, Aldershot: Datormouth, 1996, p. 50.
against any particular bloc.\textsuperscript{80} When discussing with the Tunku on joining ASEAN in October 1967, the Prime Minister of Ceylon, Dudley Senanayake stated that Ceylon was considering participation, but joining the regional organisation was not an urgent matter.

According to S. R. Nathan, Canagaratnam Gunasingham, Sri Lanka’s former High Commissioner to Singapore, said that the then Prime Minister of Ceylon had come under pressure not only from the leftists within his country, but also from India, China and the Soviet Union, although the island country had hoped of ‘breaking away from its moorings in South Asia and becoming a trading nation with links to South East and East Asian nations as well as to all littoral Asia.’\textsuperscript{81} Ceylon is located at the south of India in the Indian Ocean and is in close proximity to the largest country of South Asia, India, but if Ceylon joined ASEAN, it would in a sense ‘become a Southeast Asian country.’ ASEAN leaders took a favourable view of the island country and extended a warm welcome to Ceylon to join the regional organisation. This was probably because in spite of its geographical size, the Ceylonese government played a significant role in international politics, such as hosting the Colombo Conference in 1954.

However, ASEAN countries never invited Ceylon to the ministerial meetings, although Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam were invited as guests. It can therefore be said that ASEAN members did not actually consider Ceylon a Southeast Asian country. After fourteen years had passed since the formation of ASEAN, the then Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ramasinghe Premadasa, submitted an application to join ASEAN to the Standing Committee in May 1981, but the application was turned down in the following year.

Bangladesh is geographically surrounded by India in three directions, and the southeastern part of the country is adjoining Burma. It literally lies between South Asia and Southeast Asia. Bangladesh has a complicated history. It was called East Pakistan under the sovereignty of Pakistan prior to 1971, after which it gained independence. When India and Pakistan gained independence from the British in 1947, the region of Bengal was divided into the West and East along the lines of religion, namely Hinduism and Islam. While West Bengal, which was predominantly Hindu, was incorporated as a territory of India, the Muslim-dominated East Bengal was brought into Pakistan that year. East Bengal was a region independently governed by a major Pakistani political party, the Muslim League, between 1947 and 1954. Just like other countries in Asia, nationalism in Bengal emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century and thereafter developed significantly. However, when elections were held in 1946, the majority of Bengali Muslims in East Bengal voted for the Muslim League to create a separate homeland for Muslims. The voters felt more secure and comfortable with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who became the founder of Pakistan. In 1955 it was established as one of the states of Pakistan and was renamed East Pakistan. In spite of the fact that both West and East Pakistan were part of the same country, there was a distance of 2,000 km between Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan in the West, and Dhaka, the main city in the East.

Since Pakistan consisted of two geographically divided territories, the government at that time faced problems with defending its territories. Thus, Pakistan joined the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), which was formed in 1955 with Iran, Iraq, Turkey and the United Kingdom in the interest of its western territory, and it also signed a treaty with SEATO that was established in 1954 in the interest of its

eastern territory. However, the foreign policies of Pakistan were influenced by West Pakistani elites who dominated the civil service and military, and they basically tried to strengthen relations with the Middle Eastern countries because of their feelings of affinity to Islam.\textsuperscript{83} Pakistan in the West and the East shared a common religion, but due to their different cultures and languages, East Pakistan, which is in closer proximity to Southeast Asia, was given less importance.

It is probable that East Pakistan’s foreign policies were more oriented towards Asia during the premiership of Mohammad Ali Bogra (1953-1955), a Bengali politician. This can be seen from his participation in notable conferences from Colombo to Bandung. It is possible that he attempted to draw closer to countries of both South and Southeast Asia through participating in these conferences. We do not know whether he had a regional awareness oriented towards Southeast Asia just like most of East Pakistan, but we know that Pakistan’s foreign policies were highly valued by the U.S. thereafter.

In 1971, East Pakistan achieved independence from Pakistan, and was renamed Bangladesh. When Ghaffar Baba, the Malaysian Minister of National and Rural Development visited the country, the new country’s leaders expressed their desire to join ASEAN because they regarded Bangladesh as one of the countries of Southeast Asia. An article commented: ‘Whether Bangladesh is part of South-East Asia geographically is beside the point. But its desire to join ASEAN and its claim to be one of the South-East Asian countries should be given the widest interpretation.’\textsuperscript{84} This indicated that people did not feel that Bangladesh did not belong to Southeast Asia. Although Bangladesh did not apply for membership in ASEAN, the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Ismail, stated after two months that ‘We do not

\textsuperscript{83} K. B. Sayeed, ‘Southeast Asia in Pakistan’s Foreign Policy,’ \textit{Pacific Affairs}, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Summer, 1968), pp. 230-232.
\textsuperscript{84} \textit{New Nation}, 24 March 1972, p. 6.
consider Bangladesh as part of the area we regard as South-East Asia.\textsuperscript{85} Even though the country is adjacent to Burma, Bangladesh was excluded from the region.

While Malaysia urged Ceylon to join the new regional organisation of ASEAN even before its formation, Pakistan, which possessed a territory adjacent to Burma, was not invited to join despite the fact that East Pakistan was much closer to Southeast Asia. This was probably due to the fact that ASEAN countries wanted to keep away from the conflicts between Pakistan and India, in which both countries was engaged in a war against each other in 1965.

As a matter of fact, before the Second World War, the British did not recognise the region of East Bengal as a part of Southeast Asia, and neither did the indigenous leaders of Southeast Asia. The people of East Bengal/East Pakistan also hardly possessed any regional awareness towards Southeast Asia. Most of the Muslim-dominated areas are surrounded by Hindu-dominated areas, and its south-eastern border is also contiguous with that of a Buddhist country. As such, it can be said that East Bengal is somewhat an isolated Muslim region. The present-day nations of Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh were part of British India. This might be one of the reasons as to why the people had no regional awareness of Southeast Asia. In short, the Bengali Muslims, despite being mostly attracted to the political ideals of Jinnah, felt more secure and comfortable to be part of West Pakistan, which is closer to Mecca in the Middle East. Moreover, another reason for the lack of a regional awareness towards Southeast Asia in East Bengal was that Burma, which is adjacent to the region, separated from British India and became British Burma in April 1937. With the formation of British Burma which had a Buddhist majority, a ‘wall’ was created in the south-eastern side of the region in the minds of the Bengali Muslims. With their different religions and the formation of a Buddhist-majority British Burma,

\textsuperscript{85} The Straits Times, 26 May 1972, p. 29.
the Bengali Muslims did not look to Southeast Asia for a shared regional consciousness.\textsuperscript{86}

Further, it would also be essential to discuss the regional geography of Taiwan and Papua New Guinea in order to better understand the demarcation of Southeast Asia.

Taiwan, located to the north of the Philippines and formed the Republic of China after the Second World War, was keen on joining the regional organisations of Southeast Asia. The Republic of China first showed its desire to take part in ASA as early as 1962.\textsuperscript{87} It is unknown whether it submitted an application to join at this time, but Taiwan attempted to join ASA again in 1966. Immediately after this news was reported, the Tunku opposed the admission of Taiwan because the island nation had no diplomatic relations with Malaysia, besides being outside the region of Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{88} His stand did not change even after the formation of ASEAN. There is no evidence that Taiwan expressed its desire to join ASEAN, or if ASEAN invited Taiwan to join. Taiwan is geographically close to Southeast Asia, which is approximately 250 km away from the Philippines and as mentioned in the chapter three it was included in the Malay Archipelago in the nineteenth century, but it was embroiled in political disputes with mainland China, of which the countries of Southeast Asia wanted to distance themselves from these disputes. Taiwan lost its representative seat in the United Nations in 1971. After President Nixon of the U.S. visited Beijing in 1972, the detente led to the cutting off of ties between ASEAN countries and Taiwan, and the establishment of official relations between the People’s Republic of China and ASEAN countries such as Malaysia in 1974, and Thailand and the Philippines in 1975. Relations between Southeast Asian countries and Taiwan

\textsuperscript{86} According to Thomas Daniel, analyst of ISIS Malaysia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were considered too far geographically from Southeast Asia. Interview through e-mail with him on 7 August, 2017.

\textsuperscript{87} Estrella D. Solidum, \textit{Towards a Southeast Asian Community}, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1974, p. 44.

were almost cut off during this period, and Taiwan has become isolated diplomatically since then. In light of this complicated issue, Southeast Asian leaders held to a tacit understanding that Taiwan was outside the region, and it was not allowed to join the regional organisation so as not to give rise to diplomatic problems for each member country.

Papua New Guinea had not gained independence at the time of the formation of ASEAN. It was placed under the International Trusteeship System and ruled by Australia until it became independent in 1975. Thus, ASEAN members did not consider including the country as a member state in spite of the fact that the country is contiguous with Indonesia, sharing a 760 kilometre border. When the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Adam Malik proposed the formation of a South Pacific sub-regional group, he viewed the geographical location of Indonesia as belonging to the Indian Ocean, South-East Asia and the South Pacific. When asked regarding the possibility of Papua New Guinea joining ASEAN, he answered that ‘at the beginning I was for the proposition to have an independent Papua New Guinea enter ASEAN.’ However, ‘[i]t has been told to me that the other members of ASEAN might not think Papua New Guinea as properly belonging to the East Asian area,’ but rather the South Pacific region. This led the minister to surmise that Papua New Guinea was part of the latter region. The Foreign Secretary of the Philippines, Carlos Romulo said in later years that he was not averse to ASEAN admitting Papua New Guinea. Although the country had shown its strong desire to join the regional organisation since the 1980s, the Foreign Minister of Singapore, Suppiah Dhanabalan pointed out in 1987 that ASEAN had not really thought about admitting a single country that belonged to two

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90 The Canberra Times, 10 Nov. 1973, p. 9. Thomas Daniel, analyst of ISIS Malaysia, also pointed out that Papua New Guinea is geographically too far and too Australasian -Indonesia's rule over West Papua notwithstanding. Interview through e-mail with him on 7 August, 2017.
91 The Straits Times, 15 June 1982, p. 16.
regional groups, and Papua New Guinea had been a member of the South Pacific Forum since 1971.\footnote{\textit{The Canberra Times}, 10 April 1987, p. 4.}

ASEAN leaders had defined the scope of Southeast Asia by the middle of the 1970s. According to S. R. Nathan, the westernmost border of the region ‘did not extend to the west beyond Burma.’\footnote{S. R. Nathan, \textit{ibid.}, p. 350.} The eastern and southern borders of the region did not extend beyond the Indonesian borders, and the northernmost side was the northern border of the Philippines. For this reason, even if countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Taiwan and Papua New Guinea declared that they belonged to Southeast Asia, they were not able to join Southeast Asian regional organisations or incorporate themselves into the region, as ASEAN countries decided on the scope of the region. In other words, ASEAN ‘was already creating a political need for a clearer delineation of the boundaries of Southeast Asia to distinguish insiders from outsiders.’\footnote{Chin Kin Wah, ‘ASEAN: The Long Road to “One Southeast Asia”;’ \textit{Asian Journal of Political Science}, Vol. 5, No. 1 (June 1997), p. 5.}

Subsequently, based on its own definition of the region, ASEAN has attempted to build co-operation not only within ASEAN but also with non-ASEAN countries, and the organisation directed its efforts towards establishing a regional community.

\textbf{Towards an ASEAN Region and Community}

With the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) on 31 December 2015, the term ‘ASEAN Community’ was often used by the mass media. After the adoption of Vision 2020 during the ASEAN summit in Malaysia in 1997, in which the member countries stated that they ‘envision the entire Southeast Asia to be, by 2020, an ASEAN community conscious of its ties of history, aware of its cultural
heritage and bound by a common regional identity,’95 ASEAN members declared the establishment of an ASEAN Community ‘comprising three pillars, namely political and security cooperation, economic cooperation, and socio-cultural cooperation’96 in the Bali Concord II in 2003. Thereafter, the regional organisation has produced the ASEAN Charter and adopted the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community (2009-2015). Although it seems that the ASEAN Secretariat itself has declared that the term ‘ASEAN Community’ was first used in Vision 2020, this term actually originates from the Declaration of ASEAN Concord in Bali, Indonesia in 1976.

The term ‘ASEAN Community’ did not emerge suddenly in 1976, but was coined after the term ‘ASEAN region’ became widely used. One of the earliest usage of the term ‘ASEAN region’ in the early stages was in 1968 by the then Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Razak.97 It seems that he had never used this term officially since then. Perusing declarations, joint communiqués, statements of Foreign Ministers and other related documents of ASEAN, the term ‘ASEAN region’ has been used frequently since 1971. President Marcos of the Philippines used this term three times in his opening speech at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1971. While the terms ‘ASEAN countries’ and ‘ASEAN governments’ were used only once respectively, the term ‘ASEAN region’ was used more emphatically than other terms, in which it is often found in official ASEAN documents. With his use of the term, it became more popular in The Straits Times in Singapore,98 as writers started using the term more. ASEAN documents such as the joint communiqués and speech texts in 1972 and 1973 did not use the term ‘ASEAN region,’ but President Suharto of Indonesia, mentioned

the term twice in his opening speech in the seventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta in 1974. The communique issued from it also employed the term ‘ASEAN region’ and, more interestingly, described ‘ASEAN as one region.’ This indicates that the political leaders had by then at least reached a consensus that ASEAN was a sub-region within Southeast Asia.

As discussed above, ASEAN members aimed to include all Southeast Asian countries within the organisation since the early stages of its establishment. To this end, it was necessary to use a new regional term besides ‘Southeast Asia’ in order to include all the countries within the region and to enhance regional consciousness. Southeast Asia, having a variety of cultures from each country, differs from Europe that has a generally common and similar culture in terms of religion and languages. The term ‘Europe,’ which was said to coin by Greece, has been widely used around the region since then because the word ‘Europe’ has similar spellings and pronunciations in the different European languages. Thus, in the case of Europe, it was not difficult to create regional consciousness and a common identity, subsequently laying the foundation for a European community.

On the other hand, the term ‘Southeast Asia,’ which was coined by the West, had to be translated from English into local languages. Thus, unlike Europe, no common regional term exists because of translations into different languages. This was a major obstacle to the creation of a shared regional consciousness. When the indigenous political leaders wished to refer to the entire region, they used the term ‘Southeast Asia’ in their respective languages. Unlike ‘ASEAN,’ the term ‘Southeast Asia’ has different expressions in different languages, such as Asia Tenggara in Indonesian and Malay, Timog-silangang Asya in Tagalog and เอเซียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ in Thai.

(Ae chia ta wan org chiang tai) in Thai. These different expressions in each country have not been helpful in creating awareness for a common regional identity among the common people. Thus, the regional leaders came up with ‘ASEAN’ as a name to refer to the region. By widely using the untranslatable term ASEAN, the political leaders have attempted to define the region and create a shared regional identity. This was how a regional name became transformed from being a name of Western origin to being a regional term of indigenous origin. This was also, so to speak, one of the process of the de-colonization of the regional name. That was why indigenous politicians in the Southeast Asian region actively used the term ‘ASEAN region.’

While a couple of regional organisations were set up before ASEAN, the names of these organisations could not be fully used to refer to the region. For example, the term ‘ASA region’ was sometimes used in The Straits Times, but politicians hardly used the term. This was so because ASA consisted of only three countries and was suspended for three years after its formation. There were a few instances when local newspapers used the term ‘SEAMEO region,’ which refers to the regional educational organisation formed in 1966. Despite the fact that most Southeast Asian countries participated in the beginning, little attention was paid to this organisation. Thus, the term ‘SEAMEO region’ was a non-impacted term and got never popular. Furthermore, a few articles in the newspapers used the term ‘SEATO region,’ but this term was somewhat inappropriate because the SEATO members were not neighbouring countries and, as discussed in the previous chapter, SEATO was not a regional organisation per se.101

100 For example, The Straits Times, 23 Nov. 1962, p. 6, ibid., 27 May 1967 p. 5 and ibid., 1 Feb. 1967, p. 10.
ASEAN is the acronym for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and it contains the regional name ‘Southeast Asia.’ It is also a convenient term to use as an acronym in newspapers, magazines and any other media because it is easily pronounced and allows the saving of space on paper through the usage of an acronym. Another importance of using this term is that it can be used in local newspapers in various languages. As ASEAN is an acronym, it cannot be translated into local languages. For example, a book entitled ASEAN: Dalam Berita, Harapan dan Kenyataan 1967-1977, which collected ASEAN related articles in Indonesia, shows that all local newspapers here have neither employed the translated official name, Perhimpunan Bangsa-bangsa Asia Tenggara (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), nor PBAT/PBBAT, the acronym from the translation. Indonesians have a tendency to abbreviate long names, whether it is an indigenous term in their own language or a translated term, such as PBB (Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa: the United Nations in English) and AS (Amerika Syarikat: the United States of America in English), but for the term ASEAN, Indonesia has remained using the English acronym. It might be presumed that writers first used the Indonesian language acronym PBAT/PBBAT or Perhimpunan Bangsa-bangsa Asia Tenggara, but since then instead of it, ‘ASEAN’ has consistently been used. In other cases, Berita Harian and other Malay newspapers in Singapore also applied the English acronym since 1967. The translated name, Persatuan Negara-negara Asia Tenggara was used only at the time of the formation of the regional organisation. It was written as ‘Persatuan Negara

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102 As mentioned in the chapter 1, the term ‘Southeast Asia’ in ASEAN official documents used ‘South-East Asia’ in 1967, but thereafter, the terms ‘South East Asia’ and ‘Southeast Asia,’ was used. The case in point is ‘The ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting to assess the agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam and to consider its implication for Southeast Asia, Kuala Lumpur, 15 Feb. 1973’ in ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986, p. 115. However, the term ‘Southeast Asia’ has been consistently used as the current version since 1976 (Declaration of ASEAN Concord and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia).

Asia Tenggara (ASEAN).\textsuperscript{104} It is worth pointing out here that the Indonesian and Malay newspapers used the English acronym and not an acronym from their language, even though the name of the regional organisation was indeed translated. Local newspapers in the Philippines and Thailand have also applied the English acronym (Thai newspapers use the term ASEAN as อาเซียน in Thai characters, but pronunciation is the same as English.), in spite of the fact that they had translated the term: Samahan ng mga Bansa sa Timog-silangang Asya in Tagalog and สมานำประชาชาติแห่งเอเซียนตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ (sa ma kom pra cha chard hang ae chia ta wan org chiang tai) in Thai. Likewise, as the political leaders of ASEAN members often used the acronym in speeches and writings, newspapers also followed suit. This has led to the popularization of the term ASEAN in the mass media.

The term ‘ASEAN’ itself is the name of the regional organisation. President Suharto of Indonesia stated that ‘ASEAN ... is a genuine grouping which does not serve the interest nor execute the policy of whatever outside power. It is an organisation of our own, by ourselves and for ourselves.’\textsuperscript{105} None the less, the political leaders of the five founding countries possibly intended to rename the Southeast Asian region ‘ASEAN’ for the purpose of strengthening regional solidarity. As currently the ten countries within Southeast Asia are members, ASEAN may now be perceived as a region in its own right. Donald Emmerson pointed out that ASEAN is not the regional name and ‘Southeast Asia the region and ASEAN the organisation are not the same thing.’\textsuperscript{106} However, after President Marcos officially started using the term ‘ASEAN region’ in 1973, the term ‘ASEAN’ has somewhat become the regional name. As the Bangkok Declaration in 1967 stated, the regional organisation

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{104} Berita Harian, 9 Aug. 1967, p. 1.
  \item\textsuperscript{105} Statements by the ASEAN heads of governments at ASEAN ministerial meetings 1968-1985, Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 1986, p. 29.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
attempted to lay the foundation ‘for a prosperous and peaceful community of South-East Asian Nations’\textsuperscript{107} and was ‘open for participation to all States in the South-East Asian Region.’\textsuperscript{108} During the early years of ASEAN the regional organisation consisted of the five founding countries only, and as such the term ‘ASEAN region’ could not apply to the entire region of Southeast Asia. While ASEAN was passive in terms of building a regional community during the early stages, ASEAN countries had intended since its formation that all Southeast Asian countries join the regional organisation.

Another important thing at this time was that ASEAN leaders had intended to create a regional identity. President Marcos of the Philippines stressed in the Manila ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1971 the purpose of ASEAN to bring about an awakening towards a common identity and community of interests.\textsuperscript{109} Further, in a statement by ASEAN foreign ministers on 15 February 1973 that assessed the agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam while considering its implications for Southeast Asia, it was stated:

\begin{quote}
The meeting acknowledged that all nations should follow a policy of peace and friendship with all countries irrespective of their political ideology on the basis of mutual respect of each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity … The sense of identity and regional cohesion engendered through ASEAN cooperation and the development of national and regional resilience could be the foundation on which Southeast Asian countries could assume this responsibility.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{108} ‘The ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration), Bangkok, 8 August 1967,’ in \textsl{ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986}, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 115.
In short, they felt that co-operation among ASEAN countries was inevitable to create an identity.

At the same time, the ASEAN member countries themselves pursued to set up ‘ASEAN region’ as a single region. For the purpose that the region of Southeast Asia become identical to the region of ASEAN, they also considered to expand its membership and attempted to urge for co-operation with non-ASEAN countries of Southeast Asia. In this sense, it is important that ASEAN countries attempted to open the Southeast Asian summits in 1973 and 1975 including non-ASEAN countries. President Marcos of the Philippines proposed an Asian Forum in 1972 that would include all Southeast Asian countries. The proposal was incorporated into the agreement of the ASEAN informal meeting in 1973 as such: ‘the desirability of convening a conference of All South-East Asian nations to serve as an Asian forum at an appropriate time in the future.’111 Nevertheless, some ASEAN countries insisted that China and Japan should be included in the Forum,112 and in the end, the Asian Forum never materialised. Although other similar meetings were proposed by the Prime Minister of Thailand, Kukrit Pramj after the fall of Saigon to communists in 1975 and it was not crystalised, either.113

The 1973 informal meeting also discussed the expansion of ASEAN membership, and the agreement expressed the desirability ‘to expand the membership of ASEAN at the opportune time to cover all the countries in Southeast Asia.’ 114 They agreed that they would like the Non-ASEAN members of Southeast Asia to join the ASEAN region after ‘establishing and furthering contacts and promoting

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113 Centre for Strategic and International Studies, ibid., p. 320. The daily Indonesian newspaper, Harian Merdeka reported on 24 July 1975.
interlocking relationships amongst the countries.’ This shows that the ASEAN countries wished to expand the ASEAN region by expanding the membership and that the member states made all effort to strengthen the relations with the non-ASEAN members irrespective of ideologies.

On February 1976, the first ASEAN summit was held in Bali, Indonesia. It was said that the summit was urgently held in light of communist victories in Cambodia on 17 April, South Vietnam on 30 April and Laos on 2 December, 1975. Carlos Romulo, the Foreign Secretary of the Philippines denied that the summit was held solely because of the Indochina situation. The summit finally decided to ‘expand ASEAN cooperation in the economic, social, cultural and political fields.’ The heads of the ASEAN member countries issued three documents: the Joint Press Communiqué, Declaration of ASEAN Concord (Bali Concord), and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). The Bali summit was significant in that it issued these documents and, as Michael Leifer pointed out, it served to confirm the member states’ regional identity. These documents, in particular the Bali Concord and TAC, were significant in confirming this regional identity.

The Declaration of ASEAN Concord in 1976 used the term ‘ASEAN Community’ twice, in which the term was never used before, and this was thus its first official usage. The clause 8 states: ‘Member states shall vigorously develop an awareness of regional identity and exert all efforts to create a strong ASEAN community’ Further, the Concord also mentioned that one of ASEAN’s aims was to provide ‘support for the active involvement of all sectors and levels of the ASEAN

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115 Ibid.
116 The Straits Times, 17 May 1975, p. 1
communities.’ In the same light, this Concord said that ASEAN’s aim was to encourage scholars, writers, artists and mass media to play active roles ‘in fostering a sense of regional identity and fellowship.’

The significance of the Bali Concord was that it officially declared political co-operation among the member states. The Concord re-affirmed the economic and cultural co-operation among member states, and also emphasised regional stability:

The stability of each member state and of the ASEAN region is an essential contribution to international peace and security. Each member state resolves to eliminate threats posed by subversion to its stability, thus strengthening national and ASEAN resilience.

Moreover, it is significant that this clause referred to ‘ASEAN resilience,’ which is used for the first time in an official document here. This new phrase was derived from the phrase ‘national resilience’ that President Suharto of Indonesia had started to use since 1972. ‘National resilience’ means ‘the ability of a country to make the social and economic changes necessary for progress, and to meet all external threats while preserving the country’s essential national resilience.’ From the term ‘national resilience,’ he went on to coin the term ‘regional resilience.’ According to the President, this means ‘the ability of member countries to settle jointly their common problems and look after their future and well-being together,’ further stating that ‘if each country develops its own “national resilience,” gradually a “regional resilience” will emerge.’ It is not sure whether his use of the word ‘regional’ at this time

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120 Ibid., p. 34.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid., p. 32.
124 Ibid.
referred to ASEAN states only or the whole Southeast Asian region in the above context. On the other hand, the phrase ‘ASEAN resilience’ in the Declaration expressed an intention to find and settle common problems among member states not only in economic and cultural aspects but also in the political field. The Declaration further articulated that ‘Member states shall vigorously develop an awareness of regional identity and exert all efforts to create a strong ASEAN community.’ In this statement, the ‘regional identity’ means ASEAN identity, not identity of Southeast Asian region. This Declaration presented a goal for long term to form the community by creating the regional identity. It also implies that the members wished to create a single community beyond any ideologies with expansion of membership and the ASEAN region in order to stabilise in political and economic fields. This declaration was based on strong conviction of the members. The five members had ever strong suspicion and misunderstanding at the time of the formation of the regional organisation, but through a great number of meetings and discussion they have successfully overcame it and built up the relations of mutual trust. Based on their experience and confidence, the members attempted to extend the method to the Non-ASEAN countries, in particular communist countries, for the purpose of stability of the entire region.

On the other hand, the main purpose of the TAC was ‘to promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation among their peoples which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship.’ More exactly, TAC was ‘conceived to promote a way of promoting greater common understanding both within and beyond the bounds of ASEAN ... The essence of that common understanding was

125 ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986, p. 32.
126 Ibid., p. 35.
respect for national sovereignty.¹²⁷ This treaty was produced mainly for non-ASEAN countries in Southeast Asia, in particular for Vietnam whose long and bitter war had just ended. While this treaty pushed for the establishment of mutual trusting relations with non-ASEAN countries, ASEAN countries expected that in the future non-ASEAN countries would accept the principles of TAC, i.e. respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, abstention from threat or use of force, peaceful settlement of international disputes, equal rights and self-determination and non-interference in the affairs of states. It was hoped that this treaty would also move them towards accepting these principles. For this reason, the treaty stated that one of its aims was to ‘open for accession by other states in Southeast Asia.’¹²⁸ Tun Razak, in his final speech to ASEAN countries, clearly mentioned his expectation: ‘Already then we envisaged the creation of a family of nations in Southeast Asia which would embrace the whole region to promote cultural, social and economic cooperation for the mutual benefit of all.’¹²⁹ The ASEAN members pursued to transfer the entire region of Southeast Asia into the ASEAN region by dragging the non-members.

It is said that regional organisations were modelled on the European Economic Community (EEC). Based on the Benelux Customs Union, i.e. Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, in 1948, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established in 1952, and it subsequently developed into the EEC with six member countries in 1957. Imitating this, the five countries of Southeast Asia went on to form ASEAN. According to the former Secretary-General of ASEAN, Phan Wannamethee, ‘the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in 1976 was inspired, as far as political co-operation was concerned, by the Luxembourg Report of 27

¹²⁷ Michael Leifer, ibid., p. 69.
¹²⁹ Statements by the ASEAN heads of governments at ASEAN ministerial meetings 1968-1985, Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 1986, p. 36.
October 1970.”\textsuperscript{130} This report, called the ‘Davignon Report,’ was produced after the EEC Six Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in 1970, mainly ‘to study the best way of achieving progress in the matter of political unification, within the context of enlargement of the European Communities.’\textsuperscript{131} The report stated that ‘The Ministers are … convinced that progress here would be calculated to promote the development of the Communities and give Europeans a keener awareness of their common responsibility,’\textsuperscript{132} and that regional political co-operation was inevitable for the purpose of establishing a community. The statements inspired ASEAN leaders to consider the formation of an ASEAN community and to expand ASEAN membership. For the purpose of expanding membership in the future, ASEAN members expressed the need to have good neighborly relations with non-ASEAN countries and to build a strong community through the TAC. The clause 12 of the TAC stated:

\begin{quote}
The High Contracting Parties in their efforts to achieve regional prosperity and security, shall endeavor to cooperate in all fields for the promotion of regional resilience, based on the principles of self-confidence, self-resilience, mutual respect, cooperation and solidarity which will constitute the foundation for a strong and viable community of nations in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{133}
\end{quote}

The Vietnam War that destabilised the entire Southeast Asian region was the main reason that gave rise to the need for creating political and economic stability. After the end of the war, ASEAN needed to communicate and take initiatives to build mutual trust in a peaceful manner. The year 1975 witnessed significant victories by

\begin{footnotes}
\item[132] Ibid., p. 3.
\item[133] ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986, p. 36.
\end{footnotes}
communists, and the end of the war became the watershed for regional politics. To create mutual trust, ASEAN members had to fill the gap in relations with non-ASEAN countries, and the TAC was the document to do so. Its long-term aim was to remove hatred and suspicion, and create a regional community that would lead to the development of a regional identity.

The two documents, i.e. Bali Concord and TAC, signed by the heads of ASEAN countries were definitely the most important documents in forming an ASEAN Community that embraces the entire Southeast Asia, and also in developing regional consciousness. The documents are considered a single set and are inseparable with regards to the formation of the community. However, the level of regional consciousness was still low among the people in ASEAN at the time. Thus, Lau Teik Soon and Mr. Rukmito Hendraningrat, the retiring Indonesian Ambassador to Singapore, appealed for various ASEAN activities such as sports and academic co-operations to be held in order to further awaken regional consciousness.134

The regional organisation has become more active since the summit. The two factors contributed to do so. First, the ASEAN leaders felt that the ‘domino theory,’ which the U.S. government stirred up fear, would not be carried out. The Malaysian minister, Ghazali Shafie shared the opinion with others, and the Tunku also believed that the domino theory would not happen.135 Other factor was that Vietnam expressed its desire before the summit to forge regional co-operation in economic and cultural fields.136 It is worthwhile to note in terms of its activities in earnest that ASEAN has started economic ministerial meetings since 1975 and also set up the ASEAN Secretariat in 1976.

Non-ASEAN countries have joined the organisation since the 1980s, and currently all Southeast Asian countries except East Timor have become ASEAN members.\textsuperscript{137} It was at a time when the term of the Western origin ‘Southeast Asia,’ almost became synonymous with the ASEAN region defined by the local leaders.

Conclusion

After the end of the Confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia, regional co-operation emerged in earnest among five of the Southeast Asian countries. With the fall of Sukarno and the birth of the Suharto administration, regional relationships slowly began to improve. Consequently, ASEAN was formed in 1967 for regional economic and cultural co-operation, which proceeded at quite a slow pace even in the 1970s. However, at the same time, the members have been also aware of the necessity of regional co-operation in political field.

Initially ASEAN’s members consisted of only five countries, which were considered anti-communist countries, and so it did not cover all Southeast Asian countries. North Vietnam, which was the first communist country in the region, was not invited. Burma and Cambodia rejected joining the new regional organisation. Thus, it was said that the organisation had an anti-communist and regional outlook like SEATO. None the less, through both formal and informal meetings, the members strengthened the relations and solidarity not only in the economic and cultural fields, but also in the political area.

ASEAN members made a bold political declaration through ZOPFAN. Although ZOPFAN was declared by the five members in a special meeting in 1971 on

\textsuperscript{137} After Brunei joined in 1984, the organisation expanded its members in the 1990s, namely Vietnam (1995), Myanmar and Laos (1997) and Cambodia (1999), and currently it has the ten country members. The East Timor, which gained independence from Indonesia in 2002, is still awaiting approval to become a part of the organisation.
Malaysia’s initiative, this declaration was not for ASEAN, but for the entire Southeast Asian region including its communist countries. Non-ASEAN countries in the region criticised, but the declaration made them recognise the significance of the entire region’s security and was conducive toward enhancing regional consciousness.

On the other hand, ASEAN members decided and defined the scope of the region through the organisation to chart their own path. ASEAN has become a regional organisation that demarcated the region of Southeast Asia by itself, which then decided, through their selection process, whether candidate countries such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Taiwan were allowed to join the region or not. In doing so the members made the definition clear for their own region, when in fact the regional scope was not even clear in the 1960s. The definition was for the purpose of keeping their regional independence and at the same time building up its regional consciousness.

ASEAN has also ambitiously sought to transform the Western coined region of ‘Southeast Asia’ into their own region, the ‘ASEAN region.’ The term ‘ASEAN’ was used in the media in each country without translation into their own languages and became popular among the general public. Since the 1970s, official documents issued by the regional organisation began to use the term ‘the ASEAN region’ as a sub-region of Southeast Asia. Spreading out the term at least in each member country helped the public to create the regional consciousness.

The declaration to pursue the creation of ‘a strong ASEAN community’ in the 1976 first ASEAN summit was the official starting point to create an ASEAN identity in the future. The official documents issued in the summit also sought to enlarge ASEAN and open it to other countries in the region. In essence, this move by the founding countries was an attempt to establish ASEAN firmly within their own

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region without depending on major powers from the outside. This project was for the purpose of de-colonisation and regional self-reliant.